

## Monday, July 20

6:30–8:00 a.m.	Registration and Continental Breakfast	Rooms TBD
8:00–9:45 a.m.	<b>Keynote</b> —William M. Ferriter <i>Decoding the DNA of Highly Effective PLCs: Using the Three Big Ideas to Build the Collaborative Foundation of Your School</i>	
9:45–10:00 a.m.	Break	
10:00–11:30 a.m.	<b>Breakout Sessions</b>	See pages 2–3.
11:30 a.m.–1:00 p.m.	Lunch (on your own)	
1:00–2:30 p.m.	<b>Breakout Sessions</b>	See pages 2–3.
2:30–2:45 p.m.	Break	
2:45–3:45 p.m.	<b>Keynote</b> —Heather Friziellie <i>Believe: Living, Learning, and Leading From the Inside Out</i>	

## Tuesday, July 21

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

## Wednesday, July 22

7:00–8:00 a.m.	Continental Breakfast	Rooms TBD
8:00–9:30 a.m.	<b>Breakout Sessions</b>	See pages 2–3.
9:30–9:45 a.m.	Break	
9:45–11:45 a.m.	<b>Keynote</b> —Luis F. Cruz <i>Resistance 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, July 20		Tuesday, July 21		Wednesday, July 22
	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.
<b>Tim Brown</b>	Becoming World Class Together: Aligning Instruction, Assessment, and Intervention Through Collective Commitments Room TBD	Creating Confident Learners Through Effective Feedback* Room TBD	Helping Students Believe They Can: Building Self-Efficacy Through Reflection and Goal Setting* Room TBD	Creating Confident Learners Through Effective Feedback Room TBD	Helping Students Believe They Can: Building Self-Efficacy Through Reflection and Goal Setting Room TBD
<b>Blake Clark</b>	Strengthening Collaboration and Culture Through Coaching* Room TBD	Empowering Students to Lead Their Own Learning* Room TBD	Leadership Solutions for Sustainable School Excellence and Personal Growth Room TBD	Strengthening Collaboration and Culture Through Coaching Room TBD	Empowering Students to Lead Their Own Learning Room TBD
<b>Luis F. Cruz</b>	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
<b>William M. Ferriter</b>	Examining the Right Work of Highly Effective Teacher Teams Room TBD	Understanding the Role of the Guiding Coalition in a PLC Room TBD	Raising the Bar and Closing the Gap: Designing Effective Secondary Intervention Periods Room TBD	From Isolation to Collaboration: Building Effective Teams for Singleton Teachers Room TBD	AI as a Thought Partner for Differentiation Room TBD
<b>Heather Friziellie</b>	Your Physical, Mental, and Relational Wellness: Thriving at Work <i>and</i> at Home! Room TBD	All Means All: Mindsets and Moves That Elevate Every Learner Room TBD	Raising the Bar and Closing the Gap: Whatever It Takes in Elementary Schools Room TBD	Braving Difficult Conversations Room TBD	Instructional Effectiveness for <i>All!</i> Room TBD

Presenter	Monday, July 20		Tuesday, July 21		Wednesday, July 22
	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.
<b>Anthony Muhammad</b>	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
<b>Maria Nielsen</b>	Show Me What Ya Got: Engagement Strategies to Keep the Pulse on Student Learning Room TBD	The 15-Day Challenge: Simplify and Energize Your PLC at Work* Room TBD	High-Impact ELA Strategies for Elementary Classrooms Room TBD	Help Your Team: From Hot Mess to On Fire Room TBD	The 15-Day Challenge: Simplify and Energize Your PLC at Work Room TBD
<b>Phillip Page</b>	From Promise to Practice: Ensuring a Guaranteed and Viable Curriculum in a PLC at Work Culture Room TBD	From Vision to Impact: How Districts Align, Support, and Monitor PLC at Work Success Room TBD	Celebrating in a PLC at Work: A Leader’s Guide to Building Collective Efficacy and High-Performing Collaborative Teams* Room TBD	Leveraging the Guiding Coalition in a PLC at Work Culture to Implement Change and Continuous Improvement Room TBD	Celebrating in a PLC at Work: A Leader’s Guide to Building Collective Efficacy and High-Performing Collaborative Teams Room TBD
<b>Mona Toncheff</b>	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	Activating the Keys of Formative Assessment to Create a Culture of Learning Room TBD	From Scores to Learning: Effective Grading Practices Room TBD

Agenda is subject to change.

