

Tuesday, June 16

6:30–8:00 a.m.	Registration and Continental Breakfast	Rooms TBD
8:00–9:45 a.m.	Keynote —Mike Mattos <i>All In! Digging Deeper Into Becoming a True Professional Learning Community</i>	
9:45–10:00 a.m.	Break	
10:00–11:30 a.m.	Breakout Sessions	See pages 2–3.
11:30 a.m.–12:30 p.m.	Lunch (provided)	
12:30–2:00 p.m.	Breakout Sessions	See pages 2–3.
2:00–2:15 p.m.	Break	
2:15–3:15 p.m.	Keynote —Julie A. Schmidt <i>Positioned to Lead: Leading From Every Role, Every Day</i>	

Wednesday, June 17

7:00–8:00 a.m.	Registration and Continental Breakfast	Rooms TBD
8:00–9:45 a.m.	Keynote —Jasmine K. Kullar <i>What Does Answering the Four PLC Questions Look and Sound Like?</i>	
9:45–10:00 a.m.	Break	
10:00–11:30 a.m.	Breakout Sessions	See pages 2–3.
11:30 a.m.–12:30 p.m.	Lunch (provided)	
12:30–2:00 p.m.	Breakout Sessions	See pages 2–3.
2:00–2:15 p.m.	Break	
2:15–3:15 p.m.	Team Time —Presenters aid in your collaborative team discussions.	

Thursday, June 18

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 —Eric Twadell <i>Beyond PLC Lite: Digging Deeper Into the Three Big Ideas of a PLC at Work</i>	

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	Tuesday, June 16		Wednesday, June 17		Thursday, June 18
	10:00–11:30 a.m.	12:30–2:00 p.m.	10:00–11:30 a.m.	12:30–2:00 p.m.	8:00–9:30 a.m.
Tim Brown	Becoming World Class: Steps, Processes, and Tools for Getting on the Same Page Room TBD	Creating Confident Learners Through Effective Feedback* Room TBD	Enhancing Self-Efficacy and Motivation Through Reflection and Goal Setting* Room TBD	Creating Confident Learners Through Effective Feedback Room TBD	Enhancing Self-Efficacy and Motivation Through Reflection and Goal Setting Room TBD
Luis F. Cruz	Breaking Through the Initialisms: Connecting PLC and RTI to Ensure High-Quality Learning for Every Student* Room TBD	PLC Versus PLC Process: The Difference Between PLC as a Noun and a Verb Room TBD	Embracing English Language Development and Supporting Bilingual Students With the PLC Process Room TBD	Breaking Through the Initialisms: Connecting PLC and RTI to Ensure High-Quality Learning for Every Student Room TBD	Knowledge Is Not Power Until It Is Applied: Turning Your PLC Institute Experience Into Action Room TBD
Cassandra Erkens	Instructional Agility Through Collaboration Room TBD	ELA Protocols for the Highly Engaged Classroom Room TBD	Coaching Moves for Healthy and Productive Teams Room TBD	Collaborative Common Assessments Room TBD	The Double Take on Retakes Room TBD
Jasmine K. Kullar	Training Teacher Leaders in a PLC Room TBD	Cultivating Exceptional Principals Room TBD	Your Physical, Mental, and Relational Wellness: Thriving at Work <i>and</i> at Home! Room TBD	Tough Conversations With Resisters, Fake Supporters, and the Eternally Crabby Room TBD	Meetings, Meetings, and More Meetings Room TBD
Mike Mattos	Developing and Supporting High-Performing Teacher Teams Room TBD	The Four Pearls of Effective Interventions Room TBD	Beyond Study Halls and Special Education: Tackling the Logistics of Secondary Systematic Interventions Room TBD	Behavior Solutions: Leveraging the PLC at Work Process to Teach Essential Behaviors Room TBD	Guiding Principles for Principals: Tips and Tools for Leading the PLC at Work Process Room TBD

