

Monday, July 20

6:30–8:00 a.m.	Registration and Continental Breakfast	Rooms TBD
8:00–9:45 a.m.	Keynote —Mike Mattos <i>All In! Digging Deeper Into Becoming a True Professional Learning Community</i>	
9:45–10:00 a.m.	Break	
10:00–11:30 a.m.	Breakout Sessions	See pages 2–3.
11:30 a.m.–1:00 p.m.	Lunch (on your own)	
1:00–2:30 p.m.	Breakout Sessions	See pages 2–3.
2:30–2:45 p.m.	Break	
2:45–3:45 p.m.	Keynote —Bob Sonju <i>Right Here, Right Now: The Power of Educators Learning Together</i>	

Tuesday, July 21

7:00–8:00 a.m.	Registration and Continental Breakfast	Rooms TBD
8:00–9:45 a.m.	Keynote —Brandon Jones <i>The Keystones of Exceptional Schools</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, July 22

7:00–8:00 a.m.	Continental Breakfast	Rooms TBD
8:00–9:30 a.m.	Breakout Sessions	See pages 2–3.
9:30–9:45 a.m.	Break	
9:45–11:45 a.m.	Keynote —Regina Stephens Owens <i>Courageous Capacity: Sustaining a Culture of Care and Competency</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.
Kristen Bordonaro	The Collaborative IEP: From Compliance to Collective Responsibility Room TBD	Using Learning Progressions to Go To and Through the Standard Room TBD	Aligning Academics, Behavior, and SEL Across Tier 1, Intervention, and Special Education* Room TBD	All Means All: Creating Guaranteed, Viable Learning for Every Student Room TBD	Aligning Academics, Behavior, and SEL Across Tier 1, Intervention, and Special Education Room TBD
Brandon Jones	Boulders, Rocks, and Butterflies: Simplifying the First Critical Question for Learning Room TBD	Abandoning Archaic Practices: A Radical Hope for the Next Generation* Room TBD	School Culture That's Steady in the Storm Room TBD	Develop Without Defeating: Supporting One Another in Continuous Improvement Room TBD	Abandoning Archaic Practices: A Radical Hope for the Next Generation Room TBD
Mike Mattos	Developing and Supporting High-Performing Teacher Teams Room TBD	The Four Pearls of Effective Interventions Room TBD	Raising the Bar and Closing the Gap: Whatever It Takes in Elementary Schools Room TBD	Behavior Solutions: Leveraging the PLC at Work Process to Teach Essential Behaviors Room TBD	Guiding Principles for Principals: Tips and Tools for Leading the PLC at Work Process Room TBD
Michael L. McWilliams	From Groups to Teams: The Visible and Invisible Work of Highly Effective Teams* Room TBD	From Roadblocks to Results: Navigating Conflict, Conquering Resistance, and Building Trust* Room TBD	Culture by Design: Strategic Actions That Create the Conditions for Learning for All 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
Peter Noonan	<i>Coming soon!</i> Room TBD	<i>Coming soon!</i> Room TBD	<i>Coming soon!</i> Room TBD	<i>Coming soon!</i> Room TBD	<i>Coming soon!</i> Room TBD
Regina Stephens Owens	The Why Effect 2.0: Intentional Systems Produce Inspirational Cultures Room TBD	From Overload to Impact: A Data Discussion for Educators and Instructional Leaders Room TBD	Your Physical, Mental, and Relational Wellness: Thriving at Work and at Home! Room TBD	Different by Design: Small, Virtual, Innovative, and Singleton PLCs Room TBD	Educators Are Learners, Too! Stop Telling, Start Teaching 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.
Bob Sonju	The Genius in The Room: Leveraging Team Strengths for Collective Learning and Growth* Room TBD	The Leadership Lens: Leadership Actions to Support the Work of Collaborative Teams Room TBD	Collaboration Scene Investigation (CSI): Examine the Evidence and Crack the Code of Effective Collaboration Room TBD	The Genius in The Room: Leveraging Team Strengths for Collective Learning and Growth Room TBD	One Degree Off: How Small Drifts in PLC Work Lead Teams Away From Student Learning Room TBD
Tesha Ferriby Thomas	Navigating Tiered Coaching in a PLC at Work Room TBD	Give Me the Keys! Tools That Turbocharge Team Collaboration Room TBD	Hot HITS for PLC Success: Unleashing High-Impact Teaching Strategies* Room TBD	Read It, Write It, Prove It: How Purposeful Nonfiction Literacy Accelerates Student Learning Room TBD	Hot HITS for PLC Success: Unleashing High-Impact Teaching Strategies Room TBD
Eric Twadell	Social and Emotional Learning in a PLC at Work Room TBD	New to AI? Facilitating Better Teaching and Learning With AI Tools Room TBD	Raising the Bar and Closing the Gap: Whatever It Takes in Secondary Schools Room TBD	Leadership Matters: Exploring the Habits of Highly Effective District, School, and Team Leaders Room TBD	Grading for Learning: Evidence-Based Grading and Reporting in a PLC at Work Room TBD

