

Monday, June 22

6:30–8:00 a.m.	Registration and Continental Breakfast	Rooms TBD
8:00–9:45 a.m.	Keynote —Sarah Schuhl <i>More Than a Moment: The Power of Being a PLC</i>	
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 —Tim Brown <i>Motivate, Inspire, Question: Leading in a PLC</i>	

Tuesday, June 23

7:00–8:00 a.m.	Registration and Continental Breakfast	Rooms TBD
8:00–9:45 a.m.	Keynote —Anthony Muhammad <i>Transforming School Culture 2.0: Why Culture Is Important Today, Tomorrow, and Forever</i>	
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 24

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 —Luis F. Cruz <i>Resistance Is a Natural Byproduct of Implementing PLCs: How to Confront It and Win</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	Monday, June 22		Tuesday, June 23		Wednesday, June 24
	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.
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
Wendy Custable	Establishing an Interdependent Team Culture That Lasts Room TBD	Central Office: Leading in a PLC at Work Culture Room TBD	Relentlessly Building a Culture of Continuous Improvement* Room TBD	Tips of the Trade: Becoming a High-Performing Singleton Team Room TBD	Relentlessly Building a Culture of Continuous Improvement Room TBD
Troy Gobble	Using PLC Practices to Support and Promote Student Wellness Room TBD	Enhancing Inquiry-Based Science Classrooms Through PLC Practices Room TBD	Leading the Long Game: Leadership Moves That Make Standards-Based Grading Stick* Room TBD	From Updates to Impact: Designing Administrative Meetings That Drive Collective Action Room TBD	Leading the Long Game: Leadership Moves That Make Standards-Based Grading Stick Room TBD
Paula Maeker	Deconstruct to Reconstruct: Building Collective Instructional Expertise, Clarity, and Agility Around Essential Learning Room TBD	Literacy in a PLC at Work: Ensuring Essential Literacy Outcomes in Grades K–6 Room TBD	Raising the Bar and Closing the Gap: Whatever It Takes in Elementary Schools Room TBD	Gaining Ground: Four Key Factors to Increase Student Achievement in Schools With Significant Need Room TBD	We Really Do Mean All! Collectively Meeting the Diverse Needs of All Learners 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

Presenter	Monday, June 22		Tuesday, June 23		Wednesday, June 24
	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.
Mark Onuscheck	Fostering Reading Skills Through PLCs: Why Every Teacher Is a Reading Teacher Room TBD	What Are We Asking the Brain to Do? Vertically Aligning a K-12 Curriculum Through Cognitive Strategies Room TBD	Your Physical, Mental, and Relational Wellness: Thriving at Work <i>and</i> at Home! Room TBD	Instructional Coaching in a PLC: Strengthening Practice Through Collective Learning Room TBD	Resilience at the Center: How PLC Cultures Strengthen Social-Emotional Learning Room TBD
Kyle Palmer	Parentships in a PLC: Forming and Sustaining School-Home Relationships With Families Room TBD	Measuring the Impact of Change: Defining Success and Confronting the Illusion of Motion* Room TBD	Championship Teams: Maximizing the Impact of Your Collective Efficacy Room TBD	The Connected Campus: Harnessing the Power of Social Health in Your School Culture Room TBD	Measuring the Impact of Change: Defining Success and Confronting the Illusion of Motion 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	Together We Can Accelerate Student Learning to Grade Level and Beyond Room TBD

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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

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 multtiered 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.

Wendy Custable

Establishing an Interdependent Team Culture That Lasts

In this session, Wendy Custable explores how teams transition from collaboration as a meeting structure to true interdependence and shared responsibility for student learning. Participants explore the conditions and leadership behaviors that sustain effective collaborative teams over time—beyond the initiative of the year.

Troy Gobble

Using PLC Practices to Support and Promote Student Wellness

Social-emotional learning (SEL) often lives on posters, assemblies, or isolated initiatives rather than in the daily work of teaching and learning. In this session, Troy Gobble reframes SEL as essential instructional work—not an add-on—by examining how one high school embedded SEL directly into its PLC processes. Participants explore how clearly defined SEL learning targets, student feedback, and collaborative analysis can drive both academic growth and student well-being. Troy demonstrates how PLC structures provide the clarity, consistency, and accountability necessary to make SEL measurable, intentional, and sustainable across classrooms.