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Regina Stephens Owens	The <i>Why</i> Effect 2.0: Intentional Systems Produce Inspirational Cultures Room TBD	Educators Are Learners, Too! Stop Telling, Start Teaching Room TBD	From Overload to Impact: A Data Discussion for Educators and Instructional Leaders Room TBD	Different by Design: Small, Virtual, Innovative, and Singleton PLCs Room TBD	Inspiring a Culture of Courage and Care Room TBD
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 <i>All</i> 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
Mona Toncheff	Together We Can Accelerate Student Learning to Grade Level and Beyond* Room TBD	Making Learning Visible: Learning Targets as the Heart of a Guaranteed and Viable Curriculum Room TBD	Math Success for All: Tier 1 and Tier 2 Instruction That Works Room TBD	Together We Can Accelerate Student Learning to Grade Level and Beyond Room TBD	From Scores to Learning: Effective Grading Practices Room TBD
Eric Twadell	Social and Emotional Learning in a PLC at Work Room TBD	New to AI? Facilitating Better Teaching and Learning With AI Tools Room TBD	Leadership Matters: Exploring the Habits of Highly Effective District, School, and Team Leaders Room TBD	Grading for Learning: Evidence-Based Grading and Reporting in a PLC at Work Room TBD	It's All About Culture! Examining the Culture of Your School Room TBD

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Session Descriptions—Day 1

MORNING KEYNOTE

Mike Mattos

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

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

Participants in this session:

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

MORNING BREAKOUT SESSIONS

Tim Brown

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.

Cassandra Erkens

Instructional Agility Through Collaboration

The best way for teachers to reach instructional agility in their individual classrooms is to stand on the shoulders of their team's collaborative efforts. When teams collaborate to prioritize and unpack standards, clarify criteria for quality, identify learning progressions and learning targets, determine appropriate levels of rigor, and collectively analyze error, individual team members become powerful and efficacious. Participants in this session explore the team tools and processes required to help individual teachers be precise, yet flexible, in their instructional efforts.

Participants can expect to:

- Explore the meaning of instructional agility.
- Examine team tools and processes required for individual precision.
- Identify ways to develop and encourage individual flexibility when functioning in a collaborative team.

Jasmine K. Kullar

Training Teacher Leaders in a PLC

School leaders need to spend time building and developing their teacher leaders because their leadership is vital to the PLC process. Too often, we throw teacher leaders into their roles and expect them to lead, but many may not know how. In this session, Jasmine K. Kullar argues that their role is more than just communicating information to their departments on behalf of the principal. Participants explore everything from what teacher leaders are supposed to do in a PLC to how they receive training.

Participants in this session:

- Discuss the role of teacher leaders in a PLC.
- Explore leadership traits needed for effective teacher leadership.
- Generate ideas for professional development for teacher leaders.

Mike Mattos

Developing and Supporting High-Performing Teacher Teams

Teacher teams are the engines of a professional learning community. They are responsible for identifying, teaching, assessing, and intervening on the most essential curriculum that students must learn each year. When teacher teams do the right work really well, student learning thrives. In this session, Mike Mattos provides a step-by-step process for forming, developing, and supporting high-performing teacher teams.

Participants learn how to:

- Form teacher teams and monitor their progress.
- Develop team norms, address violations, and focus teams on the right work.
- Create a tight/loose calendar of team outcomes.

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

Mona Toncheff

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.

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

Tim Brown

Creating Confident Learners Through Effective Feedback

There is little doubt that how feedback is given and how feedback is received significantly impact learners. Since feedback is one of the most powerful tools we have at our disposal to enhance learning, it is important that educators understand the characteristics of effective feedback. In this session, Tim Brown explores those characteristics, and participants reflect on the degree to which those conditions are understood and used in their schools.

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.

Cassandra Erkens

ELA Protocols for the Highly Engaged Classroom

The discipline of English Language Arts offers the protocols for academic discourse that work in all subjects and for all grade levels. Done well, the protocols can be used to 1) help students monitor their own progress to improve over time, 2) improve the quality of class discussions, and 3) empower teachers to assess the same standards across all ELA domains (reading, viewing, listening, speaking, and writing). In this session, Cassandra Erkens offers tips, tools, and quality practices for improved academic discourse and increased student engagement.

Participants can expect to:

- Select or modify appropriate strategies and tools for improved academic discourse.
- Explore options for the design and use of task-neutral rubrics.
- Identify strategies for streamlining the assessment process across all ELA domains.