Agenda is subject to change.

Session Descriptions—Day 1

MORNING KEYNOTE

Mike Mattos

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

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

Participants in this session:

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

MORNING BREAKOUT SESSIONS

Kristen Bordonaro

The Collaborative IEP: From Compliance to Collective Responsibility

Grounded in *The Collaborative IEP* (Solution Tree, 2024), this session reframes the IEP as a living instructional tool rather than a compliance document owned by one individual. Kristin Bordonaro examines how collaborative PLAAFPs, standards-aligned goals, clearly defined roles, and intentional progress monitoring move teams beyond compliance toward life-changing special education services that meaningfully impact student learning, independence, and long-term outcomes. This session addresses PLC essential questions one and two by clarifying expectations, strengthening instructional response, and ensuring teams adjust instruction when students are not making progress.

Participants in this session:

- Explain the role of the IEP within a PLC at Work framework.
- Differentiate between compliance-driven and instructionally driven IEP practices.
- Analyze a PLAAFP and IEP goals for instructional clarity.
- Translate IEP goals into life-changing daily instructional practice.
- Identify one actionable instructional adjustment or system-level shift that strengthens shared ownership and improves meaningful student outcomes.

Brandon Jones

Boulders, Rocks, and Butterflies: Simplifying the First Critical Question for Learning

The best schools and classrooms teach less to mastery and instead focus on the most essential skills and dispositions every student must learn in each course and grade level to be prepared for the next grade level and beyond. In a professional learning community, we address this complex challenge with a simple question: What do we want each student to learn? Participants in this session examine the work of Rick DuFour, Robert J. Marzano, Rick Stiggins, Douglas Reeves, and others to become experts in the process of identifying and clarifying what is most essential for students to learn.

Participants can expect to:

- Examine the importance of PLC question one and why it is critical to the team cycle.
- Explore various practical ways to identify shared essential learning outcomes.
- Become experts in clarifying essential standards by target, prerequisite skills, and proficiency.

Mike Mattos

Developing and Supporting High-Performing Teacher Teams

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

Participants learn how to:

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

Michael L. McWilliams

From Groups to Teams: The Visible and Invisible Work of Highly Effective Teams

Many PLC teams have structures in place yet still struggle to produce meaningful results. The missing piece is often not what teams are doing, but how they are working together. In this session, Michael L. McWilliams explores the visible work of effective PLC teams—purpose, evidence, planning, and accountability—alongside the often overlooked invisible work of trust, productive conflict, and shared ownership. Participants examine the practices and conditions that distinguish teams that merely meet from teams that consistently impact student learning. Through reflection, real-world scenarios, and practical tools, participants gain a clearer understanding of what highly effective teams do differently and how to intentionally design both the structure and culture necessary for sustained success.

Participants can expect to:

- Distinguish between groups and highly effective PLC teams using research-based indicators.
- Identify the visible practices that drive effective team functioning and results.
- Recognize the invisible relational conditions that support trust, productive conflict, and accountability.
- Assess their own team's effectiveness and pinpoint specific areas for growth.

Peter Noonan

Coming soon!

Regina Stephens Owens

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

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

Participants in this session:

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

Bob Sonju

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

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

Participants in this session:

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

Tesha Ferriby Thomas

Navigating Tiered Coaching in a PLC at Work

Coaching is a journey: rarely linear and always responsive to changing conditions. Tesha Ferriby Thomas explores The Coach's Compass, a practical framework for navigating tiered coaching within a professional learning community. Designed for instructional coaches and school leaders, this session focuses on making intentional coaching decisions that support individuals while strengthening team-based practices.

