**Agenda**

**Little Rock, AR • December 6–8**

**Monday, December 6**

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| 6:30–8:00 a.m. | Registration |  |
| Continental Breakfast |  |
| 8:00–9:45 a.m. | **Keynote**—Regina Stephens Owens  *A Declaration of Interdependence: Designing Culture and Developing Community for Learning* |  |
| 9:45–10:00 a.m. | Break | |
| 10:00–11:30 a.m. | **Breakout Sessions** |  |
| 11:30 a.m.–1:00 p.m. | Lunch (on your own) | |
| 1:00–2:30 p.m. | **Breakout Sessions** |  |
| 2:30–2:45 p.m. | Break | |
| 2:45–3:45 p.m. | **Panel Discussion**—*Presenters provide practical answers to your most pressing questions.* |  |

**Tuesday, December 7**

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| 7:00–8:00 a.m. | Registration |  |
| Continental Breakfast |  |
| 8:00–9:45 a.m. | **Keynote**—Mike Mattos  *In the Eye of the Storm: Staying Focused and Grasping Opportunity During Challenging Times* |  |
| 9:45–10:00 a.m. | Break | |
| 10:00–11:30 a.m. | **Breakout Sessions** |  |
| 11:30 a.m.–1:00 p.m. | Lunch (on your own) | |
| 1:00–2:30 p.m. | **Breakout Sessions** |  |
| 2:30–2:45 p.m. | Break | |
| 2:45–3:45 p.m. | **Team Time**—*Presenters are available to aid in your collaborative team discussions.* |  |

**Wednesday, December 8**

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| 7:00–8:00 a.m. | Continental Breakfast |  |
| 8:00–9:30 a.m. | **Breakout Sessions** |  |
| 9:30–9:45 a.m. | Break | |
| 9:45–11:45 a.m. | **Keynote**—Luis F. Cruz  *Bringing It All Together: Igniting the PLC Process to Ensure High Levels of Learning for All* |  |

**Agenda is subject to change.**

**Breakouts at a Glance**

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Presenters & Titles** | **Monday, December 6** | | **Tuesday, December 7** | | **Wednesday, December 8** |
| **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.** |
| **Luis F. Cruz** | | | | | |
| PLCs and Students Learning English as an Additional Language | X |  |  |  |  |
| I Like What I’m Hearing! So How Do We Initiate Our PLC Journey? |  | X |  |  |  |
| Remembering Rick DuFour: Embracing the "Tight and Loose" of the PLC Process |  |  | X |  |  |
| Taping Before Painting: Taking the Critical Steps to Respond Collectively When Students Don't Learn |  |  |  | X |  |
| I Am Sold on PLCs: Practical Tools and Directions to Be Successful |  |  |  |  | X |
| **Janel Keating** | | | | | |
| Are Kids Learning and How Do We Know? Data-Based Decision Making in High-Performing Teams | X |  |  |  |  |
| This Is Where It All Fits! The Well-Designed Unit Plan: From Standards to Assessments, Unit by Unit |  | X |  |  |  |
| Aligning the Work of Teams: From the Boardroom to the Classroom |  |  | X |  |  |
| The Institute Is Almost Over: School and Team Life After a PLC Institute |  |  |  | X |  |
| Stomping Out PLC Lite |  |  |  |  | X |
| **Mike Mattos** | | | | | |
| Are We a Group or a Team? | X |  |  |  |  |
| Personalized Learning in a PLC at Work: Developing Student Agency Through the Four Critical Questions |  | X |  |  |  |
| Raising the Bar and Closing the Gap: Whatever It Takes in Secondary Schools |  |  | X |  |  |
| Guiding Principles for Principals: Tips and Tools for Leading the PLC at Work Process |  |  |  | X |  |
| Taking Action: How the PLC at Work Framework Drives an Effective Multitiered System of Supports |  |  |  |  | X |
| **Regina Stephens Owens** | | | | | |
| The *Why* Effect: Intentional Systems Drive Inspirational Cultures | X |  |  |  |  |
| Data Discussion for Instructional Leaders: From Data to Design to Demonstration of Learning |  | X |  |  |  |
| Technology and Teams: Leveraging Technology for Learning |  |  | X |  |  |
| All for One: A Community of Singletons Wired by Relevance and Results |  |  |  | X |  |
| Collective Efficacy at Work |  |  |  |  | X |
| **Julie A. Schmidt** | | | | | |
| Yes We Can! Collaboration for *All* Learners | X |  |  |  |  |
| Question One in an All-Means-All Culture |  | X |  |  |  |
| Raising the Bar and Closing the Gap: Whatever It Takes in Elementary Schools |  |  | X |  |  |
| Differentiation for Teams: Taking It to the Next Level |  |  |  | X |  |
| Protocols for Results: Turning Data Into Information |  |  |  |  | X |