Jasmine K. Kullar

Cultivating Exceptional Principals

Supporting school leaders is the responsibility of all district leaders. As school leaders take on the challenge of leading PLCs at their schools, they will inevitably need support from their district leaders. However, support can be a very loosely defined term. In this session, Jasmine K. Kullar explores how to define that support by examining three specific strategies. First, district staff will learn how to provide that support through meaningful and impactful professional development

for school leaders. Second, district staff will explore strategies to recognize school leaders. Finally, district staff will identify ways to create a school system that focuses on educator wellness.

Participants can expect to:

- Learn strategies to make professional development meaningful and impactful.
- Identify various recognition strategies.
- Explore aspects of educator wellness for school leaders.

Mike Mattos

The Four Pearls of Effective Interventions

The fundamental purpose of a professional learning community is to ensure high levels of learning for every student. Achieving this goal requires that schools effectively answer the third critical question of a PLC: How will we respond when students don't learn? In this session, Mike Mattos provides four guiding principles—four pearls—that can make your site interventions more effective. Participants explore how being a PLC creates the schoolwide processes needed to successfully implement these powerful ideas.

Participants in this session:

- Understand the four pearls to effective interventions.
- Explore examples and tools to implement each pearl.
- Connect the four pearls to the four critical questions of a PLC at Work.

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.

Mona Toncheff

Making Learning Visible: Learning Targets as the Heart of a Guaranteed and Viable Curriculum

A textbook or a standards document alone is not a guaranteed and viable curriculum. A curriculum becomes guaranteed when every teacher, team, and student understands the learning targets and success criteria for the essential standards. The curriculum is viable when it is possible for all students to learn the essential standards in the school year.

In this session, Mona Toncheff focuses on strengthening the first critical PLC question: What do we want students to learn? Participants learn how to support teams with unpacking standards into clear, student-friendly learning targets that make expectations transparent and actionable for both students and teachers. Mona models practical tools and protocols for unpacking standards, refining learning targets, and developing success criteria that ensure a guaranteed and viable curriculum at all levels.

Participants in this session:

- Examine how to translate standards into daily learning targets that reflect the full intent and rigor of the standard.
- Explore how well-defined success criteria clarify what proficiency looks like and how it supports consistent instruction and assessment.
- Identify ways learning targets and success criteria empower students to monitor, reflect on, and take ownership of their learning.

Eric Twadell

New to AI? Facilitating Better Teaching and Learning With AI Tools

Please bring a charged device (tablet or laptop recommended).

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

Julie A. Schmidt

Positioned to Lead: Leading From Every Role, Every Day

Leadership in schools isn't about a title; it's about action, influence, and a shared commitment to student success. No matter your current role, you have the power to lead from where you stand. In this keynote, Julie A. Schmidt inspires participants to embrace leadership in their current roles by focusing on collaboration, continuous learning, and taking meaningful action to drive positive change. Through interacting with one another, considering practical strategies, and reflecting, participants are empowered to be catalysts for improvement, no matter their position.

Session Descriptions—Day 2

KEYNOTE

Jasmine K. Kullar

What Does Answering the Four PLC Questions Look and Sound Like?

You've learned about the foundation and building blocks of a PLC within the three big ideas. In this keynote, Jasmine K. Kullar goes deeper into the work of teacher teams in a PLC. What does it mean when we say that teams must collaborate? Collaboration is not about what's being taught on Monday or Tuesday; it is about the four fundamental questions. Dr. Kullar explores each of the questions in depth so participants gain a deeper understanding of what the work entails for collaborative teams.

Participants in this session:

- Explore the four fundamental questions of a PLC.
- Reflect on the current reality of the PLC work as it relates to the four questions.
- Develop next steps for each PLC question.

MORNING BREAKOUT SESSIONS

Tim Brown

Enhancing Self-Efficacy and Motivation Through Reflection and Goal Setting

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

Luis F. Cruz

Embracing English Language Development and Supporting Bilingual Students With the PLC Process

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 acquiring English as an additional language. In addition, educators must collectively contribute to English language development by embracing both designated and integrated ELD instructional approaches. In this session, Luis F. Cruz shares his expertise in both the PLC process and working with English learners to equip participants with strategies for ensuring these students thrive within the PLC framework.