Participants can expect to:

- Develop clear, scalable SEL learning targets aligned to the four critical questions of a PLC at Work and the CASEL competencies.
- Analyze student perception and SEL data to identify patterns, instructional implications, and team-level responses.
- Apply PLC structures and routines that embed SEL into collaborative planning, reflection, and intervention—rather than treating it as a standalone initiative.

Paula Maeker

Deconstruct to Reconstruct: Building Collective Instructional Expertise, Clarity, and Agility Around Essential Learning

To bring essential standards to life, teams must build shared clarity, collective expertise, and the instructional agility needed to respond to learning in real time. In this hands-on session, Paula Maeker moves beyond simply naming essential standards and into the instructional decisions that make them actionable. Using a practical framework, Paula unpacks complex standards into clear learning progressions that guide instruction, assessment, and response. Participants

actively apply the process, examine examples from classroom practice, and leave with a repeatable, team-friendly approach that transforms collaborative planning from a compliance task into a powerful driver of student learning.

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.

Mark Onuscheck

Fostering Reading Skills Through PLCs: Why Every Teacher Is a Reading Teacher

When learning to read becomes everyone's work, student learning accelerates. Educators in this session examine how strong professional learning communities create the conditions for consistent, high-impact literacy practices across all content areas. Mark Onuscheck focuses on how reading strategies—when shared, refined, and monitored through PLCs—strengthen student engagement, deepen comprehension, and improve retention of complex content. Participants engage in purposeful dialogue around how pre-reading, during-reading, and post-reading strategies function not as isolated instructional moves but as shared commitments that support students' ability to think critically, make meaning, and transfer learning across disciplines. Mark emphasizes aligning literacy practices to student evidence and ensuring coherence and clarity in how students experience reading in every classroom.

Participants can expect to:

- Reflect collaboratively on how reading practices drive student engagement, comprehension, and retention across all subject areas.
- Identify shared literacy practices that promote critical thinking and disciplinary understanding and consider how PLC structures support their consistent implementation.

Kyle Palmer

Parentships in a PLC: Forming and Sustaining School-Home Relationships With Families

Award-winning principal Kyle Palmer shares strategies for how to build better parent engagement and collaboration within a school community to better support all students. Participants learn what a “parentship” is and how to purposely build a guiding coalition to move this work forward in their schools. Participants also receive several easy-to-implement strategies for their own collaborative teams and school communities along with time and tools to think through that process.

Participants in this session:

- Understand how to create their education triangle of collaboration between parents, educators, and students.
- Learn how to create mission, vision, and collective commitment statements to build their own parentship.
- Receive numerous specific strategies to enhance their parentship and engage effectively with parents.

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.

AFTERNOON BREAKOUT SESSIONS

Tim Brown

Creating Confident Learners Through Effective Feedback

How feedback is given and how feedback is received significantly impacts 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.

Wendy Custable

Central Office: Leading in a PLC at Work Culture

In this session, Wendy Custable examines the critical role central office leaders play in creating the conditions for continuous improvement across schools. Participants explore how alignment, coherence, and disciplined leadership practices enable organizations to transition from compliance to collective responsibility for the success of every student.

Troy Gobble

Enhancing Inquiry-Based Science Classrooms Through PLC Practices

The NGSS science and engineering practices call for classrooms where students think, question, investigate, and reason like scientists—not merely absorb content. Yet many science teams struggle to translate these practices into consistent, high-quality instructional experiences. In this session, Troy Gobble focuses on how professional learning communities can serve as the engine for deepening teacher understanding of the NGSS practices and for designing inquiry-based lessons that restore curiosity, rigor, and wonder to science classrooms. Participants examine how collaborative planning, shared analysis, and intentional lesson design move inquiry from aspiration to daily practice.

Participants can expect to:

- Clarify the intent of the NGSS science and engineering practices and what they look like in authentic classroom instruction.
- Analyze the instructional shifts between traditional content delivery and inquiry-driven learning aligned to the practices.
- Design collaborative PLC routines and lesson-planning approaches that embed the science practices into daily instruction.

Paula Maeker

Literacy in a PLC at Work: Ensuring Essential Literacy Outcomes in Grades K–6

In this session, Paula Maker engages K–6 educators in collaborative team processes that help determine what literacy outcomes are truly essential and deserve the greatest instructional time, focus, and support. Through examples, vertical standards study, and guided application, teams learn how to move from “trying to guarantee it all” to making intentional, shared decisions that prioritize essential literacy learning. Literacy teams gain a clearer starting point, a common language for collaborative conversations, and a practical approach to collectively ensuring high levels of literacy learning for all.

