

ACTION RESEARCH INVESTIGATION INTO THE PROCESS OF TEAMING
IN ONE SCHOOL DISTRICT

A Dissertation
presented to
the Faculty of the Graduate School
at the University of Missouri- Columbia

In Partial Fulfillment
Of the Requirement for the Degree
Doctor of Education

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DECEMBER 2007

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IN ONE SCHOOL DISTRICT

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DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my family:

My dad, for teaching me to believe anything is possible;

My husband, for supporting me through this process;

My children, for keeping me focused on what is important in life; and

My siblings, friends, and colleagues, for being my cheerleaders.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to acknowledge the following people for helping me with my research:

I would like to thank Dr. Margaret Grogan, for her refinement of this action research process through reflective questioning. I would like to thank the Educational Leadership and Policy Analysis graduate team for giving me such a strong foundation in leadership theory in order to conduct this research.

I would like to thank the superintendents and teams of Maxville who made this action research project possible: Steering Committee, District Leadership Team, District Collaboration Focus Team, and the Communication Arts, Mathematics, Science, and Social Studies PreK-12 Vertical Teams.

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ACTION RESEARCH INVESTIGATION INTO TEAMING IN A
SCHOOL DISTRICT

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ABSTRACT

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 a 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.

Through a series of three or four three-hour meetings with four vertical teams, two three-hour meetings with the Data Analysis and Assessment Team, two interviews with teacher leaders, personal journaling, and analysis of team artifacts such as team meeting notes and professional development, this study documented the experience of

teaming and the application of team processes in the preK-12 vertical teams and Data Analysis and Assessment Team.

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 documented the difficulty of implementing teaming in traditional school district culture.

CHAPTER ONE

Introduction to the Study

Background-National and State

Within the last five years school districts in the United States have been faced with many new challenges regarding student proficiency, curriculum standards, increased diversity, federal and state compliance laws, monetary restrictions, and increased accountability for performance (Murphy, 2003). The No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB) federal mandate alters public school accountability (Heath, 2003; Petersen & Young, 2004). Heath (2003) stated:

All schools in districts that accept Title I federal funds must make detailed annual reports on the progress of all children...[including] minority children, children with disabilities, children with limited English proficiency, and children from low-income families. If the district is not successful in raising the level of all students, immediately and steadily, to the state-defined level of proficiency, the district will lose control (p. 1).

NCLB changes the measurement tools by which schools are compared and labeled successful. According to Petersen and Young (2004), NCLB surpasses past efforts in accountability by providing specific compliance guidelines as well as school and student achievement mandates. Data from annual assessment results are utilized for data-driven decisions concerning instruction and resource allocation.

According to NCLB, by 2014 all students must be proficient in reading, math, and science. Each state determines the levels of proficiency as each year passes to the

targeted 2014 of all students being proficient. The phrase all students includes the subgroups of students with disabilities, English language learners, major racial groups, and economically disadvantaged students.

If a school district is not successful in meeting the level of proficiency for adequate yearly progress (AYP) set by the state, certain steps are initiated (National Research Service, 2003). AYP is reported on annual school report cards. Parents are able to compare information concerning quality of education between schools (Petersen & Young, 2004). If a school receiving Title I funds is unable to meet AYP for two years consecutively, the school offers the students' parents the option to transfer to another public school. If a school fails to meet AYP for three consecutive years, supplemental instructional services must be made available with the parents choosing the provider. Four consecutive years requires corrective actions which may involve staff or curriculum replacement or restructuring to improve the school (National Research Service, 2003).

NCLB links the quality of the school staff to student's academic performance. Therefore, NCLB requires all teachers of core academic subjects of English, reading or language arts, mathematics, science, foreign languages, civics and government, economics, arts, history and geography to be highly qualified (National Research Service, 2003). NCLB directly affects every teacher in any Title I school system in the United States (Heath, 2003). In addition to teachers being highly qualified, the staff development and curriculum and instruction utilized by a school must meet standards of scientifically based research.