# Session Descriptions—Day 1

## MORNING KEYNOTE

### William M. Ferriter

#### **Decoding the DNA of Highly Effective PLCs: Using the Three Big Ideas to Build the Collaborative Foundation of Your School**

In this session, William M. Ferriter dives deep into the heart of what it takes to create a thriving professional learning community. Much like the double helix of DNA, a school's mission, vision, values, and goals are tightly interwoven, forming the backbone of everything we do. Participants in this session discover how to craft a foundation that is both dynamic and adaptable—one that drives collaboration, fosters continuous learning, and nurtures a culture of professional growth, just as DNA serves as the blueprint for life itself.

Participants in this session:

- Understand how the DNA metaphor illustrates the foundational structure of effective PLCs.
- Recognize the critical roles mission and vision play in defining a PLC's culture and direction.
- Explore ways to strengthen collaboration and communication by aligning team efforts with the three big ideas of the PLC at Work process.

## MORNING BREAKOUT SESSIONS

### Tim Brown

#### **Becoming World Class Together: Aligning Instruction, Assessment, and Intervention Through Collective Commitments**

World-class teams don't assume alignment; they design it. When expectations for instruction, assessment, and intervention are clear and shared, students experience greater clarity and support. In this session, Tim Brown provides practical tools and structured processes for developing collective commitments that get teams on the same page and strengthen learning for all students.

Participants in this session:

- Analyze examples of effective collective commitments.
- Identify gaps or inconsistencies in current team practices.
- Draft or refine one to three collective commitments aligned to instruction.

## Blake Clark

### **Strengthening Collaboration and Culture Through Coaching**

Participants in this session explore practical strategies to empower new teachers through effective coaching practices that strengthen collaboration and foster a positive school culture. Blake Clark focuses on three key areas: instructional support, mental health advocacy, and systematic sustainability. Participants gain actionable tools and insights to build a culture of collaboration, ensuring every new teacher thrives in their role and contributes meaningfully to the school community.

Participants in this session:

- Deepen their understanding of how to mentor new teachers in implementing impactful instructional strategies and managing classrooms effectively.
- Learn approaches to address the mental health challenges faced by new educators, promoting resilience and well-being.
- Discover the value of systematic, schoolwide practices that create a nurturing and sustainable environment for both staff and students.

## 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.

## William M. Ferriter

### **Examining the Right Work of Highly Effective Teacher Teams**

In this session, William M. Ferriter examines why many collaborative teams struggle to see value in their work and how a lack of clarity around purpose often leads to frustration, inefficiency, and

skepticism. Bill explores a practical framework that defines the right work of collaborative teams as studying instruction together through recurring cycles of inquiry focused on essential standards. He emphasizes concrete tools and templates that help teams build shared clarity, analyze evidence of learning, and take action for students. Examples will demonstrate how AI tools can support teams in doing this work more consistently and with less effort.

Participants in this session:

- Explore a graphic organizer that clearly defines the right work of effective collaborative teams.
- Learn practical processes for engaging in cycles of inquiry, including unpacking essential standards, writing proficiency scales, developing assessments, and analyzing evidence of learning.
- Examine how AI tools can serve as thought partners that help teams complete the technical work of collaboration more consistently and intentionally.