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.

Mark Onuscheck

What Are We Asking the Brain to Do? Vertically Aligning a K–12 Curriculum Through Cognitive Strategies

Curriculum alignment is not just about standards and pacing; it is about the cognitive work we ask students to do over time. Educators in this session examine how thinking develops from kindergarten through high school and whether our curriculum is intentionally designed to grow students’ cognitive capacity year after year. Participants explore how cognitive strategies—such as reasoning, analyzing, synthesizing, problem solving, and metacognition—emerge, deepen,

and become more sophisticated as students mature. Through collaborative discussion, educators consider how vertical alignment depends on deliberately increasing task complexity, refining instructional moves, and asking better questions that stretch students' thinking without overwhelming them. Rather than treating rigor as an abstract ideal, teams make rigor visible by examining how tasks, questions, and learning experiences evolve across grade levels—and how gaps or redundancies in cognitive demand can unintentionally limit student growth.

Participants can expect to:

- Explore key cognitive strategies that support higher-order and critical thinking and how these strategies develop across grade bands.
- Collaborate to examine vertical alignment through a cognitive lens, identifying opportunities to better sequence thinking demands across a K-12 curriculum.
- Generate practical insights into increasing task complexity and improving questioning practices, ensuring students are consistently challenged to think more deeply, flexibly, and independently over time.

Kyle Palmer

Measuring the Impact of Change: Defining Success and Confronting the Illusion of Motion

Schools today operate in a climate of relentless change, where new programs, technologies, and tools are constantly introduced with the promise of better outcomes. We call this phenomenon the illusion of motion. What's missing is a practical, evidence-informed approach that helps schools distinguish between what truly drives improvement and what simply adds noise. Kyle Palmer takes on that challenge by introducing the idea of measuring the effectiveness of innovative practices and processes in the school setting to help leaders evaluate whether their innovations are genuinely producing meaningful outcomes or just more wasted motion. In a time of growing accountability and limited resources, Kyle offers both a rationale and a roadmap for creating lasting cultures of improvement, where innovation is purposeful, practical, and proven.

Participants in this session:

- More deeply understand and recognize the illusion of motion and how to confront it.
- Utilize tools provided to analyze readiness for a new innovation as well as better understand the thoughts and feelings of those navigating change efforts.
- Gain the ability to assess the effectiveness of school improvement initiatives and innovations by clarifying and measuring what success looks like.

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.

AFTERNOON KEYNOTE

Tim Brown

Motivate, Inspire, Question: Leading in a PLC

If your school's mission is to ensure that all students learn at high levels, then a culture of high expectations for exceptional teaching must become the journey of every staff member. This can only be accomplished if the school leaders organize and plan for continuous learning among all staff members. In this keynote, Tim Brown identifies the key structures and considerations for fostering an environment where individuals are motivated and supported to strive for excellence.

Session Descriptions—Day 2

KEYNOTE

Anthony Muhammad

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

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

Participants in this session:

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

MORNING BREAKOUT SESSIONS

Tim Brown

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.

Wendy Custable

Relentlessly Building a Culture of Continuous Improvement

In this session, Wendy Custable shares an authentic school-based journey of building and sustaining a professional learning community through relentless focus on improvement. Using real-world examples from practice, participants examine the leadership behaviors and systems that drive a shared vision, meaningful collaboration, evidence-based decision making, and collective responsibility for every student's success.

Troy Gobble

Leading the Long Game: Leadership Moves That Make Standards-Based Grading Stick

Shifting to standards-based grading is not a technical adjustment; it is a multiyear cultural change that tests leadership clarity, coherence, and resolve. In this session, Troy Gobble traces one school's five-year journey to redesign grading and reporting practices, focusing on the leadership decisions, organizational structures, and pacing choices that made sustained change possible. Participants examine how leaders balance urgency and patience, navigate resistance, and maintain focus on purpose while the work evolves over time.

Participants can expect to:

- Identify the leadership and organizational conditions necessary to support a multiyear transition to standards-based grading.
- Analyze common breakdown points in grading reform efforts and how leaders can anticipate and address them.
- Apply a planning framework to an upcoming change initiative in their own school, clarifying next steps and leadership priorities.

Paula Maeker

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.

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.

Mark Onuscheck

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.