**Agenda is subject to change.**

**Session Descriptions**

**Luis F. Cruz**

## **[KEYNOTE] Bringing It All Together: Igniting the PLC Process to Ensure High Levels of Learning for All**

The PLC process must be well understood and implemented to achieve the goal of accelerating

learning for every student in the school. If *learning by doing* is at the heart of what successful schools do to reach high academic achievement for all, then teams must learn what successful schools have done to effectively initiate and sustain a PLC process.

Participants in this session learn and discuss:

* How to simply and practically define the PLC process
* Steps successful PLC schools have taken to ensure high levels of learning for all of their students
* The moral imperatives that guide our work with students

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## **PLCs and Students Learning English as an Additional Language**

Luis F. Cruz shares how schools use PLC strategies to help English learner populations flourish. By effectively using PLC components, administrative and teacher leaders close achievement gaps for students learning English as a second language. Dr. Cruz shows how EL task-force leaders reculture and restructure while introducing best practices to increase learning outcomes for all students.

A task force can initiate seven steps to ensure that English learners are included in the “all means all” mantra that defines a school’s fundamental purpose of learning for every student.

Participants discover how:

* Teacher-led task forces increase academic performance for English learners.
* PLC practices highlight stark realities when English learners are not learning.
* Adults change their expectations and behaviors when listening to English learners’ needs, resulting in significant improvements in student achievement.

**I Like What I’m Hearing! So How Do We Initiate Our PLC Journey?**

Academic research and accounts from educators worldwide confirm that PLCs when implemented effectively, lead to high levels of learning for every student. However, questions remain. Who is responsible for initiating a PLC? How does a team establish the foundational pillars of a PLC? How does this process take shape? Is it normal to expect staff resistance to this process, and is there a difference between rational and irrational forms of resistance? Luis F. Cruz explains the *who*, *why*, and *how* associated with the PLC process.

Participants in this session learn:

* How to initiate a PLC process
* The role of a guiding coalition
* How to establish the foundation of a PLC

**Remembering Rick DuFour: Embracing the “Tight and Loose” of the PLC Process**

Throughout his professional life, Richard DuFour shared insights to guide educators in continuously strengthening PLC process implementation. One of his most notable keynote presentations captured which aspects of the PLC process must be tight and which could be loose. Luis F. Cruz honors the life of Dr. DuFour by reminding audiences about Rick’s message and his purpose of ensuring learning for *all* students.

Outcomes from this session include:

* Understanding why adopting a collaborative culture is a “must do” in a successful PLC
* Learning why ensuring a guaranteed and viable curriculum is essential to the PLC process
* Exploring why allowing teachers the “defined autonomy” to teach how they believe most effective is a loose aspect of the PLC process

## **Taping Before Painting: Taking the Critical Steps to Respond Collectively When Students Don’t Learn**

The third critical question of a PLC, What do we do when students don’t learn?, often stumps teachers and administrators. Luis F. Cruz showcases methods that schools use to guarantee collaboration (taping the room) and to ensure a collective response when students do not learn (painting the room). Participants learn how the PLC and RTI processes complement each other in increasing academic achievement for all students.

Participants learn:

* How effective teacher teams collaborate and respond when students do not learn
* Ways to ensure a guaranteed and viable curriculum
* The critical role of common assessments

## **I Am Sold on PLCs: Practical Tools and Directions to Be Successful**

As educators initiate the PLC process, they need practical tools to begin and enhance the journey. However, educators might discover that their staff needs convincing. How and why is the PLC process the best way to accelerate learning for all students?

Luis F. Cruz shares articles, templates, activities, and videos to provide administrative and teacher leaders the tools to amplify improvement at their sites.

Participants learn:

* The difference between rational and irrational forms of adult resistance and how to address each
* The art *and* science of effective leadership and how to maneuver in both directions
* Practical actions to accelerate the PLC process

**Janel Keating**

## **Are Kids Learning and How Do We Know? Data-Based Decision Making in High-Performing Teams**

The two important reasons to look at data in a PLC are to determine whether kids are learning and to improve professional practice. This interactive session highlights how high-performing teams quickly examine their data to make decisions that impact kids in the classroom. Participants are provided an effective, user-friendly data analysis tool to facilitate this work.