## Heather Friziellie

### **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.

## 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.

## Maria Nielsen

### **Show Me What Ya Got: Engagement Strategies to Keep the Pulse on Student Learning**

Ready to turn up the energy in your classroom? In this session, Maria Nielsen helps teachers move beyond “sit and get” and into lessons where every student is thinking, responding, and showing what they know. Participants explore engaging, easy-to-implement strategies that keep the pulse on student learning from beginning to end.

Participants can expect to:

- Explore the *nifty-nine* high-impact teaching practices.
- Practice engagement strategies that check for understanding in real time.
- Learn the difference between single-response questions, open-ended questions, and engagement prompts.
- Gain ready-to-use ideas that boost participation, spark thinking, and make learning visible

## Phillip Page

### **From Promise to Practice: Ensuring a Guaranteed and Viable Curriculum in a PLC at Work Culture**

A guaranteed and viable curriculum is a foundational commitment of a PLC at Work culture and the promise made to every student. Phillip Page examines how collaborative teams and school leadership work together to identify the most essential learning and ensure it is taught, assessed, and learned by all students. This session explores the shared responsibilities of teacher teams, guiding coalitions, and building leaders in maintaining focus, coherence, and accountability for essential learning.

Participants can expect to:

- Examine the characteristics of a high-functioning collaborative team equipped to ensure all students are proficient in essential learning.
- Explore how to create learning targets and ladders of progression to intentionally respond to student learning.
- Study an assessment scorecard that serves as an academic contract for students and teachers to use for additional proof of practice to improve learning.

## **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.

## **AFTERNOON BREAKOUT SESSIONS**

### **Tim Brown**

#### **Creating Confident Learners Through Effective Feedback**

Although feedback is one of the most powerful influences on student learning, not all feedback has the same impact. The way we respond to student work can either build clarity and confidence or unintentionally create confusion and discouragement. Participants in this session explore research-based characteristics of effective feedback and examine how grading practices strengthen student learning.

Participants in this session:

- Apply the six keys of effective feedback to real classroom examples.
- Explore Thomas Guskey's four conditions for making grades meaningful.
- Analyze how their own feedback or grading examples align with these principles.

## Blake Clark

### **Empowering Students to Lead Their Own Learning**

Participants in this session unlock the power of student rubrics and learning progressions to elevate their teaching practices and achieve sustained student success. Blake Clark provides educators with the knowledge and tools to design and implement strategies that foster higher levels of learning for all students. Participants develop a clear understanding of how to apply standards-based roadmaps to drive meaningful, measurable learning outcomes and support every student in reaching their highest potential.

Participants in this session:

- Explore how well-structured rubrics provide equitable opportunities for student growth, ensuring that all learners can thrive academically regardless of ability level.
- Gain actionable insights into vertical alignment strategies that build on prior knowledge and skills, fostering deeper connections and higher achievement across grade levels.

## 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.

## William M. Ferriter

### **Understanding the Role of the Guiding Coalition in a PLC**

Guiding coalitions are the backbone of any thriving professional learning community, ensuring that collaborative teams stay focused on the right work. Participants in this session explore the critical role of guiding coalitions, learn strategies for supporting teams at every stage of their development, and examine practical tools and resources to nurture collaboration.

Participants in this session:

- Examine the role of the guiding coalition in a PLC at Work.
- Learn about supporting collaborative teams at different stages of development.
- Discover specific tools and processes that guiding coalitions can use to support the development of collaborative teams.

## Heather Friziellie

### **All Means All: Mindsets and Moves That Elevate Every Learner**

This session is intentionally designed for both general and special educators who are working to ensure every student, without exception, experiences high levels of learning.

Together, participants explore the key ideas from *Yes We Can: General and Special Educators Collaborating in a Professional Learning Community* (Solution Tree, 2016) and its companion text, *All Means All: Essential Actions for Leveraging Yes We Can!* (Solution Tree, 2025). Participants examine the personal and systemic beliefs that shape our work, assess how aligned systems strengthen collaboration between general and special educators, and identify inclusive practices that make all *truly* mean *all*.

