Wednesday, July 8

7:00–8:00 a.m.	Registration and Continental Breakfast	Rooms TBD
8:00–9:45 a.m.	**Keynote**—Bill Zima *Designing for Learning: Purpose as the Foundation of Marzano Mastery Approaches*	
9:45–10:00 a.m.	Break	
10:00–11:30 a.m.	**Breakout Sessions**	See page 2.
11:30 a.m.–12:30 p.m.	Lunch (provided)	
12:30–2:00 p.m.	**Breakout Sessions**	See page 2.
2:00–2:15 p.m.	Break	
2:15–3:15 p.m.	**Panel Discussion**—Presenters answer your most pressing questions.	

Thursday, July 9

7:00–8:00 a.m.	Registration and Continental Breakfast	Rooms TBD
8:00–9:45 a.m.	**Keynote**—Mike Ruyle *From Vision to Action: The* How *of Marzano Mastery Approaches*	
9:45–10:00 a.m.	Break	
10:00–11:30 a.m.	**Breakout Sessions**	See page 2.
11:30 a.m.–12:30 p.m.	Lunch (provided)	
12:30–2:00 p.m.	**Breakout Sessions**	See page 2.
2:00–2:15 p.m.	Break	
2:15–3:15 p.m.	**Team Time**—Presenters aid in your collaborative team discussions.	

Friday, July 10

7:00–8:00 a.m.	Continental Breakfast	Rooms TBD
8:00–9:30 a.m.	**Breakout Sessions**	See page 2.
9:30–9:45 a.m.	Break	
9:45–11:30 a.m.	**Keynote**—Debbie Aholt *Get the Learning Loud: When the Purpose, Practices, and Proof Become the Noise*	

Agenda is subject to change.

Breakout Sessions at a Glance

MMA domains are listed beneath titles in **bold red**. Rooms will be listed in blue three weeks before the event.

Presenter	Wednesday, July 8		Thursday, July 9		Friday, July 10
	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.
Debbie Aholt	Leading Marzano Mastery Approaches: Building a Guiding Coalition to Drive the Work **1–7** Room TBD	Academic Outcomes: Powerful Proficiency Scales **2a** Room TBD	Collaborative Planning: Instructional Unit Design Using Proficiency Scales **6a** Room TBD	Making Adult Learning a Non-Negotiable: Supporting the Adult Learner Through Change **7c** Room TBD	Let the Evidence Lead: How Parallel Assessments Can Drive the Learning **5a** Room TBD
Robert J. Marzano				Assessment Literacy for Educators: Transforming Assessment, Measurement, and Grading *(with Julia Simms)* **5** Room TBD	Test-Specific Thinking **5** Room TBD
Mike Ruyle	Understanding the Equity Domain **4** Room TBD	Personalizing Instruction in a Mastery-Based System **6a** Room TBD	Instructional Leadership That Transforms: Critical Behaviors That Foster Marzano Mastery Approaches **7c** Room TBD	Student-Teacher Relationships: Know the Humans in Front of You **7** Room TBD	Mastery Approaches as the System to Cultivate Healing and Resilience **2b** Room TBD
Bill Zima	How Marzano Mastery Approaches and Stakeholder Voice Affect a School's Purpose **1–7** Room TBD	Understanding the Nonacademic Outcomes: Metacognitive, Cognitive, and Life Skills **2b** Room TBD	From Philosophy to Proof: Why Performance Scales Matter in System Design **1–7** Room TBD	Agency by Design: Why Student Agency Is a System Outcome, Not an Add-On **3** Room TBD	Grouping Students Using Scales and CBE Assessment **6** Room TBD

Agenda is subject to change.

Session Descriptions—Day 1

KEYNOTE

Bill Zima

Designing for Learning: Purpose as the Foundation of Marzano Mastery Approaches
In this keynote, Bill Zima frames the institute by introducing Marzano Mastery Approaches as a coherent decision-making protocol for designing schools around learning, not compliance. Rather than improving the school through isolated initiatives or disconnected strategies, Bill focuses on the critical role of a context-driven purpose statement—the *why* that shapes every design decision within a mastery-based system. Participants learn that a vision alone is insufficient to guide system design and explore how a clearly articulated purpose defines the intended experience of learning, sets expectations for success, and serves as the primary filter for selecting, aligning, and refining programs and practices.