NCLB changes the way schools do business in changing the accountability measures by which schools are assessed. In Missouri, school districts are held accountable by the Department of Secondary and Elementary Education (DESE) through the Missouri School Improvement Program (MSIP) Standards and Indicators Manual-Fourth Cycle with the performance standards of MSIP being annually reported through the Annual Performance Report (APR). Graduation and student attendance requirements for Missouri have been increased. Missouri school districts are required to have a five-year Comprehensive School Improvement Plan (CSIP).

Missouri school districts face unique opportunities in addressing the dissonance between current practices and performance in school districts to meeting MSIP and APR standards resulting from NCLB. Missouri school districts face new challenges in responding to, initiating, and managing change as a result of the external forces of federal and state mandates and the internal forces of current student performance (Davis, 2003; Morgan 1997; Tierney, 1988).

Background – Community and District

Maxville School District, located in rural Missouri, serves a student population of approximately 4,300 students ranging over a 390 square-mile area. The geographical nature of the district creates isolated pockets of students and communities. One hundred percent of the students attending the eight schools in the district are eligible to be bused from nine small outlying communities. Some students ride the school bus for over an hour from home to school.

Maxville School District is comprised of eight school buildings (See Table A).

Table A

School Building Size, Location and Grade Span

Building	Size	Location	Grade Span
One Elementary (OE)	866	Maxville Campus	PK-3 *
Two Elementary (TE)	154	Teamville	K-5
Three Elementary (THE)	250	Libertyville	K-5
Four Elementary (FE)	722	Maxville Campus	4-6
Maxville Middle School (MMS)	652	Maxville Campus	7-8
Maxville High School (MHS)	1383	Maxville Campus	9-12
Maxville Technical Center (MTC)	802	Maxville Campus	9-12
Maxville Alternative School (MAS)	102	Maxville	6-12**

Note. *PK refers to the Special Education Early Childhood Program, not a regular preschool program.

**Most students at Maxville Alternative School are grades 10-12 with a few students from 6-9.

Five of the buildings are located on a central campus in Maxville. Maxville Alternative School, also located in Maxville, is not part of the central campus. Two Elementary School is within a thirty- minute drive of central campus at Teamville, Missouri. Three Elementary School is within a thirty-minute drive of central campus at Libertyville, Missouri. Maxville School District is currently building a new high school with a projected completion date of May 2007. Upon the completion of the new high school, the five buildings on central campus and the two outlying elementary schools will also be reorganized into different grade span configurations. These outlying elementary schools

will be K-4 schools. The buildings on central campus will be a PK-2 elementary, 3-4 elementary, 5-6 elementary, 7-8 middle school, and 9-12 high school.

Maxville School District has experienced many changes in the feeder communities in the last five years. According to the Missouri Census Data Center (MCDC) Demographic Profile Three Trend Report, the population for Ausra County has increased by 35% from 1990 to 2000. The population of Libertyville, one of the communities in Maxville School District, has increased 41% since 1990, with the minority population increasing by 1.8% (moving.com, 2005). As an indicator of growth in Libertyville, construction costs increased by 62% based on analysis of commercial construction data from 1988 to 1999. From 2000 to 2005, commercial construction costs increased another 42%. According to the Economic Lifeline published by the Missouri Department of Transportation (MoDOT), “MoDOT estimates the new traffic generated by two new Libertyville developments could reach peak levels of 4400 cars per hour when the large new residential, commercial and retail projects are completed” (MoDOT, 2005, p. 2). The MCDC Demographic Profile Three Trend Report states that the work force by occupation in management, professional, and related occupations has increased 2.8% from 1990 to 2000. The production, transportation and material moving occupations have increased by 8.3%. The types of jobs being created in the Maxville School District area are mostly minimum wage. In comparing wage rates in the area to the rest of Missouri, the overall average wage rate in the area is 23% less than the wage rate for similar occupations in Missouri (AmerenUE, 2003). The poverty status has decreased a half percent within the community.

Having impacted Maxville School District, these community changes have resulted in district changes. According to the DESE Report Cards for Maxville School District, a change in district population from 2000 to 2004 resulted in a one percent district change. Individual building populations ranged from a -24% to a 7% change in population during that same time period. Based on the Fall 2005 Maxville School District Letter, from 2004 to 2005, the district population increased 3.6% with individual building populations ranging from -2% to 13% change. As of March 2007, all of the individual buildings in the district are crowded. Based on the Strategic Planning PowerPoint on September 23, 2005, four of the eight buildings were over enrollment capacity, with three buildings being within 50 students of enrollment capacity. As the new high school is being built, the Mathematics Department at Maxville High School has already outgrown the originally designed wing, scheduled to be completed May 2007. Increases in additional buildings and personnel create a continued diligence in district finances.