Participants in this session:

- Understand the six core principles from *Yes We Can!* and *All Means All* and their role in maximizing learning for every student.
- Examine personal and systemic beliefs that influence our work with students.
- Reflect on current practices to identify alignment gaps and needed shifts.
- Develop clear next steps to strengthen shared ownership and collective commitment in the PLC process to elevate 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.

## Maria Nielsen

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

In this session, Maria Nielsen helps participants establish, reboot, or reignite their collaborative teacher teams. In just 15 days, participants can simplify the work, clarify priorities, and create momentum that leads to real results for students. Schools across the nation and around the world are using this powerful seven-step process to turn collaboration into meaningful action and good intentions into guaranteed results.

Participants in this session:

- Explore real-life scenarios, implement ready-to-use strategies, and clarify the true work of collaborative teams.
- Learn a simple, actionable seven-step process for creating a guaranteed and viable curriculum.
- Gain a clear roadmap, renewed energy, alignment, and next steps to begin the 15-Day Challenge immediately.

## Phillip Page

### **From Vision to Impact: How Districts Align, Support, and Monitor PLC at Work Success**

Learn how district leaders can actively align priorities, support school teams, and monitor progress to drive effective PLC at Work implementation across all schools. Phillip Page provides concrete strategies, tools, and guiding questions district teams can use immediately to strengthen coherence, ensure accountability, and accelerate continuous improvement for every school and every student.

Participants in this session:

- Examine how districts can align vision, priorities, and expectations across all schools.
- Establish structures that provide meaningful support for school-based teams.
- Explore effective progress-monitoring systems to assess impact and guide continuous improvement.

## 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.

## AFTERNOON KEYNOTE

### Heather Friziellie

#### **Believe: Living, Learning, and Leading From the Inside Out**

Beliefs shape outcomes. In this session, Heather Friziellie explores how what educators believe directly influences their actions and outcomes. Through powerful stories, interactive reflections, and practical strategies, participants uncover how shifting beliefs can spark resilience, unleash potential, and strengthen collective efficacy. Participants are inspired and equipped to ask (and answer) the critical question: What do *you* believe?

Participants in this session:

- Explore a framework for identifying, examining, and shaping beliefs and aligned actions to lead to more positive outcomes.
- Commit to one intentional belief shift that creates a positive ripple effect.

# 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

#### **Helping Students Believe They Can: Building Self-Efficacy Through Reflection and Goal Setting**

Students are more motivated and engaged when they believe their effort leads to growth. Research consistently shows that self-efficacy—a student’s belief in their ability to succeed—is one of the strongest predictors of persistence and achievement. Participants in this session examine the essential conditions that strengthen student self-efficacy through purposeful goal setting and structured reflection. They explore practical routines, tools, and team-developed strategies that help students set meaningful goals, monitor their progress, and reflect on their growth.

Participants in this session:

- Explore the connection between self-efficacy, motivation, and student achievement.
- Identify key characteristics of effective goal setting and reflection practices.
- Analyze examples of student goal-setting tools and reflection protocols.

## **Blake Clark**

### **Leadership Solutions for Sustainable School Excellence and Personal Growth**

Effective leadership requires more than just strategies and vision; it demands emotional intelligence, resilience, and personal growth. In this session, Blake Clark provides leaders with the tools and insights needed to thrive in the face of challenges while staying true to their values and objectives. Participants enhance their leadership capacity, build resilience, and find clarity in their role as a leader, empowering them to make a lasting impact.

Participants in this session:

- Uncover the key questions every leader must address to guide their teams with clarity and purpose.
- Learn practical approaches to navigating the complexities of leadership roles, turning challenges into opportunities for growth.
- Discover how to make sound, objective decisions without being overwhelmed by outcomes, ensuring a balanced and focused leadership approach.