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.
- Learn how to differentiate between designated and integrated instruction to continuously develop the English language for students learning English as an additional language.

Cassandra Erkens

Coaching Moves for Healthy and Productive Teams

Effective instructional coaches do not do the work of the teams; rather, they monitor and support each team's ability to be both healthy and productive. The work requires that coaches make strategic moves that empower teams to learn their way to success. Participants in this session explore coaching options in given scenarios.

Participants can expect to:

- Engage in collaborative problem solving regarding genuine coaching challenges.
- Identify tools and protocols to successfully monitor and support collaboration.
- Explore PLC coaching metrics as guidelines for success.

Jasmine K. Kullar

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.

Mike Mattos

Beyond Study Halls and Special Education: Tackling the Logistics of Secondary Systematic Interventions

Providing systematic supports—where students can receive the collective expertise of the entire staff—requires dedicated intervention time within a school’s master schedule. At the secondary level, scheduling time at Tier 2 is relatively easy—it is the process virtually every middle/high school does to create an “assembly” schedule. The real obstacles begin when the staff considers the logistics of having potentially hundreds of students transitioning to specific interventions.

Critical questions arise, such as:

- How do we determine what interventions to offer?
- How do we assign staff?
- How do we transition students to the correct help sessions?
- What if students need help in more than one course?
- How do we hold students accountable to attend?
- What do we do for students who don’t need extra help?

In this session, Mike Mattos explores specific processes that work—and don’t work—when creating and targeting secondary interventions.

Regina Stephens Owens

From Overload to Impact: A Data Discussion for Educators and Instructional Leaders

In a time of intense focus on data, it’s essential to build a rich culture of learning through dialogue and data, shifting from deficit thinking to a data mindset. Participants in this session discover practical ways to foster this culture, leverage varied data types, and boost team capacity for high levels of learning for all. Regina Stephens Owens equips instructional leaders to turn data into a catalyst for continuous growth and impact.

Participants learn:

- How we think with data to uncover insights and possibilities
- How we organize and access data for seamless use
- How we act on data in real time through decisions, shifts, and interventions

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.

Mona Toncheff

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.

Eric Twadell

Leadership Matters: Exploring the Habits of Highly Effective District, School, and Team Leaders

District, school, and team leaders play an important role in developing PLCs. This session explores the essential characteristics and roles of leaders in creating and sustaining a culture of collaboration and shared responsibility in a PLC.

Participants in this session:

- Zero in on essential conversations to create a focus on learning.
- Discover how effective leaders facilitate a culture of shared responsibility.
- Examine strategies effective leaders must utilize to develop a learning-centered culture in districts, schools, and teams.

AFTERNOON BREAKOUT SESSIONS

Tim Brown

Creating Confident Learners Through Effective Feedback

There is little doubt that how feedback is given and how feedback is received significantly impact learners. Since feedback is one of the most powerful tools we have at our disposal to enhance learning, it is important that educators understand the characteristics of effective feedback. In this session, Tim Brown explores those characteristics, and participants reflect on the degree to which those conditions are understood and used in their schools.

Luis F. Cruz

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

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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.

Cassandra Erkens

Collaborative Common Assessments

When collaborative common assessments are implemented well, amazing things happen for students and teachers. When teachers engage in the process, they can collectively offer laser-like instruction, inform assessment literacy, and create differentiated and instructionally sensitive responses to support all learners. In this session, Cassandra Erkens offers an overview of the process, protocols, and tools to help with the delivery and data that result from using collaborative common assessments.

Participants in this session:

- Identify key factors when delivering collaborative common assessments.
- Learn strategies and tools to support data analysis.

Jasmine K. Kullar

Tough Conversations With Resisters, Fake Supporters, and the Eternally Crabby

Despite the excitement and buy-in educators may have in implementing PLCs and engaging in this work, they will undoubtedly run into staff who do not support the journey. These are team members who may seem to support a PLC but speak against it in the parking lot, openly resist, or are just averse to innovation. Working with people who do not want to change the way they have always done things can be challenging, but it can—and must—be done. Jasmine K. Kullar outlines how understanding the *why* helps shape the solutions to working through this very real problem and effective inroads into difficult conversations. Participants delve into proven tips and techniques for mastering these tough conversations.