**This Is Where It All Fits! The Well-Designed Unit Plan—From Standards to Assessments,   
Unit by Unit**

Unit planning is one of the most important activities in which collaborative teams engage. While there is no “right” way for teams to plan instructional units, there are numerous things teams must pay attention to in the process. Participants in this session discuss examples and see video clips of teacher teams effectively planning units of instruction—from standards and learning targets to end-of-unit common formative assessments.

Janel Keating walks participants through each step of the PLC process. Teams learn to plan a   
unit of instruction from beginning to end and understand how a unit-of-instruction plan is tied to analyzing the data at the end of the unit. This session illustrates the continuous improvement cycle in action.

## **Aligning the Work of a PLC: From the Boardroom to the Classroom**

## A districtwide professional learning community is more than a sum of individual parts. A high- performing school district that functions as a PLC reflects thoughtful alignment and integration of work at the central office level, in individual schools, and in teacher teams. While highlighting the efforts of highly successful school districts, Janel Keating describes how districts organize and align at each level to implement PLC concepts and practices systemwide. This session provides many practical examples and useful templates to assist any school or district in doing the work of a PLC.

## **The Institute Is Almost Over: School and Team Life After a PLC Institute**

Award-winning teams that get more students to learn at high levels often start by attending a PLC at Work institute. Janel Keating shares essential next steps for participants to take back to their districts, schools, and teams to effectively do the work of a PLC. She highlights an effective team’s daily work and illustrates how all work relates to the four critical questions of a PLC.

Outcomes from this session include:

* Establishing and communicating a common vocabulary
* Reviewing a team monthly planner and feedback tool
* Examining essential standards, learning targets, and pacing guides
* Working with common assessments and quick checks for understanding
* Learning how to create additional time and support within the school day
* Exploring positive behavioral interventions, supports, and responses to intervention

**Stomping Out PLC Lite**

There’s a difference between doing the right work to improve student learning and doing what is often called “PLC lite”—simply going through the motions. This session aims to help teams, schools, or districts refocus on doing the right work in the right ways to make a difference for students and improve professional practice of adults. Janel Keating illustrates what effective collaboration should look like from preschool through high school to include the work of singletons.

Participants in this session:

* Identify key elements of effective weekly collaboration.
* Observe effective collaboration in action.
* View products that are the results of collaborative teams doing the “right” work.
* Engage with a weekly data protocol.
* Show the work of singleton teachers.
* Understand the power of a SMART goal.
* Explore the principal’s role in leading the right work of collaborative teams.
* Highlight the relationship between team leaders and principals.

**Mike Mattos**

**[KEYNOTE] In the Eye of the Storm: Staying Focused and Grasping Opportunity During Challenging Times**

Without question, the COVID-19 pandemic has caused educators across the world to face unprecedented challenges. Regardless of the safety-driven shifts to virtual learning and social distancing, our mission remains the same: to ensure every student acquires the academic skills, knowledge, and behaviors needed for future success.

Mike Mattos builds the case that teachers should not view current teaching conditions as something to endure until things get back to normal. Instead, they should see this as an opportunity to better prepare students for the demands of postsecondary education and the 21st-century global economy. Grasping this opportunity requires educators to learn new tools. The PLC at Work process is the best way to support the adult learning needed for educators and students to thrive during these difficult times.

**Are We a Group or a Team?**

Collaborative teacher teams are the engine that drives a professional learning community. When these teams are highly engaged in the right work, student learning accelerates. When they are not, learning sputters and stalls. Because teachers traditionally must attend grade-level or departmental team meetings, schools often mistakenly assume that merely renaming these gatherings “PLC time” represents teacher collaboration. The act of meeting does not make a team, but instead, simply a group.

Participants in this session:

* Assess if they are currently part of a group or a team.
* Review the essential work of teacher teams in a PLC.
* Learn how to navigate team disagreements successfully.
* Leave with specific action steps to improve your teacher team.

**Personalized Learning in a PLC at Work: Developing Student Agency Through the Four Critical Questions**

“Creating lifelong learners” is a key objective in the mission statements for many schools and districts. Because today’s average high school graduate will change careers at least four times by the age of 40, ensuring that all students master the skills and behaviors needed to guide their future learning is essential to ensuring their future success. A study of highly effective, learning-progressive schools worldwide found these schools share two common elements: they operate as high-functioning PLCs with well-implemented RTI structures, and they promote student agency in the learning process.

