

Public Abstract

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The problem pertained to a school district's capacity to continually address through the strategic planning and restructuring process, the external and resulting internal changes caused by new accountability requirements for subgroups and changing community demographics at the rate in which these changes were occurring.

Working as an insider in collaboration with other insiders, this participatory action research study, through two action research cycles of diagnosing, planning, taking action, and evaluating, explored the implementation of preK-12 vertical teaming in school district with a traditional culture. This study was guided by two research questions: (a) To what extent, if at all, have the preK-12 vertical teams understood the principles and characteristics of teaming?; and (b) What is the experience of the vertical teams in the organization learning to function from a radical transition during a top-down leadership to teaming?

Cycle One was the implementation of district teaming focusing on district teaming structures and administrator professional development. Cycle Two was the implementation of preK-12 vertical teams led by teacher leaders and a new district evaluative team comprised of teacher leaders over the preK-12 vertical teams with a focus on teacher leader and team professional development.

Data were analyzed through the context of sustained school district reform, culture, distributed leadership and teaming. Through embedded professional development and team experiences, participants valued teaming but had difficulty applying team processes without support due to extreme discomfort and distrust. Implications for this research document the difficulty of implementing teaming in traditional school district culture.