## **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.

## **William M. Ferriter**

### **Raising the Bar and Closing the Gap: Designing Effective Secondary Intervention Periods**

Creating time during the school day for targeted interventions is critical for ensuring every student masters essential grade-level standards. In this session, William M. Ferriter explores the key steps secondary schools can take to develop flexible intervention periods that provide timely reteaching of grade-level essentials without sacrificing access to extension opportunities. Participants discover strategies for addressing scheduling challenges, avoiding common

implementation mistakes, and designing intervention periods targeting grade-level essential standards that work for all students.

Participants in this session:

- Analyze the characteristics of effective secondary intervention periods that are designed to provide students with additional time and support to master grade-level essentials.
- Identify strategies for balancing skill-focused interventions with extension opportunities for students who are already proficient.
- Develop actionable steps to implement or refine intervention periods that target mastery of grade-level essentials.

## Heather Friziellie

### **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.

## Maria Nielsen

### High-Impact ELA Strategies for Elementary Classrooms

In this session, Maria Nielsen guides elementary educators through time-tested ELA strategies that make standards clear and instruction intentional. Teachers explore how reading and writing work hand in hand to deepen comprehension and ensure on-grade-level reading.

Participants in this session:

- Practice five proven reading strategies that boost reading fluency and comprehension.
- Understand how reading and writing connect to accelerate learning.
- Leave with practical tools and graphic organizers to support student writing.

## Phillip Page

### Celebrating in a PLC at Work: A Leader's Guide to Building Collective Efficacy and High-Performing Collaborative Teams

What leaders choose to celebrate shapes culture. Celebrating practices aligned to the three big ideas of PLC at Work inspires collective responsibility, deepens a focus on learning, and drives results that benefit every teacher and student. Phillip Page explores how intentional and meaningful recognition of the *right work* fuels a powerful culture shift and strengthens collaborative teams.

Participants in this session:

- Discuss meaningful celebrations that recognize all staff who engage in the *right work*.
- Establish celebration strategies that lead to high-functioning collaborative teams.
- Explore practical tools to celebrate the small wins in leadership and in the three big ideas of a PLC.

## 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.

## AFTERNOON BREAKOUT SESSIONS

### Tim Brown

#### **Creating Confident Learners Through Effective Feedback**

Although feedback is one of the most powerful influences on student learning, not all feedback has the same impact. The way we respond to student work can either build clarity and confidence or unintentionally create confusion and discouragement. Participants in this session explore research-based characteristics of effective feedback and examine how grading practices strengthen student learning.

Participants in this session:

- Apply the six keys of effective feedback to real classroom examples.
- Explore Thomas Guskey's four conditions for making grades meaningful.
- Analyze how their own feedback or grading examples align with these principles.

### Blake Clark

#### **Strengthening Collaboration and Culture Through Coaching**

Participants in this session explore practical strategies to empower new teachers through effective coaching practices that strengthen collaboration and foster a positive school culture. Blake Clark focuses on three key areas: instructional support, mental health advocacy, and systematic sustainability. Participants gain actionable tools and insights to build a culture of collaboration, ensuring every new teacher thrives in their role and contributes meaningfully to the school community.

Participants in this session:

- Deepen their understanding of how to mentor new teachers in implementing impactful instructional strategies and managing classrooms effectively.
- Learn approaches to address the mental health challenges faced by new educators, promoting resilience and well-being.
- Discover the value of systematic, schoolwide practices that create a nurturing and sustainable environment for both staff and students.

## 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.

## William M. Ferriter

### **From Isolation to Collaboration: Building Effective Teams for Singleton Teachers**

Collaboration is a cornerstone of effective teaching, but for singleton teachers and educators in small schools who don't share a curriculum, traditional PLC structures often make meaningful collaboration feel out of reach. William M. Ferriter challenges the idea that collaboration must be built around a shared curriculum and instead makes the case that singleton teachers can do powerful collaborative work by studying the skills and dispositions students need to be successful, regardless of subject area. Bill explores three practical teaming structures—vertical, interdisciplinary, and electronic—and shows how using these structures to focus collaborative inquiry on skills, dispositions, and instructional practices can create authentic opportunities for shared learning for every teacher.