Participants in this session:

- Understand how The Coach's Compass aligns individual coaching with PLC practices.
- Identify coaching moves that build trust, clarify goals, and respond to varying needs.
- Apply tiered coaching strategies to authentic challenges.
- Gain practical tools to guide their next coaching steps.

Eric Twadell

Social and Emotional Learning in a PLC at Work

In most schools, social and emotional learning (SEL) is little more than canned programs that highlight cliché-driven posters and flyers. Schools that take SEL seriously learn quickly that we can teach and assess SEL just like any other subject and content area. In this session, Eric Twadell explores the CASEL social-emotional learning competencies and develops strategies and best practices for teaching and learning.

Participants in this session:

- Explore the CASEL social-emotional learning competencies—self-management, self-awareness, social awareness, responsible decision-making, and relationship skills.
- Learn strategies for the explicit assessment of these competencies.
- Understand how these competencies can impact student learning.
- Learn how to assess the impact of social and emotional learning instruction.

AFTERNOON BREAKOUT SESSIONS

Kristen Bordonaro

Using Learning Progressions to Go To and Through the Standard

Teachers are often caught between grade-level standards and students who are not yet ready to access them independently. This session addresses that tension by exploring how learning progressions serve as the bridge between the standard and the learner. Kristin Bordonaro shows how to unpack essential standards, identify prerequisite skills, and design instruction that moves students to and through the standard without watering it down. Kristin provides educators with a clear pathway for differentiation, scaffolding, and specially designed instruction that maintains a guaranteed and viable curriculum for all learners.

Participants in this session:

- Clarify the difference between lowering the standard and scaffolding toward the standard, explaining how learning progressions protect rigor while increasing access for all learners.
- Explain how learning progressions function as the bridge between grade-level standards and diverse learners within a PLC at Work framework.
- Unpack an essential grade-level standard to identify the critical learning all students must ultimately demonstrate, regardless of starting point.
- Design a clear learning progression that identifies prerequisite skills and conceptual understandings and outlines how students move to and through the standard over time without creating alternative goals.
- Apply a “to and through the standard” lens to align instructional strategies, scaffolds, and supports and leave with one actionable learning progression that can be immediately implemented in classrooms, teams, or PLCs.

Brandon Jones

Abandoning Archaic Practices: A Radical Hope for the Next Generation

An archaic practice is defined as any embedded practice that is not leading to higher levels of learning. Our students’ values, preferred methods of learning, and factors that motivate them have changed through the years. Has our system for reaching, supporting, and teaching changed with them? Unfortunately, for too many schools, the answer is a resounding no. A typical response is to continue piling more responsibilities and expectations on educators. Instead of learning together and implementing research-backed strategies, we chase the next new program and initiative, hoping it will save the ship from sinking. In doing so, initiative fatigue quickly sets in, and even those with the best intentions begin to act out of rote compliance.

Thankfully, we have the authority and the ability to improve our course of action—to begin prioritizing a limited number of policies and practices that directly improve the motivation, preparation, and learning of our students. To make room for these best strategies, we must also identify and remove the archaic practices that are demotivating students and hindering learning so the healing process in our schools can begin.

Participants can expect to:

- Compare the learning needs of different generations of students.
- Examine a systematic process for identifying, removing, and replacing archaic practices that are not leading to higher levels of learning.
- Explore common archaic practices in leadership, teaching, and learning that, if abandoned, will improve the motivation and preparation of students.

Mike Mattos

The Four Pearls of Effective Interventions

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

Participants in this session:

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

Michael L. McWilliams

From Roadblocks to Results: Navigating Conflict, Conquering Resistance, and Building Trust

What separates highly effective teams from struggling ones is not the absence of challenges but the ability to address them with clarity, urgency, and trust while keeping student learning at the center. In this session, Michael L. McWilliams equips participants with practical strategies to navigate conflict, address resistance, and respond to common team roadblocks that can easily derail collaboration and stall performance. Participants examine real team scenarios, distinguish between productive and unproductive conflict, and learn how to build shared commitments that sustain trust and accountability over time. Michael emphasizes actionable tools that can be applied immediately in collaborative meetings and leadership conversations.