Participants can expect to:
- Distinguish between a vision and a purpose statement and explain why a clear, context-driven purpose is essential for designing and sustaining a mastery-based system.
- Explore MMA as an integrated system and understand how the domains function collectively to support purposeful decision making rather than as isolated initiatives.
- Use the MMA domains as a learning lens and approach breakout sessions with clarity about how domain-specific questions can identify programs and practices to construct purpose and inform coherent system design.

MORNING BREAKOUT SESSIONS

Debbie Aholt

Leading Marzano Mastery Approaches: Building a Guiding Coalition to Drive the Work [1–7]
The journey to competency-based education cannot be led by one person or even by a traditional leadership team juggling daily operations. In this session, Debbie Aholt explores why a guiding coalition is essential for leading meaningful change and how to select the right people to lead. Participants explore the attributes, mindsets, and skills needed on a guiding coalition, along with the importance of shared leadership, reciprocal accountability, and balancing heads and hearts to navigate predictable turmoil during change.

Participants can expect to:
- Compare the role of a guiding coalition to that of a traditional leadership team.
- Learn the essential attributes of effective members of the guiding coalition.
- Explore a guiding coalition framework to plan and implement Marzano Mastery Approaches.

Mike Ruyle

Understanding the Equity Domain [4]

In a mastery-based learning system, equity means having high expectations for every student, preparing blueprints for success, embracing diversity, respecting individual identities, and valuing cultural heritage.

Participants can expect to:
- Delve into culturally responsive, strength-based teaching in an MBL system.
- Consider how academic press is addressed using MBL principles.
- Discover ways to increase access and literacy through high-quality vocabulary instruction.

Bill Zima

How Marzano Mastery Approaches and Stakeholder Voice Affect a School's Purpose [1–7]

A school's purpose is not a slogan; it is a decision-making tool that shapes system design, programs, and practices. Participants in this session explore how intentional questions found in Marzano Mastery Approaches and authentic stakeholder voice work together to inform a school's purpose and how a clearly articulated purpose, in turn, sharpens the questions leaders ask and the feedback they seek. Bill Zima examines purpose as a time-bound, context-driven statement that defines the intended experience of learning and serves as the primary filter for system-level decisions. Participants gain greater clarity on how stakeholder input, guiding questions, and evidence interact to build coherence and sustain improvement in competency-based systems.

Participants can expect to:
- Develop awareness of how purposeful questioning and stakeholder voice interact to inform their purpose statement.
- Recognize the role of structured protocols in capturing meaningful stakeholder voice.
- Understand how stakeholder-informed purpose supports system coherence and decision making.

AFTERNOON BREAKOUT SESSIONS

Debbie Aholt

Academic Outcomes: Powerful Proficiency Scales [2a]

Proficiency scales clarify what students need to know and how they will progress toward mastery. In this session, Debbie Aholt explores how proficiency scales function as learning progressions that guide instructional planning, assessment, and student ownership. Participants examine how starting with clear target content, identifying essential foundational knowledge and vocabulary, and designing meaningful extensions result in proficiency scales that are coherent, usable, and powerful tools for teaching and learning.

Participants can expect to:
- Understand how proficiency scales are a learning progression that clarifies learning.

- Explore how student-friendly proficiency scales increase clarity and ownership.
- Learn criteria for writing and refining proficiency scales that are coherent, usable, and instructionally aligned.

Mike Ruyle

Personalizing Instruction in a Mastery-Based System [6a]

Personalizing the learning experience aligns with mastery-based learning because teachers aim to differentiate specifically for every student in appropriately challenging and personally relevant ways within individualized time frames. Teachers in this session fluidly identify where students sit on a proficiency scale and provide targeted instructional strategies that they have cultivated through their own learning and practice.

Participants can expect to:
- Delve into how the New Art and Science of Teaching can help teachers effectively differentiate instruction.
- Consider how to increase student engagement and ownership.
- Engage with an array of examples from MBL classrooms that show how to target instruction based on student knowledge.