Kyle Palmer

Championship Teams: Maximizing the Impact of Your Collective Efficacy

Collaborative teams are the engine that drives student learning in schools. While this idea seems simple, having highly effective teams is not. In this session, Kyle Palmer explores several highly effective and proven strategies to build the teams that are needed in a school community.

Participants in this session:

- Explore trademarks of highly effective teams.
- Understand the research and power behind collective efficacy.
- Discover how to set effective trackable goals to focus the work of your team.
- Learn three game-changing team tools to focus on the right work.

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. In this session, Sarah Schuhl provides real examples showing how to create time for supplemental and intensive interventions.

Participants in this session:

- Clarify the purpose for Tier 1, Tier 2, and Tier 3 learning and the time needed for each in a school day.
- Explore what to consider when designing time for interventions in a secondary master schedule.

AFTERNOON BREAKOUT SESSIONS

Tim Brown

Creating Confident Learners Through Effective Feedback

How feedback is given and how feedback is received significantly impacts 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

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.

Wendy Custable

Tips of the Trade: Becoming a High-Performing Singleton Team

In this session, Wendy Custable explores the roadblocks, benefits, and how-tos of collaborating in diverse and blended curricular teams to address the uniqueness of being the only teacher of a course or program.

Troy Gobble

From Updates to Impact: Designing Administrative Meetings That Drive Collective Action

Too many administrative meetings default to updates, logistics, and announcements, thereby consuming time without advancing learning or leadership. In this session, Troy Gobble examines how Stevenson High School redesigned its administrative meeting structures to function as true collaborative teams rather than information exchanges. Participants analyze how intentional meeting design, clear purposes, and disciplined protocols can transform administrative time into a powerful lever for coherence, shared leadership, and schoolwide improvement.

Participants can expect to:

- Design an administrative meeting structure that prioritizes learning, problem solving, and collective responsibility over announcements and logistics.
- Analyze their current administrative meetings to identify time traps, misaligned agendas, and opportunities to increase impact.
- Apply practical protocols and norms that strengthen collaboration, decision making, and follow-through across leadership teams.

Paula Maeker

Gaining Ground: Four Key Factors to Increase Student Achievement in Schools With Significant Need

Higher levels of academic success are not only possible, they are probable if we rethink our approach to school improvement and reinvest in systemwide practices that lead to swift and significant gains in student achievement. In this session, participants explore four key factors that consistently drive student achievement in high-need contexts. Grounded in research and real school experiences, this session highlights systemwide practices that strengthen instruction, build collective efficacy, and close learning gaps while maintaining grade-level expectations. Participants gain a clear understanding of what actually moves learning forward, why these factors work, and how to begin applying them immediately to gain and sustain higher levels of student success.

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).

Mark Onuscheck

Instructional Coaching in a PLC: Strengthening Practice Through Collective Learning

Instructional coaching is most powerful when it lives inside a strong professional learning community—where trust, shared responsibility, and a focus on student learning guide adult growth. In this session, Mark Onuscheck explores how coaching functions not as a program or

role but as a collective practice that strengthens instruction across classrooms through reflection, feedback, and shared inquiry. Participants examine how instructional coaching supports PLC priorities by aligning coaching conversations to essential standards, evidence of student learning, and agreed-upon instructional practices. Mark highlights how coaching can create safe spaces for teachers to test ideas, refine strategies, and learn from one another while maintaining clarity around purpose, roles, and impact. Through collaborative discussion and practical examples, participants consider how coaching cycles, classroom observation, and feedback protocols can be embedded into PLC structures to promote continuous improvement without fear or judgment.

Participants can expect to:

- Examine the role of instructional coaching within a PLC culture, clarifying how coaching supports—not evaluates—teacher practice.
- Explore coaching structures and routines that align with PLC priorities and keep the focus on student learning.
- Identify strategies for building trust, reflection, and shared accountability to ensure coaching conversations lead to meaningful instructional growth.

Kyle Palmer

The Connected Campus: Harnessing the Power of Social Health in Your School Culture

Social health is quickly becoming one of the most critical pillars of school success, yet it's often the least discussed. Increasing levels of stress are leaving more teachers burned out instead of fired up with their jobs. Kyle Palmer examines the research, real-world impact, and practical strategies schools can use to build a socially healthy environment for both students and staff. Participants learn why social health is a driving force behind retention, collaboration, safety, and resilience—and how it influences a school's capacity to innovate and improve.