Participants in this session:

- Identify reasons why having tough conversations is difficult.
- Recognize why we may not achieve the desired outcome after having tough conversations.
- Acquire various tips, techniques, and strategies to engage in effective tough conversations.

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, some students will need support mastering the behaviors to succeed in school and beyond. Every school knows this universal truth, but many schools lack the systematic processes needed to achieve this outcome. In this session, Mike Mattos demonstrates how a school can leverage the four critical questions of the PLC at Work process to identify, teach, assess, and intervene when students lack essential academic and social behaviors.

Participants in this session:

- Create the right mindset for teaching behavior.
- Learn how the entire school—the entire PLC—must work together to teach essential behaviors.
- Consider systematic, tiered supports to target behavior interventions.

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.

Mona Toncheff

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. Participants 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 patterns.

Participants in this session:

- Distinguish between remediation and acceleration using classroom and team-based examples.
- Identify which of the six acceleration mindsets most closely reflects current school practices.

- Determine specific actions teams can take to shift toward an acceleration mindset while maintaining access to grade-level learning.

Eric Twadell

Grading for Learning: Evidence-Based Grading and Reporting in a PLC at Work

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.

Session Descriptions—Day 3

BREAKOUT SESSIONS

Tim Brown

Enhancing Self-Efficacy and Motivation Through Reflection and Goal Setting

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

Luis F. Cruz

Knowledge Is Not Power Until It Is Applied: Turning Your PLC Institute Experience Into Action

After attending a PLC at Work institute, educators often return to their schools energized—only to encounter the challenge of fostering buy-in from colleagues who were not part of the experience. How can school leaders and teacher teams cultivate shared commitment, meaningful collaboration, and lasting implementation of the PLC process? In this closing session, Luis F. Cruz shares proven, practical strategies for helping colleagues think differently, feel differently, and ultimately do differently so that the PLC work moves beyond isolated practice and becomes embedded schoolwide.

Participants in this session:

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

Cassandra Erkens

The Double Take on Retakes

There is an art to developing effective and meaningful assessments for retake opportunities. Such assessments must provide teachers and learners with sufficient and valid evidence that the intervention opportunities have successfully moved learners to meet the demands of the required expectations. At the same time, retake opportunities should not burden educators or frustrate learners. In this session, Cassandra Erkens explores the criteria for effective and efficient designs and the systems that make the process more manageable and meaningful for students and teachers alike.

Participants in this session:

- Examine the rationale for and the dos and don'ts of reassessment systems.
- Identify the criteria and strategies for designing reassessments.
- Explore the conditions for employing a reassessment system that motivates learners while steeping them in self-regulation processes.

Jasmine K. Kullar

Meetings, Meetings, and More Meetings

Grade-level meetings, department meetings, faculty meetings, and now collaborative meetings are needed, but how do you make them effective, efficient, and productive? Your perception of your team—whether you're in a high-performing team or not—could be related to how your meetings are run. In this session, Jasmine K. Kullar explores what makes meetings effective and how to get teams there. Participants review several strategies to improve their meetings and strengthen their collaborative teams.

Participants can expect to:

- Explore the relationships of meetings and collaborative teams.
- Examine characteristics of effective and ineffective meetings.
- Identify strategies to make effective collaborative meetings the norm in their school.

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.

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.

Mona Toncheff

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 exist: 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 an afterthought 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.

Eric Twadell

It's All About Culture! 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.

KEYNOTE

Eric Twadell

Beyond PLC Lite: Digging Deeper Into the Three Big Ideas of a Professional Learning Community at Work

Moving beyond PLC lite is a never-ending journey of continuous improvement and growth and requires a deep commitment to the three big ideas of the PLC process: learning, collaboration, and results. In this keynote, Eric Twadell highlights the work that Adlai E. Stevenson High School (the “birthplace of the PLC at Work process”) has done to stay focused on the fundamental components of their PLC at Work culture and drive a steady increase in student learning and achievement.