According to the Maxville School District Report Card (2004), this predominately white district has seen an increase in minority population from 1.2% in 2000 to 3.4% in 2005. Although the poverty rate in the feeder communities has decreased by half a percent, the free and reduced lunch trend has increased district-wide from 34.5% in 2000 to 42.2% in 2004. Data produced in the October 14, 2005 Strategic Planning Committee PowerPoint presentation indicated the free and reduced lunch trends in each building ranged from 20% to 55% in 2000. In 2004, the trends increased to 23% to 64% of the building student population. Based on these figures, Maxville School District's level of diversity, viewed through the lens of socio-economic status, is increasing.

Maxville School District demonstrates excellence in education and has received the prestigious “Distinction in Performance” award from DESE for the last ten years (District Letter, Fall 2005). On the surface, appearances of Maxville School District student performance seem to indicate no concern. However, further analysis provides additional information. First, NCLB requires progress of all children. An examination of the Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) Report for Maxville R-III School for 2004 stated the required state proficiency goal for Communication Arts in 2005 was 38.8% of each disaggregated group. Therefore, 38.8% of each group was required to score in or above the proficiency category in Communication Arts on the Missouri Assessment Program (MAP). In 2004 the Communication Arts state proficiency goal was 20.4% and out of the ten disaggregated categories, Maxville School District met this goal in all disaggregated groups except students with disabilities and Hispanic students. In 2005, with the proficiency goal increasing to 38.8%, three categories were not met: students with disabilities, students with limited English proficiency and Hispanic students. In mathematics, the state proficiency goal increased from 10.3% in 2004 to 26.6% in 2005 in each of the ten disaggregated groups. In 2004 all but one of the ten groups met the proficiency level. In 2005, students with disabilities continued to not meet the proficiency target. When the expectation includes all students, Maxville School District can no longer depend on the white, middle-class students to carry the scores in the district. The increase in state expectation for student achievement for proficiency status in communication arts and mathematics of 100% in 2014 has created a concern for the district.

In analyzing grade level MAP scores district-wide in Communication Arts, Mathematics, Social Studies, and Science by comparing the differences in the MAP Index Scores from 2001 to 2005, all Maxville School District Map Index scores are above the average MAP Index Score for Missouri. Comparing the 2005 MAP Index Scores for Maxville School District against 2001 past scores reveal a different perspective (See Table B).

Table B

Percent Comparison of 2001 to 2005 MAP Index Scores

Academic Area	Percent Change of MAP Index Scores from 2001-2005		
Communication Arts	Grade 3	Grade 7	Grade 11
	-2%	-3.7%	-1.5%
Mathematics	Grade 4	Grade 8	Grade 10
	-5.5%	-5%	-.5%
Social Studies	Grade 4	Grade 8	Grade 11
	-4%	-6.7%	-16%
Science	Grade 3	Grade 7	Grade 10
	+8.3%	+1%	-16.3%

In comparing academic performance in Maxville School District with the state performance, the district is performing above the average MAP Index Score. However, in comparing Maxville School District with past scores, nine of the twelve MAP Index Scores considered have decreased from 2001 to 2005. This decrease indicates a concern.

In preparation for beginning the Maxville School District Comprehensive School Improvement Process, the district conducted an internal Mock MSIP Review to collect baseline data to assess District compliance with MSIP standards. According to this Mock MSIP Review, the district has dedicated many resources to provide additional resources and interventions for students. Interventions range from the addition of Reading Recovery, two literacy coaches, Title I staff, an alternative school, and the inclusion of district-wide before and after school tutoring programs. Despite the interventions and the financial support behind these intervention programs, the MAP Index Scores are decreasing.

Also, the expected level for attendance has been raised to 95.7% in Missouri. For the past four years, the district attendance has remained steady at 94%, with individual buildings ranging from 92% to 95%. This expected level for attendance raises an additional concern in the district.