Participants in this session:

- Reflect upon the challenges leading to burnout that we all face in the field of education.
- Take away several strategies and activities to help reignite your passion for teaching and learning.
- Learn how to develop deep connections with others to create a culture everyone wants to be a part of.

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.

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.

Wendy Custable

Relentlessly Building a Culture of Continuous Improvement

In this session, Wendy Custable shares an authentic school-based journey of building and sustaining a professional learning community through relentless focus on improvement. Using real-world examples from practice, participants examine the leadership behaviors and systems that drive a shared vision, meaningful collaboration, evidence-based decision making, and collective responsibility for every student's success.

Troy Gobble

Leading the Long Game: Leadership Moves That Make Standards-Based Grading Stick

Shifting to standards-based grading is not a technical adjustment; it is a multiyear cultural change that tests leadership clarity, coherence, and resolve. In this session, Troy Gobble traces one school's five-year journey to redesign grading and reporting practices, focusing on the leadership decisions, organizational structures, and pacing choices that made sustained change possible. Participants examine how leaders balance urgency and patience, navigate resistance, and maintain focus on purpose while the work evolves over time.

Participants can expect to:

- Identify the leadership and organizational conditions necessary to support a multiyear transition to standards-based grading.
- Analyze common breakdown points in grading reform efforts and how leaders can anticipate and address them.
- Apply a planning framework to an upcoming change initiative in their own school, clarifying next steps and leadership priorities.

Paula Maeker

We Really Do Mean All! Collectively Meeting the Diverse Needs of All Learners

The word *all*, by definition, does not exclude, so how do we meet the varied and unique needs of learners who are eligible for additional services? If we embrace the belief that *every student is our student*, then we must build systems and structures that deepen collaboration and shared responsibility for student success. The focus and purpose of our work remains clear: high expectations with equally high support, shared ownership, and instructional practices that ensure higher levels of learning for *all* students.

Designed for both general and special educators, this session examines the past and current realities of special education, reflects on practices that either support or hinder a culture of learning for all, and explores strategies for purposeful collaboration that address learner variability.

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.

Mark Onuscheck

Resilience at the Center: How PLC Cultures Strengthen Social-Emotional Learning

In a time when students are navigating unprecedented academic, social, and emotional demands, schools must move beyond isolated SEL initiatives and intentionally cultivate resilience as a core outcome of learning. In this session, Mark Onuscheck explores how strong PLC cultures can become powerful engines for building students' social-emotional skills—especially those that foster perseverance, adaptability, self-regulation, and a sense of belonging. Participants examine the foundational SEL capacities that underlie resilience and learn how collaborative adult practices directly shape students' ability to manage challenges, engage productively in learning, and grow through difficulty. Through a PLC lens, Mark highlights how schools can align beliefs, instructional practices, and data use to ensure that resilience is not left to chance but is intentionally developed in every classroom and for every student.

Participants can expect to:

- Explore how PLC structures and norms can intentionally support student resilience, ensuring SEL is embedded across classrooms rather than treated as an add-on.
- Investigate classroom environments and instructional practices that explicitly teach and reinforce SEL skills such as self-awareness, emotional regulation, persistence, and healthy risk taking.
- Examine the role of SEL data—including observation, reflection, and student voice—in strengthening school culture and guiding collective action toward student well-being and resilience.

Kyle Palmer

Measuring the Impact of Change: Defining Success and Confronting the Illusion of Motion

Schools today operate in a climate of relentless change, where new programs, technologies, and tools are constantly introduced with the promise of better outcomes. We call this phenomenon the illusion of motion. What's missing is a practical, evidence-informed approach that helps schools distinguish between what truly drives improvement and what simply adds noise. Kyle Palmer takes on that challenge by introducing the idea of measuring the effectiveness of

innovative practices and processes in the school setting to help leaders evaluate whether their innovations are genuinely producing meaningful outcomes or just more wasted motion. In a time of growing accountability and limited resources, Kyle offers both a rationale and a roadmap for creating lasting cultures of improvement, where innovation is purposeful, practical, and proven.

Participants in this session:

- More deeply understand and recognize the illusion of motion and how to confront it.
- Utilize tools provided to analyze readiness for a new innovation as well as better understand the thoughts and feelings of those navigating change efforts.
- Gain the ability to assess the effectiveness of school improvement initiatives and innovations by clarifying and measuring what success looks like.

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.

KEYNOTE

Luis F. Cruz

Resistance Is a Natural Byproduct of Implementing PLCs: How to Confront It and Win

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

Participants in this session:

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