Participants in this session:

- Identify the structural and practical challenges that limit collaboration for singleton teachers.
- Explore collaborative team structures that allow teachers to study, teach, and assess essential skills and dispositions together.
- Begin developing an actionable plan for integrating singleton teachers into meaningful PLC work.

## Heather Friziellie

### **Braving Difficult Conversations**

All leaders face situations in which difficult conversations must occur to ensure necessary progress and improvement. Participants in this session define crucial conversations and practice engaging in both sides of the dialogue to build toolboxes and increase comfort levels with this task moving forward.

Participants in this session:

- Understand the *what* and *why* of a brave conversation.
- Learn about essential steps for having brave conversations.
- Practice these steps during a structured activity, taking time to reflect and plan for action moving forward.

## 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).

## Maria Nielsen

### **Help Your Team: From Hot Mess to On Fire**

Every team hits a rough patch. The question is — what happens next?

As teachers move toward becoming truly interdependent teams, challenges are inevitable. This engaging session helps educators recognize common team struggles and shift their thinking and practices to ensure high levels of learning for every student. Participants examine the habits of highly effective teams, analyze real-world scenarios, and identify clear strategies to move their team forward with purpose and momentum.

Participants in this session:

- Identify common challenges that limit a team's effectiveness.
- Develop strategies to address obstacles through norms, breach of norms, and collective commitments.

- Leave with practical tools and renewed confidence to move your team from stuck to strong — and from hot mess to on fire.

## Phillip Page

### **Leveraging the Guiding Coalition in a PLC at Work Culture to Implement Change and Continuous Improvement**

A sustainable PLC at Work culture depends on the strength of a guiding coalition. Drawing from *Learning by Doing* (Solution Tree, 2024) and John Kotter's research, Phillip Page explores why meaningful culture shifts cannot be led by a single individual but must be owned by a collective group of committed leaders and staff. Participants examine the purpose, composition, and responsibilities of effective district or school guiding coalitions and how these teams build collective efficacy to lead change. Attendees gain guiding questions and practical considerations to intentionally design or refine a guiding coalition that meets the unique needs of their district or school.

Participants in this session:

- Discuss the six roles and responsibilities of the guiding coalition members.
- Establish success criteria for an effective guiding coalition to build the necessary collective efficacy in the PLC process.
- Explore practical tools to progress monitor results and provide intentional and individualized professional learning to schools and collaborative teams.

## Mona Toncheff

### **Activating the Keys of Formative Assessment to Create a Culture of Learning**

Knowing whether students have learned cannot be left to intuition or end-of-unit grades. In this session, Mona Toncheff focuses on the intentional use of common assessments as evidence of learning throughout a unit of instruction. Collaborative teams view assessments as a continuous, cyclical process that are used to monitor learning, surface student thinking, and inform instructional decisions.

Participants learn how to:

- Design common assessments aligned to learning targets and success criteria.
- Use assessment evidence to make timely instructional adjustments and determine next steps for learning.
- Provide meaningful feedback that supports student learning and ownership.
- Apply practical tools and protocols to strengthen instruction, promote consistency across classrooms, and keep learning at the center throughout a unit.

# Session Descriptions—Day 3

## BREAKOUT SESSIONS

### Tim Brown

#### **Helping Students Believe They Can: Building Self-Efficacy Through Reflection and Goal Setting**

Students are more motivated and engaged when they believe their effort leads to growth. Research consistently shows that self-efficacy—a student’s belief in their ability to succeed—is one of the strongest predictors of persistence and achievement. Participants in this session examine the essential conditions that strengthen student self-efficacy through purposeful goal setting and structured reflection. They explore practical routines, tools, and team-developed strategies that help students set meaningful goals, monitor their progress, and reflect on their growth.