Bill Zima

Understanding the Nonacademic Outcomes: Metacognitive, Cognitive, and Life Skills [2b]

In this session, Bill Zima situates the Portrait of a Graduate within Domain 2 (student outcomes) with a focus on nonacademic outcomes as defined in the Marzano framework: metacognitive, cognitive, and life skills. Participants examine how these skills and dispositions can be clearly articulated through proficiency scales and intentionally aligned within a coherent system of teaching, assessment, and support. Participants explore how well-defined student outcomes inform a school's purpose, guide system design decisions, and ensure alignment across programs and practices bring your Portrait of a Graduate to life.

Participants can expect to:
- Identify nonacademic student outcome options for system designing.
- Discover how nonacademic metacognitive, cognitive, and life skills serve as the underlying structure that aligns and strengthens external practices (Portrait of a Graduate, social and emotional learning, learner profiles, workforce readiness competencies), creating coherence across the system.
- Recognize how clearly articulated nonacademic outcomes can be translated into proficiency scales that guide instructional, assessment, and support decisions, ensuring a Portrait of a Graduate is operational rather than symbolic.

Session Descriptions—Day 2

Mike Ruyle

From Vision to Action: The *How* of Marzano Mastery Approaches
In this keynote, Mike Ruyle brings Marzano Mastery Approaches to life through concrete examples of implementation from schools actively engaged in mastery-based learning. Participants explore how the seven domains of MMA provide clear direction for building coherent systems that support competency-based education. They reflect on their current reality, connect practices to purpose, and clarify where to focus their efforts to move the work forward.

Participants can expect to:
- See real examples of how schools are implementing the seven MMA domains.
- Reflect on where their school or team is on the mastery-based learning journey.
- Identify priority areas where focused effort will have the greatest impact.
- Gain a clearer direction for next steps toward implementation.

MORNING BREAKOUT SESSIONS

Debbie Aholt

Collaborative Planning: Instructional Unit Design Using Proficiency Scales [6a]
When learning revolves around mastery, students progress at different rates, and teachers shift from delivering content to monitoring how learners interact with and understand it. In this session, Debbie Aholt focuses on how teams plan instruction at the unit level using proficiency scales. Participants examine structures for collaborative planning that support collective responsibility, allow teachers to respond to learner needs, and ensure consistent, high-quality instruction across classrooms.

Participants can expect to:
- Understand why collaborative, unit-level planning is essential in competency-based systems.
- Explore how proficiency scales guide instructional decisions.
- Unpack the seven elements of effective instructional unit design.

Mike Ruyle

Instructional Leadership That Transforms: Critical Behaviors That Foster Marzano Mastery Approaches [7c]
Nothing in education will ever effectively evolve—especially a massive paradigm shift such as the implementation of a Marzano Mastery Approach—unless it is led with focus, commitment, and energy.

Participants can expect to:
- Consider the leadership traits and actions that are pivotal for shifting to a Marzano Mastery Approach in their local context.
- Delve into the vital efforts of leadership to help raise the model with teachers, families, and the larger community.
- Identify specific actions that are important for leadership teams to consider during the change process, especially in the early stages.

Bill Zima

From Philosophy to Proof: Why Performance Scales Matter in System Design [1–7]

Many schools adopt new programs and practices with strong intentions, yet struggle to explain how those decisions connect back to their purpose or even how they know whether the system is actually working. In this session, Bill Zima builds awareness of why performance scales are a critical leadership tool to move the decisions made using Marzano Mastery Approaches and translate them into a system's design philosophy and coherent action. Participants explore the role performance scales play in identifying and aligning programs and practices, distinguishing implementation activity from evidence of impact, and using lagging indicators as proof that the system is producing its intended purpose. The session is designed to orient leaders to the thinking embedded in the performance scale tool, not to build scales in real time.

Participants can expect to:
- Understand how performance scales function as a leadership decision-making tool for operationalizing a school's design philosophy rather than as a mechanism for evaluating individual performance.
- Identify how performance scales help leaders name, align, and organize programs and practices across stages of implementation so they work together in service of a shared purpose.
- Develop awareness of how performance scales use lagging indicator evidence to determine whether programs and practices are producing the intended purpose, helping leaders move from activity-based decisions to evidence-based system refinement.