In summary, external and internal factors are impacting the Maxville School District. The community demographics in race and work force are changing. Population is increasing at a faster rate than had occurred in the past ten years. The free and reduced lunch count and the minority population rates are increasing. Federal and state expectations require more accountability for disaggregated groups. Student performance is decreasing in small increments in spite of an increase in interventions. Student performance based on the disaggregated groups is not meeting state and federal expectations. A new high school is currently being constructed; will upon completion result in grade level reconfiguration of the buildings. Increasing student population, new

buildings, and student interventions require diligence in the management of school finances. These changing internal and external factors in the district have been comprehensively analyzed as the district initiating a new CSIP process.

Maxville's CSIP Process

To meet the DESE requirement of creating a new five-year CSIP Plan, a baseline of Maxville School District data was collected through an internal Mock MSIP Review in all service and program areas utilizing Fourth Cycle MSIP Standards and Indicators. The district then met with outside consultants from Central Missouri State University and the Office of Social and Economic Data Analysis (OSEDA) to review data, brainstorm and plan a basic process for the district. The preliminary process incorporated research on the following concepts: (a) equal representation of stakeholders (Cervero & Wilson, 1994; Patton, 1997); (b) plan, do, study, act cycle (Demming, 1986); (c) strategic communication plans (Armistead, 2002); (d) high performing teams (Katzenbach & Smith, 1993); (e) SMART goals, goals that are strategic and specific, measurable, attainable, results-based, and time bound (Conzemius & O'Neil, 2002); and (f) assessment literacy (Hargreaves & Fullan, 1998). The process discussed began as a CSIP Process and transformed into a Strategic Planning Process. This new name indicated the district initiating a new way of doing business, changing district culture, and creating a living, breathing document, not just replacing a CSIP Plan.

One of the first hurdles addressed dealt with data accessibility in the district. Past years of student achievement were stored in different formats and in different software programs, but also lacked systematic connection to student demographics. A primary

focus in the process dealt with data driven decisions and measurable goals. Data were reorganized to allow accessibility for manipulation by the teams. A new structure was being developed throughout the district, going from no teams in November 2004 to having a two-tier teaming structure at the district and building level. The new way of doing business also incorporated going from top-down leadership to collaborative, team-led leadership in order to better meet the every changing needs of the district and to incorporate a continuous cycle of inquiry.

In the fall of 2005, the district began implementation of the Strategic Planning Process. In addition to identifying areas of concern, a representative, thirty-member Strategic Planning Committee created new mission, vision, and a set of guiding principles for the district. The Steering Committee created the District's SMART goals (Conzemius & O'Neil, 2002) based on the input from the Strategic Planning Committee. The communication update for the Strategic Planning Committee listed the five SMART goals as:

- 1) Attendance: Within two years the district attendance rate will increase from 93.6% to 95.7 % as indicated in the District's APR (Annual Performance Report).
- 2) Communication Arts: By the end of the 2005-2006 school year, 45% of all students in the District will be at the advanced or proficiency level on the Communication Arts state test.
- 3) Mathematics: By the end of the 2005-2006 school year, 35% of all students in the District will be at the advanced or proficiency level on the Mathematics state test.

- 4) Communication and Collaboration: Within 5 years, the district will evolve as a learning community with 100% of all buildings working as collaborative teams to continually improve student learning and achievement as measured by the team's ability to meet building and district goals.
- 5) To maintain the financial integrity of the district during the next five years (2005-2010), the District will maintain, a twenty percent balance in the Teachers' and Incidental Funds. The District will maintain a balance in Capital Projects Fund that is, at a minimum, the following year's obligations for lease purchase principal and interest payments plus \$1,000,000. The District will maintain a balance in Debt Service Fund that is, at a minimum, seventy-five percent of the following year's obligations in the Debt Service principal and interest payments.

Administrator professional development focused on the new mission, vision, and guiding principles, strategic planning process, strategic planning structure, teaming, SMART goals (Conzemius & O'Neil, 2002), and collaboration began in November 2005. As of April 2006, the district level teams were launched to begin development of action plans based upon the District's five SMART goals (Conzemius & O'Neil, 2002).