Participants in this session:

- Explore the connection between self-efficacy, motivation, and student achievement.
- Identify key characteristics of effective goal setting and reflection practices.
- Analyze examples of student goal-setting tools and reflection protocols.

### Blake Clark

#### **Empowering Students to Lead Their Own Learning**

Participants in this session unlock the power of student rubrics and learning progressions to elevate their teaching practices and achieve sustained student success. Blake Clark provides educators with the knowledge and tools to design and implement strategies that foster higher levels of learning for all students. Participants develop a clear understanding of how to apply standards-based roadmaps to drive meaningful, measurable learning outcomes and support every student in reaching their highest potential.

Participants in this session:

- Explore how well-structured rubrics provide equitable opportunities for student growth, ensuring that all learners can thrive academically regardless of ability level.
- Gain actionable insights into vertical alignment strategies that build on prior knowledge and skills, fostering deeper connections and higher achievement across grade levels.

### 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.

## **William M. Ferriter**

### **AI as a Thought Partner for Differentiation**

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

Differentiation is widely recognized as an essential classroom practice, yet many teachers struggle to implement it consistently because of the time, energy, and planning demands it requires. This session explores how artificial intelligence tools can help remove those barriers by supporting the thoughtful study of standards, instructional tasks, and student demonstrations of learning. Rather than replacing professional judgment, AI is positioned as a thinking partner that helps teachers design differentiated pathways that maintain grade-level rigor while responding to learner needs. William M. Ferriter explores practical examples of how AI tools can support both targeted reteaching and meaningful extensions by making differentiation more manageable and sustainable in real classrooms.

Participants in this session:

- Develop a clear understanding of what differentiation is and why it often feels difficult to implement consistently.
- Explore practical ways to use AI tools as thought partners when planning differentiated instruction tied to essential standards.
- Identify strategies for using AI to support both reteaching and extension through alternative demonstrations of mastery without lowering expectations.

## **Heather Frizellie**

### **Instructional Effectiveness for All!**

When we dig into the research, it's pretty easy to identify two things: We can't keep doing what we've always done and expect to get better results, and there are some clear high-leverage strategies we can employ to lead to higher levels of learning for *all* students. In this session,

Heather Friziellie focuses on the following through the lens of learning standards and increasing student proficiency:

- Building an understanding of key research findings
- Exploring five essential instructional strategies that—regardless of grade level or content area—*will* help more learners learn at higher levels than ever before
- Beginning to develop an action plan based on the learning

## **Anthony Muhammad**

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

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

Participants can expect to:

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

## **Maria Nielsen**

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

In this session, Maria Nielsen helps participants establish, reboot, or reignite their collaborative teacher teams. In just 15 days, participants can simplify the work, clarify priorities, and create momentum that leads to real results for students. Schools across the nation and around the world are using this powerful seven-step process to turn collaboration into meaningful action and good intentions into guaranteed results.

Participants in this session:

- Explore real-life scenarios, implement ready-to-use strategies, and clarify the true work of collaborative teams.
- Learn a simple, actionable seven-step process for creating a guaranteed and viable curriculum.
- Gain a clear roadmap, renewed energy, alignment, and next steps to begin the 15-Day Challenge immediately.

## Phillip Page

### **Celebrating in a PLC at Work: A Leader's Guide to Building Collective Efficacy and High-Performing Collaborative Teams**

What leaders choose to celebrate shapes culture. Celebrating practices aligned to the three big ideas of PLC at Work inspires collective responsibility, deepens a focus on learning, and drives results that benefit every teacher and student. Phillip Page explores how intentional and meaningful recognition of the *right work* fuels a powerful culture shift and strengthens collaborative teams.

Participants in this session:

- Discuss meaningful celebrations that recognize all staff who engage in the *right work*.
- Establish celebration strategies that lead to high-functioning collaborative teams.
- Explore practical tools to celebrate the small wins in leadership and in the three big ideas of a PLC.

## 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.

## 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.