AFTERNOON BREAKOUT SESSIONS

Debbie Aholt

Making Adult Learning a Non-Negotiable: Supporting the Adult Learner Through Change [7c]

Competency-based practices rise or fall based on how effectively schools support the learning of the adults doing the work. Domain 7 emphasizes that as adult roles shift, professional learning must move beyond compliance to design. In this session, Debbie Aholt highlights how guiding coalitions can create conditions that support teachers and teams in learning, applying, and refining practice over time. Participants explore how clarity, safety, and visible progress turn adult learning from episodic events into an embedded practice at the school.

Participants can expect to:
- Understand the shift in adult roles that occurs in competency-based systems and why adult learning is essential for sustained instructional improvement.
- Examine how to support educators by building clarity, safety, feedback loops, and differentiated learning pathways for adults at different readiness levels.
- Learn practical structures that prioritize adult learning, support and challenge educators, and extend learning in ways that foster collective efficacy and improve student outcomes.

Robert J. Marzano & Julia Simms

Assessment Literacy for Educators: Transforming Assessment, Measurement, and Grading [5]
In this session, Robert J. Marzano and Julia Simms provide K–12 educators with the essential knowledge and understanding needed to critique existing assessment practices and build a more equitable, classroom-centered paradigm. Participants learn about the limitations and biases of large-scale assessments, recognizing that a single test score is often unreliable and should never be the primary piece of information for decision making. Dr. Marzano and Dr. Simms focus on rethinking classroom assessments, introducing the necessity of unidimensionality and dismantling the misleading practices of using points and percentages. Participants learn how to design assessments around explicit proficiency scales for declarative and procedural knowledge by defining an unambiguous continuum of learning for every measurement topic. Finally, participants explore grading practice and how to use multiple formative scores to compute accurate summative scores (using mathematical models or mounting evidence) and ensure grades reflect academic mastery and not nonacademic factors like behavior or compliance.

Participants in this session:
- Critically evaluate the technical characteristics of large-scale assessments (sampling, alignment, construct-irrelevant variance) to understand their limitations and mitigate their influence in the classroom.
- Design and score multiple types of classroom assessments (traditional, performance, probing discussions) using a proficiency scale to ensure unidimensionality and establish an explicit knowledge continuum for a measurement topic.
- Transition from vague terminology by using formative scores to inform a summative score, actively avoiding the detrimental practice of relying on a single test score.
- Apply methods to accurately aggregate scores (such as the mathematical model of best fit or the method of mounting evidence) and convert them to traditional grades, ensuring validity and reliability in their final reporting.

Mike Ruyle

Student-Teacher Relationships: Know the Humans in Front of You [7]
In this session, Mike Ruyle addresses the specific teacher actions that create a welcoming and supportive classroom. Participants consider how relationships can enhance student engagement and learning.

Participants can expect to:
- Discuss how to use verbal and nonverbal behaviors that indicate affection for students.
- Review activities that enhance relationships with all students.
- Consider how relationships lead to healing and resilience.

Bill Zima

Agency by Design: Why Student Agency Is a System Outcome, Not an Add-On [3]
Student agency is often discussed as a desirable trait or disposition, yet in competency-based systems, it is intentionally designed, supported, and sustained through coherent programs and practices. In this session, Bill Zima builds awareness of how Marzano Mastery Approaches define agency within Domain 3, not as unstructured choice or independence, but as learners taking intentional action toward learning goals within supportive structures. Participants explore how agency develops through setting goals, taking action, encountering obstacles, and using reflection and feedback. They review examples of classroom environments, routines, and shared expectations that create the conditions for students to act independently and responsibly. Bill addresses what lives inside the agency domain and why it matters for student equity, engagement, and learning.

Participants can expect to:
- Develop an awareness of agency as a structured process in which learners set goals, take action, encounter obstacles, and reflect.
- Discuss elements such as reflection routines, standard operating procedures, shared purpose statements, and codes of collaboration, all of which create the conditions for students to act independently and make productive learning decisions.
- Develop awareness of how intentionally designed agency practices help all students meet high expectations by providing clarity, support, and voice, thereby reducing reliance on implicit norms and increasing access to success.