Mike Mattos discusses how to build a highly effective school where students are engaged in personalized learning experiences and empowered to take ownership of the four critical questions of the PLC at Work process.

Outcomes from this session include:

* Discussing the essential knowledge, skills, and behaviors required to “future proof” our students
* Defining how to create collaborative teacher teams within the PLC at Work framework and foster teacher transdisciplinary skills and behaviors
* Discovering how to use the four critical questions of a PLC to form pathways and progressions for personalized learning in the classroom
* Learning how schools utilize the RTI process to ensure every student develops agency and personalized learning opportunities required to thrive in a global economy

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

Identifying which students need help is not the biggest obstacle most secondary schools face in providing interventions; it is how to schedule the time needed to provide that help during the school day. This session provides real examples from a high-performing school showing how it creates 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.

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

The principal has an essential role in creating a PLC. Without effective support and leadership, achieving this outcome is virtually impossible. Targeted to site administrators, this session provides proven practices and examples of leading and supporting collaborative teacher teams.

Participants are called on to:

* Learn how to create an effective site leadership team.
* Effectively address violations to a school’s collective commitments.
* Monitor and support the work of collaborative teams.

**Taking Action: How the PLC at Work Framework Drives an Effective Multitiered System of Supports**

How does your school respond when students don’t learn? Compelling evidence shows that response to intervention successfully engages a school’s staff in a collective process to provide every child with the additional time and support they need to learn at high levels. Yet, at many schools, this potential lies dormant, buried under layers of state regulations, district protocols, misguided priorities, and traditional school practices misaligned to the essential elements of RTI. This session shows how the PLC at Work process creates the larger, schoolwide framework required to implement a highly effective, multitiered system of supports.

Outcomes from this session include:

* Understanding the guiding principles behind a multitiered system of interventions
* Learning essential actions that collaborative teams must complete at Tier 1 to respond when students don’t learn effectively
* Prioritizing resources to address academic and behavior interventions
* Beginning the process of creating a pyramid of interventions

**Regina Stephens Owens**

**[KEYNOTE] A Declaration of Interdependence: Designing Culture and Developing Community for Learning**

Becoming a PLC requires that we take on the characteristics of learning, collaborating, and getting results through collective inquiry, action research, and a commitment to continuous improvement.

In an era of accountability, collective responsibility for continuous improvement has given way to teams and departments in silos, with school improvement primarily focused on test scores. Regina Stephens Owens discusses the essentials required to develop the culture and collective responsibility to ensure that all learn at high levels.

Participants in this session:

* Explore designing and developing a culture based on the mission, vision, and values of a PLC.
* Examine ways to ensure transformation, from first order to second order, leveraging the six characteristics of a PLC.
* Learn how to develop a learning infrastructure and measure behaviors to ensure sustained transformation and produce collective efficacy.

**The *Why* Effect: Intentional Systems Drive Inspirational Cultures**

Organizational purpose, collective beliefs, and commitments affect building systems at all levels. How can we ensure that all practices and procedures are intentional and personify organizational beliefs? It all begins with the *why*. Regina Stephens Owens shares strategies to move cultures from attitudes of compliance, coercion, and fear to ones that are respectful, responsive, and reflective.

Outcomes include learning how to:

* Promote high standards of achievement for all.
* Create a collective, rather than individual, leadership focus.
* Design and develop cultures that are respectful, responsive, and reflective.

**Data Discussion for Instructional Leaders: From Data to Design to Demonstration of Learning**

In a time of tremendous focus on data, it is imperative to grow a rich collaborative culture through dialogue and data protocols—moving from a deficit mindset to a growth mindset.

Participants in this session discover ways to create this culture, use data protocols, and increase team capacity and student learning.

Outcomes include:

* Focusing on results through the lens of data
* Obtaining tools, tips, and templates to impact team and student learning
* Moving from data to demonstration of learning

**Technology and Teams: Leveraging Technology for Learning**

Effective teams are essential to the PLC at Work process and continuous improvement. Regina Stephens Owens shares strategies to leverage technology to support teamwork and ensure growth through collective inquiry and action research.

Participants learn how to:

* Use technology as a motivator to advance the work of teams.
* Leverage web resources to address the four essential questions of a PLC.
* Use technology to build collective capacity and ensure continuous improvement.