Statement of the Problem

The problem or challenge for the school district resided in determining how to respond adequately to the new accountability mandates imposed by federal and state laws. In addition to NCLB, Maxville was also experiencing changing community demographics and social changes. Therefore, the problem pertained to Maxville'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.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study was to investigate the planning and initial implementation of the Maxville strategic planning and restructuring response to CSIP as the process unfolds using the conceptual underpinnings of the appropriateness of teaming, use of distributed leadership, and changing of school culture for sustained reform.

Research Questions

Two research questions guided the study:

1. To what extent, if at all, have the preK-12 vertical teams understood the characteristics and principles of teaming?
2. 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?

Brief Outline of Methods

To conduct this study, I chose participative action research as a method of inquiry. Action research denotes research that was currently in process or “in action.” In this collaborative inquiry process cycles of diagnosing, planning action, taking action, and evaluating action spirals through the research in action (Coghlan & Brannick, 2005; Herr & Anderson, 2005).

Action research differs from traditional research in many aspects. In participative action research the researcher participates and is involved in the research in action. Action research depends upon the relationships, democratic dialogue, collaboration and values of the participants who have ownership of the problem (Coghlan & Brannick, 2005; Herr & Anderson, 2005). According to Reason & Torbert (2001), the contribution of action research resides in its creation of connection between knowledge and theory with community action in practice. Action research is applicable to everyday organizational issues involving change (Coghlan & Brannick, 2005).

As of March 2007, cycle one of this action research study was completed. The district diagnosed the issues of concern by conducting an internal MSIP review; planned action by creating a new mission, vision and set of guiding principles, and district-wide SMART goals; and evaluated action plans by conducting teacher and administrator surveys; and the annual Strategic Planning Committee review. The district was currently preparing to finalize the planning of action through the changing of the organizational structure through teaming. The action steps were finalized through the various district and building level teams focusing on the district level SMART goals.

Limitations

The methodology I chose for this study utilized the lens of participatory action research. This study focused an in-depth look at one institution. A large scale survey type of study targeted at districts undergoing the same kind of reform would yield more generalizable results. The results of an action research study were not meant to be generalizable. However, in situations in which the context of the study was similar,

knowledge might be transferable. My own role as researcher and a high level administrator during the whole process allowed my administrator privileges and insights into the process. As an administrator, my role might influence the degree to which people share information. My perspective as an administrator influenced this view of the reform process and the design of the study. I tried to lessen the impact of these limitations in various ways as discussed throughout the methods chapter.

Definition of Key Terms

The key terms and definitions, essential to the foundation of the study, are provided:

Action research. “An emergent inquiry process in which applied behavioral science knowledge is integrated with existing organizational knowledge and applied to solve real organizational problems. It is simultaneously concerned with bringing about change in organizations, in developing self-help competencies in organizational members and adding to scientific knowledge. Finally, it is an evolving process that is undertaken in a spirit of collaboration and co-inquiry” (Shani & Pasmore, 1985, p. 439).

Culture. “A pattern of shared basic assumptions that was learned by a group as it solved its problems of external adaptation and internal integration, that has worked well enough to be considered valid and, therefore, to be taught to new members as the correct way to perceive, think, and feel in relation to those problems” (Schein, 2004, p. 17).

Fist-to-Five. According Conzemius and O’Neill (2002), fist-to-five is a consensus tool in which team members “indicate their level of support by raising one hand either closed in a fist or with one to five fingers raised.” The level of support ranges from a fist,

which means “no...We need to find an alternative”, to five fingers, which means “All for it...I can be a leader for this decision” (p. 95).

High performing teams. According to Katzenbach and Smith (1993) “a team is a small number of people with complementary skills who are committed to a common purpose, set of performance goals, and approach for which they hold themselves mutually accountable” (p. 112).

Learning organization. According to Preskill and Torres (1999), a learning organization is “an organization [that]...foster[s] teamwork, communities of practice, and other social forms of learning” (p. 23).

Professional Learning Communities. According to DuFour, DuFour, Eaker, and Many (2006), professional learning communities (PLC) are “composed of collaborative teams whose members work interdependently to achieve common goals linked to the purpose of learning for all” (p. 3).

SMART goals. According to Conzemius and O’Neill (2002), SMART goals are tools in which the goals are strategic and specific, measurable, attainable, results-based, and time-bound (p. 4).