Session Descriptions—Day 3

Debbie Aholt

Let the Evidence Lead: How Parallel Assessments Can Drive the Learning [5a]

In a competency-based classroom, evidence should drive learning and instructional decisions. In this session, Debbie Aholt focuses on how classroom assessments aligned to proficiency scales generate meaningful evidence of learning and how parallel assessments allow teachers to gather reliable evidence over time. Participants examine how using multiple, comparable assessment opportunities helps teams respond to student needs, facilitate instruction, and keep learning at the center.

Participants can expect to:
- Explore how parallel assessments provide targeted feedback and respond to student needs in real time.
- Discover how multiple, comparable measures increase reliability and guide teachers to better facilitate instruction.
- Examine assessment opportunities that collect evidence across formats and time.

Robert J. Marzano

Test-Specific Thinking [5]

Large-scale assessment and standardized testing significantly influence students' educational opportunities and future success. In this session, Robert J. Marzano equips educators with research-based strategies to help students better navigate the structures and patterns commonly found in standardized test questions. Grounded in an in-depth analysis of assessment frames in English language arts and mathematics, participants explore how understanding test item structures enhances instructional practices, strengthens assessment design, and supports equitable student preparation.

Participants in this session :
- Examine recurrent structural patterns (item frames) common in ELA and mathematics assessment questions.
- Analyze sample test questions to identify the skills and responses required by various item frames.
- Integrate test item structures into classroom instruction to familiarize students with the thinking processes required on standardized exams.
- Strengthen students' confidence and improve performance by demystifying test structures and promoting intentional preparation.

Mike Ruyle

Mastery Approaches as the System to Cultivate Healing and Resilience [2b]

Schools move forward when they design an integrated system that serves the whole learner and is responsive to their specific context. Within Marzano Mastery Approaches, student success depends on intentionally aligning academic and nonacademic outcomes, and educators must recognize that student well-being, resilience, and self-regulation create the conditions necessary for academic learning to occur. When these elements are coherently designed and implemented, systems are better positioned to produce sustained achievement for all students.

Participants can expect to:
- Explain how an integrated school model within MMA aligns academic outcomes with nonacademic outcomes, including metacognitive, cognitive, and life skills to support learning for the whole child.
- Discuss the role of student well-being, self-regulation, and resilience as enabling conditions for academic learning rather than as separate or competing priorities within school improvement efforts.
- Identify how system-level alignment across outcomes, programs, and practices creates the conditions for sustained student achievement, particularly when design decisions are responsive to a school's specific context.

Bill Zima

Grouping Students Using Scales and CBE Assessment [6]

Effective instruction in a competency-based classroom requires more than strong lesson plans; it requires that teachers respond in real time to evidence of learning. In this session, Bill Zima builds awareness of how proficiency scales support adaptive execution of teachers' lesson plans by helping them intentionally group learners for what they need when they need it. Participants explore how classroom assessment evidence, proficiency scales, and instructional resources work together to inform short-term grouping decisions, including whole-class instruction, small groups, and individual support. Rather than focusing on specific strategies or tools, participants explore why grouping for instruction is a core instructional decision and how proficiency scales provide the clarity teachers need to adjust instruction responsively and equitably.

Participants can expect to:
- Explore how proficiency scales clarify where students are in their progression, allowing teachers to make intentional, short-term grouping decisions based on evidence rather than pacing guides or fixed grouping.
- Discuss how responsive grouping that happens before, during, and after instruction supports strong instructional practice by enabling teachers to adjust learning plans in real time based on student evidence.
- Understand how varied instructional approaches and resources can be used to support different groups of learners simultaneously while maintaining coherence and focus on progression toward proficiency.

Debbie Aholt

Get the Learning Loud: When the Purpose, Practices, and Proof Become the Noise

In every school, something is always loud—competing priorities, accountability demands, or new curriculum materials. Too often, the learning itself gets lost in the noise. Educators in this session intentionally amplify what matters most: the learning. Using the Marzano Mastery Approaches, Debbie Aholt connects purpose, practices, and programs to the proof of purpose. Participants reflect on what currently captures their system's attention and identify how MMA practices can make learning the most visible, celebrated, and sustained work in their schools.

Participants can expect to:
- Reflect on what is currently loud in their schools and evaluate whether it amplifies or distracts from the purpose.
- Examine how MMA practices provide evidence of learning and system effectiveness.
- Explore how purpose, practices, and proof work together.