

Monday, August 10

6:30–8:00 a.m.	Registration and Continental Breakfast	Rooms TBD
8:00–9:45 a.m.	Keynote —Mike Mattos <i>All In! Digging Deeper Into Becoming a True Professional Learning Community</i>	
9:45–10:00 a.m.	Break	
10:00–11:30 a.m.	Breakout Sessions	See pages 2–3.
11:30 a.m.–12:30 p.m.	Lunch (provided)	
12:30–2:00 p.m.	Breakout Sessions	See pages 2–3.
2:00–2:15 p.m.	Break	
2:15–3:15 p.m.	Keynote —Tim Brown <i>Motivate, Inspire, Question: Leading in a PLC</i>	

Tuesday, August 11

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.–12:30 p.m.	Lunch (provided)	
12:30–2:00 p.m.	Breakout Sessions	See pages 2–3.
2:00–2:15 p.m.	Break	
2:15–3:15 p.m.	Team Time —Presenters aid in your collaborative team discussions.	

Wednesday, August 12

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, August 10		Tuesday, August 11		Wednesday, August 12
	10:00–11:30 a.m.	12:30–2:00 p.m.	10:00–11:30 a.m.	12:30–2:00 p.m.	8:00–9:30 a.m.
Jason A. Andrews	From Resistance to Commitment: Building Ownership of the PLC Process* Room TBD	If Everything Is Important, Nothing Is: Clarifying Essential Standards in a PLC at Work Room TBD	From Cooperation to Collaboration: Building Highly Effective Teams in a PLC Room TBD	Building a Culture of Collective Responsibility to Support Every Student Room TBD	From Resistance to Commitment: Building Ownership of the PLC Process Room TBD
Tim Brown	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
Luis F. Cruz	Breaking Through the Initialisms: Connecting PLC and RTI to Ensure High-Quality Learning for Every Student* Room TBD	PLC Versus PLC Process: The Difference Between PLC as a Noun and a Verb Room TBD	Embracing English Language Development and Supporting Bilingual Students With the PLC Process Room TBD	Breaking Through the Initialisms: Connecting PLC and RTI to Ensure High-Quality Learning for Every Student Room TBD	Knowledge Is Not Power Until It Is Applied: Turning Your PLC Institute Experience Into Action Room TBD
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	
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

Presenter	Monday, August 10		Tuesday, August 11		Wednesday, August 12
	10:00–11:30 a.m.	12:30–2:00 p.m.	10:00–11:30 a.m.	12:30–2:00 p.m.	8:00–9:30 a.m.
Regina Stephens Owens	The <i>Why</i> 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 <i>and</i> 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
Mona Toncheff	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	Together We Can Accelerate Student Learning to Grade Level and Beyond 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
Jason Williams	Leveraging AI to Tailor Instruction for All Room TBD	Intention Span: Why Doing More Isn't Doing Better Room TBD	Shared Data, Shared Decisions: Creating a Sustainable and Healthy Data Culture* Room TBD	Enhancing (Not Replacing!) the Collaborative Team Cycle With AI Room TBD	Shared Data, Shared Decisions: Creating a Sustainable and Healthy Data Culture 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

Jason A. Andrews

From Resistance to Commitment: Building Ownership of the PLC Process

Resistance to change is a predictable part of any improvement effort, and how leaders respond to resistance often determines the success of a professional learning community. In this session, Jason A. Andrews focuses on understanding why staff resist change and how to respond in ways that build trust, clarity, and collective commitment. Participants examine common sources of resistance, explore two practical approaches for addressing it, and learn how defined autonomy provides clarity, support, and accountability to ensure teams have flexibility in how they work while remaining collectively responsible for agreed-upon outcomes.

Participants can expect to:

- Recognize common reasons for staff resistance to the PLC process.
- Apply two practical approaches for addressing resistance in constructive ways that build trust.
- Explain the concept of defined autonomy and apply it within their own school or district.

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.

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.

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.

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.

Mona Toncheff

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

A textbook or a standards document alone is not a guaranteed and viable curriculum. A curriculum becomes guaranteed when every teacher, team, and student understands the

learning targets and success criteria for the essential standards. The curriculum is viable when it is possible for all students to learn the essential standards in the school year.

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

Participants in this session:

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

Eric Twadell

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.

Jason Williams

Leveraging AI to Tailor Instruction for All

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

The range of student needs in any given classroom has likely never been broader. Tailoring instruction does not mean designing an individualized lesson for each student, but it does mean designing instruction that considers each students' needs. With teachers already doing their best with the time, resources, and skills they have, the idea of planning instruction to meet the needs

of all students may seem overwhelming. Using AI can not only make tailoring instruction take less time, but it can also help build teacher capacity on ways to support students with unique learning profiles.