Participants can expect to:

- Identify common roadblocks and sources of resistance that limit team effectiveness.
- Distinguish between productive conflict that strengthens outcomes and unproductive conflict that erodes trust.
- Apply practical strategies to address conflict, build consensus, and sustain trust.

Peter Noonan

Coming soon!

Regina Stephens Owens

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

In a time of intense focus on data, it's essential to build a rich culture of learning through dialogue and data, shifting from deficit thinking to a data mindset. Participants in this session discover practical ways to foster this culture, leverage varied data types, and boost team capacity

for high levels of learning for all. Regina Stephens Owens equips instructional leaders to turn data into a catalyst for continuous growth and impact.

Participants learn:

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

Bob Sonju

The Leadership Lens: Leadership Actions to Support the Work of Collaborative Teams

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

Participants in this session:

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

Tesha Ferriby Thomas

Give Me the Keys! Tools That Turbocharge Team Collaboration

In this session, Tesha Ferriby Thomas reveals the keys to supercharging collaborative team meetings. This dynamic exploration of tools to enhance team collaboration equips attendees for immediate implementation and lasting impact in their schools.

Participants can expect to:

- Uncover the five key elements crucial for enhancing team meetings.
- Engage in hands-on activities to deepen their understanding and application of these elements.
- Strategically identify next steps to elevate the effectiveness of collaborative teams.

Eric Twadell

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

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

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

AFTERNOON KEYNOTE

Bob Sonju

Right Here, Right Now: The Power of Educators Learning Together

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

Participants in this session:

- Gain a clear understanding of the four critical questions of a PLC and how they guide effective collaboration.
- Explore research-based practices that simplify their work while dramatically improving student learning outcomes.
- Learn simple and doable strategies to streamline collective practices.

Session Descriptions—Day 2

KEYNOTE

Brandon Jones

The keystones of Exceptional Schools

A *keystone* is defined as a central principle of a larger system that holds everything else together. In a time when our students need us the most, educators face more challenges than ever before. Rapidly changing expectations, expanding needs, and stress are leading many teachers and administrators to feel the mountains in front of them are just too tall to climb. Yet, in spite of the difficulties, you are here. Something in you knows better times are possible—for you and for the kids you serve. What critical tenets will pull it all together, solidify, and sustain the seemingly brittle system? Thankfully, there is resounding hope for you, your colleagues, and your community of learners!

In this session, Brandon Jones outlines critical components that high-functioning professional learning communities put in place to become the schools they were meant to be. Together, we stand—resolute!

MORNING BREAKOUT SESSIONS

Kristen Bordonaro

Aligning Academics, Behavior, and SEL Across Tier 1, Intervention, and Special Education

Students often experience academics, behavior, SEL, intervention, and special education as separate systems with different expectations, language, and priorities. This session focuses on instructional coherence within a PLC at Work framework. Kristin Bordonaro examines how Tier 1 instruction and shared expectations serve as the foundation for both academic and behavioral success and how misalignment across settings creates barriers to learning.

Participants in this session:

- Identify points of fragmentation between academics, behavior, SEL, intervention, and special education, and explain how those disconnects impact student access, engagement, and outcomes.
- Clarify the role of Tier 1 instruction and shared expectations as the foundation for both academic learning and behavioral success within a PLC at Work framework.
- Use an already-unpacked essential standard and shared behavioral or SEL expectations to align learning targets, routines, and supports across Tier 1 instruction, intervention, and special education.

- Design aligned instructional and behavioral supports that strengthen Tier 1 instruction while appropriately intensifying support through intervention and special education without creating parallel systems.
- Apply a practical coherence check to identify one system-level adjustment that improves alignment of academics, behavior, and SEL within existing structures.