**All for One: A Community of Singletons Wired by Relevance and Results**

Singleton teachers are accustomed to seeking solutions and understanding opportunities as they arise. Operating efficiently and effectively within a PLC can be challenging. Team members must collaborate on common denominators, work with peers to improve professional practices and student learning, leverage technology, and authentically engage in the PLC at Work process.

Regina Stephens Owens shows how to use best practices in collaboration, and participants learn how to design action plans supporting the work of schools and singleton teachers in a PLC.

Outcomes include learning:

* Ways to overcome challenges that singleton teachers face in small schools by connecting stakeholders to learning goals
* Solutions that leverage success for educators and learners by understanding interdependence more deeply
* Support high levels of learning by ensuring singleton teachers function effectively in the PLC process

**Collective Efficacy at Work**

Leveraging the strengths of all community members can be challenging. Where do we start? How can we monitor and measure to ensure growth for staff and students? How do we work interdependently to accomplish goals? Regina Stephens Owens facilitates a collaborative discussion as participants discover ways to increase results through collective responsibility.

Participants explore how to:

* Build a community of compassion where all stakeholders work interdependently to ensure students are ready for college, career, and life.
* Develop experiences where staff and students learn and grow, resulting in the alignment and achievement of individual and organizational goals.
* Invest in personal mastery that results in increased capacity, collective responsibility, and increased achievement.

**Julie A. Schmidt**

**Yes We Can: Collaboration for *All* Learners!**

When teams commit to the PLC process and decide to engage in a cycle of continuous improvement, the first critical step is to examine their personal and systemic beliefs about students, themselves, and learning. Only then can they exclaim with confidence that “all really does mean all!”

This session provides participants with strategies and protocols to examine mindsets and collaborative processes to ensure higher learning levels for all students. It is designed for general and special educators.

To develop a culture of learning for all, participants will:

* Learn past and current realities regarding special education.
* Discover strategies to build and reinforce school and district cultures.
* Reflect on practices and policies that do and do not align with the culture.
* Examine what it looks like when general and special educators purposefully collaborate on teaching and learning for *all*.
* Apply instructional decision making that leads to high levels of learning.

**Question One in an All-Means-All Culture**

Participants in this session examine the *what* and *why* of establishing a guaranteed and viable curriculum. Then, they test collaborative team protocols to see how standards drive instruction and formative assessment planning to help all students become proficient. Finally, participants use a data set and protocol to analyze data to plan instruction, intervention, and extension.

Outcomes include:

* Exploring essential elements of a guaranteed and viable curriculum for all
* Becoming familiar with a protocol that facilitates deep learning based on standards and targets
* Using the protocol for robust pre-instruction planning
* Analyzing common formative assessment data to drive instruction and intervention via the protocol

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

Schools that function as PLCs must ultimately do two things: 1) build a collaborative culture to promote continuous adult learning, and 2) create structures and systems that provide students with additional time and learning supports. After examining the key ingredients of systematic intervention and enrichment, participants receive criteria to assess their own schools’ responses and an action-planning template for next steps in raising the bar and closing the gap.

Participants examine strategies and structures to collaboratively:

* Examine core beliefs.
* Use resources (human, material, and temporal) to meet the needs of all learners
* Develop schedules to ensure that intervention is timely, systematic, and directive.
* Tap data to drive intervention, with a focus on progress monitoring to drive actions.
* Examine the most common mistakes in response to intervention.
* Review a tool for assessing the progress and opportunities for interventions within a district, school, or team.

**Differentiation for Teams: Taking It to the Next Level**

Highly effective PLC practices are built on the foundation of high-functioning collaborative teams. These teams recognize that each member brings different perspectives to the table. Participants explore the dynamics of collaborative teams and tools to assess developmental stages.

Objectives include:

* Defining the characteristics of high-performing teams
* Engaging in an activity to build understanding for team members
* Exploring tools to assess a team’s efficacy

**Protocols for Results: Turning Data Into Information**

Is your system overwhelmed with data? Using protocols to transform data into information is an efficient and effective way to achieve improved results. Participants examine tools that empower teams to use data to drive instruction, impact student learning, and identify processes to meet district needs.

Attendees can expect to:

* Review research related to data-driven decision making.
* Explore multiple protocols for data analysis.
* Reflect on their school or district’s current reality while identifying tools that can be used or modified to meet specified needs.