Participants in this session:

- Define what tailoring instruction is and is not by making explicit connections between professional learning communities and universal design for learning.
- Examine how instructional planning for student needs becomes easier by first developing a coherent learning progression for an essential standard.
- Explore how AI can specifically support collaborative and individual efforts to tailor instruction through the use of some tools that have already been created.

AFTERNOON BREAKOUT SESSIONS

Jason A. Andrews

If Everything Is Important, Nothing Is: Clarifying Essential Standards in a PLC at Work

One of the most persistent challenges in implementing the PLC at Work process is the failure to prioritize learning. When teams attempt to treat all standards as equally important, they dilute time, attention, and collective effort, resulting in coverage rather than guaranteed learning. In this session, Jason A. Andrews focuses on the critical work of identifying essential standards and unpacking them into clear, shared learning targets. Participants engage in practical protocols aligned to the PLC at Work framework that promote clarity, coherence, and collective responsibility for student learning.

Participants can expect to:

- Explore why prioritizing learning is essential for ensuring high levels of learning for all students.
- Apply REAL (readiness, endurance, assessment, and leverage) criteria to identify essential standards.
- Learn how to unpack essential standards into clear, team-developed learning targets aligned to assessments and instruction.

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.

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.

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.

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

Mona Toncheff

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

Mathematics collaborative teams are made of teachers who work tirelessly to grow student learning. Yet, despite every effort, too many students in too many schools are struggling. What can be done? It starts with mathematics teams having an intentional and focused learning plan for the year, every unit of instruction, and each daily lesson. Participants in this session explore

how teams effectively plan for grade-level learning and mathematical reasoning in each unit and give students access to learning grade-level standards in lessons through targeted Tier 1 and Tier 2 instruction. Participants examine research-affirmed teaching actions that maximize student learning during a mathematics lesson and learn how to incorporate mathematical rigor, balanced mathematical tasks, and student engagement.

Participants use the Mathematics at Work™ lesson design framework to:

- Examine research-affirmed teaching actions that maximize student learning during a mathematics lesson (Tier 1).
- Explore team actions and strategies for accelerating student learning to grade level and beyond using intentional Tier 1 and Tier 2 instruction.

Eric Twadell

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.

Jason Williams

Intention Span: Why Doing More Isn't Doing Better

High-functioning professional learning communities engage in continuous cycles of improvement to improve the results of the students they serve. However, sustained improvement doesn't come from trying to get better at everything all at once. Just like we have an attention span that defines our limits of concentration, we have an *intention* span that defines our limits of what we can do purposefully. But what does it look and sound like to be intentional as a PLC? More importantly, how can we create lasting intentionality?

Participants in this session:

- Define what intentionality looks and sounds like in a professional learning community.
- Examine three key areas of intentionality: consistency, clarity, and connection.
- Explore how goal setting is a critical practice that can either help or hinder intentionality.

- Identify key strategies for creating and protecting intentionality in your professional learning community.

AFTERNOON KEYNOTE

Tim Brown

Motivate, Inspire, Question: Leading in a PLC

If we believe all students can learn at high levels, we must also believe all adults can grow at high levels. In a professional learning community, leadership is not confined to a title; it lives in classrooms, collaborative teams, and everyday professional interactions. In this keynote, Tim Brown explores how leaders at every level motivate with purpose, inspire through clarity, and ask questions that elevate collective practice. Participants reflect on how their influence, regardless of their role, shapes expectations, strengthens adult learning, and ultimately impacts student results.

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

Jason A. Andrews

From Cooperation to Collaboration: Building Highly Effective Teams in a PLC

Collaboration is a foundational principle of the PLC process, but true collaboration requires more than simply bringing teachers together for meetings. To ensure all students learn at high levels, educators must work collectively and take shared responsibility for student success. In this session, Jason A. Andrews dives into developing genuine collaborative cultures within schools. Participants explore the distinction between cooperation and collaboration, examine the essential work of collaborative teams, and learn how to utilize tools and protocols that foster deeper, more meaningful teamwork to achieve the transformative benefits of true collaboration.

Participants can expect to:

- Identify the differences between cooperative efforts and true collaboration.
- Make the distinction between groups and highly effective professional learning teams.
- Gain tools and protocols to guide effective team collaboration.

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.

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.

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.

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.

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.

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.

Jason Williams

Shared Data, Shared Decisions: Creating a Sustainable and Healthy Data Culture

Some school systems are data driven to the point that it's punitive and detrimental to culture. Some school systems say they are data driven, but their analysis is surface level and not action oriented. When a system is data driven, the data itself becomes the goal, rather than the students represented by the data. Rather than perpetuating a data-driven mindset, Jason Williams encourages the necessary shift to a student-driven mindset. It is with a student-driven mindset that focus, energy, and resources are allocated through the motivation to improve student learning.