Brandon Jones

School Culture That's Steady in the Storm

Reforming schools to become professional learning communities takes more than managing, meeting, and exchanging mixed messages. It requires that staff examine their culture: the foundational beliefs and behaviors on which they stand. Building (or *rebuilding*) a healthy school culture can seem like a daunting task, especially if significant resistance is encountered early in the change process. It is significantly easier to purchase a new online resource, change the way we dismiss students to the bus line, or schedule themed “dress-up” days than it is to influence the thinking or behaviors of others, which is all the more reason we must learn practical strategies for dropping an anchor in what matters most for our school, staff, and students. In this session, the work of Anthony Muhammad, Luis Cruz, Rick DuFour, and Brandon Jones is used to create a practical plan for developing a culture that is unshakable.

Participants can expect to:

- Examine how to identify the components of healthy and toxic school cultures.
- Identify the types of beliefs and behaviors in which we should anchor our culture.
- Identify who is responsible for culture development.
- Determine strategies for influencing others to move closer to your desired culture.

Mike Mattos

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.

Michael L. McWilliams

Culture by Design: Strategic Actions That Create the Conditions for Learning for All

In a PLC at Work, culture serves as the invisible force that shapes how educators collaborate, how decisions are prioritized, and whether collective efforts remain centered on learning for all students. It influences what teams value, how they respond to challenges, and the degree to which responsibility for student success is truly shared. In this session, Michael L. McWilliams examines the difference between climate and culture and explores the cultural conditions necessary for a PLC at Work to thrive. Through practical, mission-driven strategies, educators learn how to intentionally build and sustain a healthy school culture that supports collaboration, collective responsibility, and continuous improvement. Participants gain actionable strategies to strengthen their school culture and create the conditions necessary for high levels of learning for all students.

Participants can expect to:

- Distinguish between climate and culture and explain the role each plays in a PLC at Work.
- Analyze current cultural practices to determine their alignment with a PLC at Work framework.
- Apply practical strategies to intentionally design and sustain a healthy, mission-driven school culture.

Peter Noonan

Coming soon!

Regina Stephens Owens

Your Physical, Mental, and Relational Wellness: Thriving at Work *and* at Home!

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

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

Participants can expect to:

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

Bob Sonju

Collaboration Scene Investigation (CSI): Examine the Evidence and Crack the Code of Effective Collaboration

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

Participants in this session:

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

Tesha Ferriby Thomas

Hot HITS for PLC Success: Unleashing High-Impact Teaching Strategies

Tesha Ferriby Thomas unveils high-impact teaching strategies that enhance student learning. This session delves into the groundbreaking research of Marzano and Hattie, exploring instructional strategies that have been proven to significantly elevate educational outcomes.

Participants can expect to:

- Explore the realm of high-impact teaching strategies (HITS) and their direct correlation to the work of PLCs.

- Immerse themselves in engaging hands-on activities designed to deepen comprehension of these impactful strategies.
- Strategically identify and plan their next steps for seamless implementation of HITS in the classroom.

Eric Twadell

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

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

Participants learn specific steps to implement a flexible secondary intervention period, including how to:

- Determine what interventions to offer each week.
- Require students to attend specific interventions.
- Monitor student attendance.
- Allocate staff.
- Extend student learning.
- Address potential obstacles.
- Do all this within teachers' contractual obligations.

AFTERNOON BREAKOUT SESSIONS

Kristen Bordonaro

All Means All: Creating Guaranteed, Viable Learning for Every Student

Too often, students with disabilities are separated from the core learning experience in the name of support. Kristin Bordonaro challenges that model and reframes access, instruction, and belief through the lenses of *yes we can* and *all means all*. Dr. Bordonaro examines how a guaranteed and viable curriculum applies to all learners, including those with significant support needs, and explores practical strategies for designing instruction that honors grade-level standards, builds independence, and ensures every student belongs to the learning community.

Participants in this session:

- Distinguish between inclusive access to learning and practices that unintentionally isolate students or lower expectations.
- Explain how a guaranteed and viable curriculum applies to every learner, including students with significant support needs.
- Examine identified essential standards to determine how all students can access the critical learning without isolation or lowered expectations.

- Design instructional pathways that preserve the standard while varying the supports, including scaffolds, UDL strategies, and specially designed instruction that increase access without reducing rigor.
- Apply a *yes we can* decision lens to identify one immediate, actionable shift that strengthens access, independence, and meaningful participation for all students.