PreK-12 Vertical Team. A team comprised of representatives from every level in the school district from preK to grade 12. This team represents a “vertical slice” of the school district that allows for evaluation of cyclical components and communication between sub-systems within a specified project or setting (CERN, 2003).

Summary

This study utilized action research to study Maxville's response to district concerns initiated by data analysis in the CSIP Process. Resulting internal changes caused by new accountability requirements for subgroups and changing community demographics through the strategic planning and restructuring process question Maxville's capacity to continually address and sustain reform at the rate in which these changes are occurring. The following review of literature includes organizational literature in relation to sustained reform, culture, distributed leadership, teaming, and action research.

CHAPTER TWO

Review of Related Literature

Introduction

The following literature focuses on organizations in general, as well as on schools. Organizational elements in sustained reform, culture, distributed leadership, teaming, and action research will be addressed. Relevant literature in each topic area is also supplemented with specific research on school organizations. The literature informs the kind of reform being attempted in this study. The design of the study, data collected and findings will be analyzed in light of the research utilizing the organizational elements within this chapter.

Sustained School District Reform

Tierney (1988), Davis (2003), and Morgan (1997) describe organizations in the context of experiencing, responding and changing as a result of outside factors shaped by forces within the organization. The outside environment is changing rapidly due to globalization, technology and workforce changes (Preskill & Torres, 1999). These reasons for environmental change have deemed knowledge as the most valued resource (Preskill & Torres). Since knowledge is ever evolving, change is a constant; and makes change management a requirement of organizations (Adams & Hamm, 2005; Davis; Julius, Balridge, & Pfeffer, 1999). School districts are not exempt from change and reform (Adams & Hamm).

Concerns with School District Sustained Reform

In 2002, a RAND study by Berends, Bodilly and Nataraj Kirby discussed studies based on ten years of research documenting disappointing results of school district reform. Typically school districts are not conducive to reform. Berends, Bodilly and Nataraj Kirby stated that applied research and continuous evaluation in a district are necessary components of attempts to increase student achievement through use of best practices. This type of school improvement requires individual schools and teachers to change, not necessarily an external change agent such as an outside evaluation or change in policy. Also, in order to have sustained reform, the school district must provide a supportive environment for the reform and be supported through policies and practices at the state level that facilitate school improvement and become embedded within district culture. School districts also need high quality external support to build capacity and leadership in addition to broadening community support and understanding of necessary components for school improvement and redesign (Berends, Bodilly, & Nataraj Kirby, 2002).

Schmoker (2004) notes similar concerns because school district reform is often too general, non-specific and non-measurable, minimal reform results. Fullan (2000) further identifies school district reform as being unsuccessful in sustaining initial reform efforts due to lack of coherence in the system, participation and cooperation of all relevant parties, and the requisite institutionalization of changes. Fullan utilizes an inside/outside metaphor describing multiple layers of educational reform incorporating the school culture as a collaborative professional learning community in cooperation with

external forces from parents, community, technology, government policy, and the teaching profession needed to assist with school reform.

Fullan, Rolheiser, Mascall and Edge (2002) conducted an analysis on large-scale, multi-year studies on reform models showing that even though the models were implemented, the cultural change needed for continuous school district improvement was not produced. These authors define six aspects of school district capacity that must interconnectedly exist in order to achieve sustainable reform. These aspects establish and coordinate ongoing accountability and capacity-building and include: (1) facilitating capacity in all schools in the district by establishing an accountability and capacity building initiative across the district, (2) investing in the leadership roles at the school level, (3) recognizing learning through the building of community and commitment for district success as a whole, (4) focusing on assessment literacy, (5) developing interventions for schools persistently failing, and (6) continually focusing initiatives through systematic inventory to achieve greater coherence (Fullan, Rolheiser, Mascall, & Edge, 2002).

