

Public Abstract

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Title:HIGH QUALITY PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT: A CASE STUDY OF A LEADERSHIP TEAM'S PROCESSES AND ACTIONS

There is a lack of information reported about the processes and actions of leadership teams responsible for leading professional development in schools, specifically schools recognized for demonstrating high quality professional development. In recent years, a sense of urgency to increase student achievement and teacher quality at high levels has led to an ever-increasing interest among schools in developing a professional learning community (PLC) model of professional development. Out of all the historical efforts at the national, state, and local levels to improve professional learning, "only a handful have had a measurable impact on teacher learning" (Sparks, 2005, p. 158).

There is information to be gleaned about leadership teams' processes and actions used when coordinating professional development for teachers. Recognizing the increased pressures associated with federal and state mandates linked to student achievement and teacher quality and the disconnect between what research has found to be effective professional development practices and what is being implemented in today's schools, there is a gap to be filled in terms of what allows schools to effectively reach adult and organizational learning through professional development. A question is raised whether this proclaimed evidence of a "knowing-doing" gap (Pfeffer & Sutton, 2000) could be linked to a lack of schools not having a solid understanding of the leadership team's processes and actions involved in achieving exemplary status.

This descriptive case study explores a rural Missouri school recognized for its implementation of a high-quality professional development program. Using a leadership team to plan for and support professional development learning experiences, this study examines whether or not this Missouri school's leadership team's processes and actions could be potential indicators which allow some schools to be able to bridge the gap between professional development actions and adult learning.