Brandon Jones

Develop Without Defeating: Supporting One Another in Continuous Improvement

We as educators recognize the need for well-timed connection and constructive feedback from colleagues. We've all also, most likely, been part of a coaching interaction that left us more frustrated than encouraged to press on. As we embark on the journey to become a professional learning community, we engage in a neverending cycle of continuous improvement. During this cycle, we will each have opportunities to coach others in an effort to perfect our craft and get better results for the students we serve. We must do so in a way that edifies one another and improves our individual and collective efficacy. Most of us entered this profession to teach children, but it never even occurred to us that we would, at times, teach our colleagues as well. As John Gardner said, "Every great leader is teaching, and every great teacher is leading."

Participants can expect to:

- Consider the critical needs of the adult learner.
- Determine best practices for coaching colleagues.
- Analyze common pitfalls of coaching and support.
- Examine a practical cycle of improvement and support for one another.

Mike Mattos

Behavior Solutions: Leveraging the PLC at Work Process to Teach Essential Behaviors

The fundamental purpose of a professional learning community is to ensure high levels of learning for all students. To achieve this mission, some students will need support mastering the behaviors to succeed in school and beyond. Every school knows this universal truth, but many schools lack the systematic processes needed to achieve this outcome. In this session, Mike Mattos demonstrates how a school can leverage the four critical questions of the PLC at Work process to identify, teach, assess, and intervene when students lack essential academic and social behaviors.

Participants in this session:

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

Michael L. McWilliams

From Groups to Teams: The Visible and Invisible Work of Highly Effective Teams

Many PLC teams have structures in place yet still struggle to produce meaningful results. The missing piece is often not what teams are doing, but how they are working together. In this session, Michael L. McWilliams explores the visible work of effective PLC teams—purpose, evidence, planning, and accountability—alongside the often overlooked invisible work of trust, productive conflict, and shared ownership. Participants examine the practices and conditions that distinguish teams that merely meet from teams that consistently impact student learning. Through reflection, real-world scenarios, and practical tools, participants gain a clearer understanding of what highly effective teams do differently and how to intentionally design both the structure and culture necessary for sustained success.

Participants can expect to:

- Distinguish between groups and highly effective PLC teams using research-based indicators.
- Identify the visible practices that drive effective team functioning and results.
- Recognize the invisible relational conditions that support trust, productive conflict, and accountability.
- Assess their own team’s effectiveness and pinpoint specific areas for growth.

Peter Noonan

Coming soon!

Regina Stephens Owens

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

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

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

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

Bob Sonju

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

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

Participants in this session:

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

Tesha Ferriby Thomas

Read It, Write It, Prove It: How Purposeful Nonfiction Literacy Accelerates Student Learning

What happens when students stop guessing and start proving their thinking with text? Learning accelerates. In this session, Tesha Ferriby Thomas explores how a small set of intentional nonfiction literacy practices can produce powerful gains in student achievement across grade levels and content areas. Participants examine how these strategies make student thinking visible while strengthening team practice within a PLC at Work framework.

Participants in this session:

- Teach students to read nonfiction with purpose.
- Use short, evidence-based writing to prove understanding.
- Design tasks that require students to synthesize ideas across texts.
- Commit to a shared literacy practice their team will implement.

Eric Twadell

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

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

Participants in this session:

- Zero in on essential conversations to create a focus on learning.

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

Session Descriptions—Day 3

BREAKOUT SESSIONS

Kristen Bordonaro

Aligning Academics, Behavior, and SEL Across Tier 1, Intervention, and Special Education

Students often experience academics, behavior, SEL, intervention, and special education as separate systems with different expectations, language, and priorities. This session focuses on instructional coherence within a PLC at Work framework. Kristin Bordonaro examines how Tier 1 instruction and shared expectations serve as the foundation for both academic and behavioral success and how misalignment across settings creates barriers to learning.

Participants in this session:

- Identify points of fragmentation between academics, behavior, SEL, intervention, and special education, and explain how those disconnects impact student access, engagement, and outcomes.
- Clarify the role of Tier 1 instruction and shared expectations as the foundation for both academic learning and behavioral success within a PLC at Work framework.
- Use an already-unpacked essential standard and shared behavioral or SEL expectations to align learning targets, routines, and supports across Tier 1 instruction, intervention, and special education.
- Design aligned instructional and behavioral supports that strengthen Tier 1 instruction while appropriately intensifying support through intervention and special education without creating parallel systems.
- Apply a practical coherence check to identify one system-level adjustment that improves alignment of academics, behavior, and SEL within existing structures.