Barriers to Sustained School District Reform

Many authors identify barriers to school district reform. According to Marshall (2003), a major deterrent to school district reform exists in staff attitude and expectations of student achievement in relation to student demographics. Staff attitude must support the idea that students with low socio-economic backgrounds are to achieve. Mai (2004) also stated that attitude in reference to maintaining the status quo in personal and professional arenas also impacts school district reform. Burch and Spillane (2004)

mention that four barriers exist at the central office level that prevent change. School relationships are seen as low priorities. Communication within the district is conducted through directives instead of dialogue. The administrator has a lack of understanding of school issues, and central office staff lack expertise around teaching and learning. Fullan, Rolheiser, Mascall and Edge (2002), Copland (2003), and Murphy and Datnow (2003) all state the impact of staff turnover, both teacher and administrator, as a key concern in sustainability of school district reform. Fullan, Rolheiser, Mascall and Edge also add resources, parent and community engagement, and focusing district initiatives as other deterrents to sustaining school district reform.

Avoiding Deterrents to Sustained School District Reform

In order to avoid deterrents to sustaining school district reform, Fullan, Rolheiser, Mascall, and Edge (2002) supported reflection through district-wide improvement in a long, multistage process involving awareness, planning, implementation, and reflection resulting in shared expertise as the driver of instructional change. The role of the administrator becomes a facilitator of reflective practice, challenging program regularities and providing resources to staff for implementation of new ideas and programs. The role of the school district is to provide a knowledge base that continually guides efforts to improve student learning and achievement. This “knowledge base includes understanding the change process, building professional learning communities..., assessment literacy, [and] knowledge building and sharing” (Fullan, Rolheiser, Mascall, & Edge, 2002, p. 3). Kilgore and Jones (2003) further support Fullan in that leaders must be given tools to create leadership teams that “increase the commitment of educators and improve the

capacity of the school to make all children high achievers” (p. 55). Farrell (2003) extends the focusing of district initiatives to sustained effort through “curiosity and enterprise; resilience; tenacity; doing without; teamwork, and compassion” (p. 21). Fullan, Bertani, and Quinn (2004) support district-wide reform through ten components: (a) leaders with a coherent driving conceptualization; (b) a collective moral purpose; (c) the structure and roles most effective for developing capacity-building; (d) leadership and capacity-building for those in key roles; (e) lateral capacity building; (f) deep learning; (g) productive conflict; (h) demanding cultures; (i) external partners; and (j) growing financial investment.

Copland (2003) and Murphy and Datnow (2003) extend the school district role to include the community through system-wide efforts, “the better school[s] [systems] are more tightly linked-structurally, symbolically, and culturally....They operate more as an organic whole and less as a loose collection of disparate subsystems” (Murphy & Datnow, 2003, p. 10). Fullan, Rolheiser, Mascall, and Edge (2002) and Knapp, Copland and Talbert (2003) believe a relationship between three levels of reform, state, district, and school building must occur simultaneously in a continuous inquiry process attached to collaborative, learning communities capitalizing upon lateral accountability among teachers. Fullan (2000) supports creation of collaborative, learning communities through reculturing of school districts. Walters, Marzano, & McNulty (2005) support the use of student achievement as a foundation upon which the learning communities throughout the district focus work in a collaborative and meaningful manner as a means toward student success. As school district reform issues become common across all levels of the

educational system, meaningful improvements in teaching and learning occur, resulting in a reculturing of teaching (Fullan, 2000) through scaffolding “a platform of trust” (Murphy & Datnow, 2003) to encourage reform. Shared values of meeting the needs of students, believing all students can learn, sharing responsibility for learning, and promoting instructional norms set the stage for active, collaborative school district learning.

Collaborative culture

Introduction

Successful sustained school district reform depends upon and results in a cultural change within the organization (Berends, Bodilly, Nataraj Kirby, 2002; Fullan, Rolheiser, Mascall, & Edge, 2002). Finnan and Meza, Jr. (2003) describe culture as “more than a context for implementation; it is essentially what is being reformed” (p. 88). Continuous school district improvement becomes embedded within district culture. By having an understanding of the influence of culture within an organization, sustained school district reform can be attained (Marzano, Waters, McNulty, 2005).

Overview of Organizational Culture

Culture has a variety of definitions depending upon context and perception of the researcher (Martin, 2002; Schein, 2000; Tierney, 1988; Yukl, 2002). Even in organizational research, no consensus exists among researchers; however, most definitions of culture include the words “shared” and “unique” (Martin, 2002, p. 56). Schein (2004) defined the culture of a group or organization as:

A pattern of shared basic assumptions that was learned by a group as it solved its problems of external adaptation and internal integration, that has worked well enough to be considered valid and, therefore, to be taught to new members as the correct way to perceive, think, and feel in relation to those problems (p. 17).

