

THE ROLE OF LEADERSHIP CAPACITY IN SUSTAINING THE SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT INITIATIVE OF SCHOOLWIDE POSITIVE BEHAVIOR SUPPORTS

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ABSTRACT

The purpose for this study was to examine what occurred within schools successfully implementing and sustaining school change through the examination of characteristics of leadership capacity. Leadership capacity was identified as broad-based, skillful participation that promoted the advancement of the capabilities of many organizational members to lead (Lambert, 2005b). The intent of the mixed design examination was to provide insights into building leadership capacity for sustaining lasting school improvement, thus impacting student achievement.

Research indicated that schools successful in sustaining school improvement build capacity for leadership within the organization (Harris & Lambert, 2003). The characteristics of leadership capacity were studied in school organizations implementing the school improvement initiative known as Schoolwide Positive Behavior Supports (SW-PBS) by investigating the factors within the school organization that resulted in some schools developing the leadership capacity to implement and sustain change while other school organizations implementing the same change initiative did not sustain the initiative effectively.

Quantitative analysis used to compare responses of teachers in schools identified as successfully sustaining school improvement with responses of teachers in schools identified as not yet successfully sustaining improvement resulted in the finding that there was a significant difference between the two school groups in all of the characteristics of leadership capacity. The effective size for each of the leadership capacity characteristics was positive and each characteristic was statistically significant for schools successfully sustaining school improvement. Principals of schools successful in sustaining school improvement demonstrated behaviors that promoted, supported, and encouraged the building of leadership capacity for lasting school improvement.

Successful school leadership builds trust, develops focus for the school, and convenes dialogue about teaching and learning. Implications for successful school leadership for sustaining school improvement involves taking additional care to enable broad teacher involvement in creating meaning and committing to the values that meaning represents for the school, in sharing knowledge through questioning and inquiry, to participate fully in decision-making based on evidence, and reflecting on how practice impacts student learning.