Brandon Jones

Abandoning Archaic Practices: A Radical Hope for the Next Generation

An archaic practice is defined as any embedded practice that is not leading to higher levels of learning. Our students' values, preferred methods of learning, and factors that motivate them have changed through the years. Has our system for reaching, supporting, and teaching changed with them? Unfortunately, for too many schools, the answer is a resounding no. A typical response is to continue piling more responsibilities and expectations on educators. Instead of learning together and implementing research-backed strategies, we chase the next new program and initiative, hoping it will save the ship from sinking. In doing so, initiative fatigue quickly sets in, and even those with the best intentions begin to act out of rote compliance.

Thankfully, we have the authority and the ability to improve our course of action—to begin prioritizing a limited number of policies and practices that directly improve the motivation, preparation, and learning of our students. To make room for these best strategies, we must also identify and remove the archaic practices that are demotivating students and hindering learning so the healing process in our schools can begin.

Participants can expect to:

- Compare the learning needs of different generations of students.
- Examine a systematic process for identifying, removing, and replacing archaic practices that are not leading to higher levels of learning.
- Explore common archaic practices in leadership, teaching, and learning that, if abandoned, will improve the motivation and preparation of students.

Mike Mattos

Guiding Principles for Principals: Tips and Tools for Leading the PLC at Work Process

Becoming a professional learning community will not happen by luck, chance, or hope; it requires focused and effective leadership. In this breakout, Mike Mattos provides guiding principles, practical examples, and targeted tools to help leaders—site or district administration and teacher leaders—successfully support teacher teams.

Participants learn how to:

- Create an effective site leadership team.
- Develop and enforce team norms.
- Monitor and support the work of collaborative teams.

Michael L. McWilliams

From Roadblocks to Results: Navigating Conflict, Conquering Resistance, and Building Trust

What separates highly effective teams from struggling ones is not the absence of challenges but the ability to address them with clarity, urgency, and trust while keeping student learning at the center. In this session, Michael L. McWilliams equips participants with practical strategies to navigate conflict, address resistance, and respond to common team roadblocks that can easily derail collaboration and stall performance. Participants examine real team scenarios, distinguish between productive and unproductive conflict, and learn how to build shared commitments that sustain trust and accountability over time. Michael emphasizes actionable tools that can be applied immediately in collaborative meetings and leadership conversations.

Participants can expect to:

- Identify common roadblocks and sources of resistance that limit team effectiveness.
- Distinguish between productive conflict that strengthens outcomes and unproductive conflict that erodes trust.
- Apply practical strategies to address conflict, build consensus, and sustain trust.

Peter Noonan

Coming soon!

Regina Stephens Owens

Educators Are Learners, Too! Stop Telling, Start Teaching

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

Participants in this session:

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

Bob Sonju

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

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

Participants in this session:

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

Tesha Ferriby Thomas

Hot HITS for PLC Success: Unleashing High-Impact Teaching Strategies

Tesha Ferriby Thomas unveils high-impact teaching strategies that enhance student learning. This session delves into the groundbreaking research of Marzano and Hattie, exploring instructional strategies that have been proven to significantly elevate educational outcomes.

Participants can expect to:

- Explore the realm of high-impact teaching strategies (HITS) and their direct correlation to the work of PLCs.

- Immerse themselves in engaging hands-on activities designed to deepen comprehension of these impactful strategies.
- Strategically identify and plan their next steps for seamless implementation of HITS in the classroom.

Eric Twadell

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

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

Participants in this session:

- Gain appreciation for using a learning map to differentiate professional development.
- Explore challenges associated with traditional grading practices and reporting results.
- Learn how to structure professional development and a learning map for teachers and teams specifically focused on standards-based grading and reporting.
- Explore the five stages of evidence-based grading and reporting.

KEYNOTE

Regina Stephens Owens

Courageous Capacity: Sustaining a Culture of Care and Competency

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

Participants learn how to:

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