Participants in this session:

- Compare a data-driven mindset to one that is student driven.
- Examine a framework to create and support a sustainable and healthy data culture.
- Explore concrete tools to assess current data practices as well as support progress with specific data practices.

AFTERNOON BREAKOUT SESSIONS

Jason A. Andrews

Building a Culture of Collective Responsibility to Support Every Student

Collective responsibility is the cornerstone of a successful professional learning community. It reflects a shared belief that all students are capable of learning at high levels and a commitment by all staff to ensure every student's success. To effectively provide students with additional time and support through a systematic and responsive approach, a culture of collective responsibility must be firmly established. Participants in this session gain practical tools and strategies to assess their current school culture and identify opportunities to strengthen collective responsibility. Through reflective activities and actionable insights, they learn how to align beliefs and actions, build trust and accountability among staff, and create an environment where everyone is committed to the success of all students.

Participants can expect to:

- Understand the four Cs of intervention, including collective responsibility.
- Know the difference between climate and culture and assess their school's current culture.
- Develop action steps to build collective responsibility in their school or district.

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.

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.

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 never-ending 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.

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.

Mona Toncheff

From Scores to Learning: Effective Grading Practices

Teachers use grades to report student learning in grade books and on report cards. Essential questions about grading exist: How do grades align with student learning and provide feedback? What is the purpose of each grade? Are grades consistent across a collaborative team? Who uses

this information? As instructional and assessment practices shift to meet rigorous standards, grades too often are an afterthought that muddy accurate reports of student learning. Clarity is needed within districts, schools, and collaborative teams so that students and other stakeholders know the meaning of each grade reported and the evidence of student learning used to generate the grade.

Participants in this session:

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

Eric Twadell

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.

Jason Williams

Enhancing (Not Replacing!) the Collaborative Team Cycle With AI

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

As generative AI tools such as ChatGPT and Gemini are integrated into more and more technology, they are increasingly being used by teachers and students. One of the most powerful ways for educators to use AI in a professional learning community is to have it function as an additional member of a collaborative team.

Participants in this session:

- Explore different purposes for using AI and determine which aspects of collaborative teamwork allow for the greatest benefits of using AI.
- Examine ways PLC practices can be supported with generative AI with an emphasis on answering the four critical questions.
- Play in the AI sandbox to become familiar with tools that have been created to increase the efficiency and accuracy of using AI.

Session Descriptions—Day 3

BREAKOUT SESSIONS

Jason A. Andrews

From Resistance to Commitment: Building Ownership of the PLC Process

Resistance to change is a predictable part of any improvement effort, and how leaders respond to resistance often determines the success of a professional learning community. In this session, Jason A. Andrews focuses on understanding why staff resist change and how to respond in ways that build trust, clarity, and collective commitment. Participants examine common sources of resistance, explore two practical approaches for addressing it, and learn how defined autonomy provides clarity, support, and accountability to ensure teams have flexibility in how they work while remaining collectively responsible for agreed-upon outcomes.

Participants can expect to:

- Recognize common reasons for staff resistance to the PLC process.
- Apply two practical approaches for addressing resistance in constructive ways that build trust.
- Explain the concept of defined autonomy and apply it within their own school or district.

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.

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.

Mike Mattos

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

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

Participants learn how to:

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

Regina Stephens Owens

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.

Mona Toncheff

Together We Can Accelerate Student Learning to Grade Level and Beyond

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

Participants in this session:

- Distinguish between remediation and acceleration using classroom and team-based examples.
- Identify which of the six acceleration mindsets most closely reflects current school practices.
- Determine specific actions teams can take to shift toward an acceleration mindset while maintaining access to grade-level learning.

Eric Twadell

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

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

Participants in this session:

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

Jason Williams

Shared Data, Shared Decisions: Creating a Sustainable and Healthy Data Culture

Some school systems are data driven to the point that it's punitive and detrimental to culture. Some school systems say they are data driven, but their analysis is surface level and not action oriented. When a system is data driven, the data itself becomes the goal, rather than the students represented by the data. Rather than perpetuating a data-driven mindset, Jason Williams encourages the necessary shift to a student-driven mindset. It is with a student-driven mindset that focus, energy, and resources are allocated through the motivation to improve student learning.

Participants in this session:

- Compare a data-driven mindset to one that is student driven.
- Examine a framework to create and support a sustainable and healthy data culture.
- Explore concrete tools to assess current data practices as well as support progress with specific data practices.

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.