Schein noted the importance of breadth of interpretation in delving into the underlying beliefs of an organization. Morgan (1997) and Schein (2000) stated that if a researcher does not have direct involvement with the organization, the researcher is less likely to be able to decipher the deeper layers of the culture.

Bolman and Deal (1997) supported Schein as they presented culture as a product and a process. The product resembles the wisdom from the past, whereas the process is never ending. The culture is renewed and recreated as newly hired staff become assimilated into the organization. Morgan (1997) supported Schein in viewing culture as a process of “reality construction” (p. 138) in which organizational members create the reality of the organization based upon the organizational culture. All four authors represented exchange of cultural forms through conversation.

Understanding Culture to Influence an Organization

Understanding the language of the organization is key in determining how to influence the organization (Bruffee, 1999). Martin (2002) also stated that physical arrangements influence culture signs and symbols of the organization. Physical objects are concrete examples of the psychological dynamics of the organization (Rafaeli & Worline, 2000). Analysis of organizational cultural forms provides clues to organizational culture (Martin, 2002; Peterson & Smith, 2000).

Understanding the shared, coded meaning of the organization is “to understand the reactions, interpretations, and actions of organizational members, as well as how those actions, thoughts, and feelings are shaped by the collectivity” (Rafaeli & Worline, 2000, p. 72). According to Yukl (2002), organizational cultural beliefs surrounding issues serve as guide for proper and improper role expectations and behavior. These beliefs guide members through maintaining relationships, understanding the environment or “sensemaking”, alleviating anxiety, uncertainty, and confusion (Schein, 1992; Weick, 1995; Yukl, 2002). When organizational decisions are made, discussions about organizational culture are discussions about making sense of events within the organization (Peterson and Smith, 2000). Collins (2001) articulates that great organizations unify through a “big idea” that frames all decisions. Bolman and Deal (1997) have described the most effective organizational cultures as those cultures that have relatively loose structures, implying loose autonomy. However, the beliefs and values of the organization tightly control the organizational culture, thereby rewarding innovation and independence simultaneously in many organizations.

Culture within a School District

School district culture described by Preskill and Torres (1999) embody culture as the “laws of the road” in a school district that allow the school personnel to function smoothly (p. 155). Sergiovanni (2000) thought of culture as the “normative glue a compass setting, steering people in a common direction” (p. 1).

Empirical studies by Copland (2003) and Walters, Marzano, and McNulty (2005) indicated that a healthy, successful school district culture is characterized by a collective

vision embodying success of all students, collaborative processes, life long learning, trust, and accountability through student outcomes. Fullan (2000) and DuFour and DuFour (2006) further described a successful school district in terms of a collaborative work culture continually promoting professional learning community, focusing on student work through assessment, and adapting instructional practices that improve results. All of these authors focus on the importance of collaboration.

Collaborative School District Culture as a Tool for Leadership

In order to have a collaborative culture, leaders set the tone of the school district. Leadership promoting frequent social interactions and collaboration among staff members is needed to develop trust, facilitate collaboration, attach meaning to events, and build school district culture (Bruffee, 1999; Martin, 2002; Schein, 2000). According to Combs, Miser, and Whitaker (1999), school district leaders foster collaboration and a sense of belonging for staff by providing collective work space and blocks of time to collaborate and valuing collaboration through creation of norms in addition to encouraging, modeling and rewarding staff members who collaborate. Leaders also shape school districts by being actively involved in observing, evaluating, and scheduling for collaboration (Cunningham and Gresso, 1993).

According to Ogawa and Bossert (1995) and Peterson and Smith (2000), leadership influences culture by shaping meanings and making sense of organizational events. To create a collaborative culture, Schein (2004) denotes six primary culture embedding mechanisms leaders use to influence, embed, and transmit culture. District leaders give attention to situations through response, measuring and controlling. Beliefs

the leader communicates through comments, casual questions and remarks and reaction to remarks impacts a collaborative culture. A leader's reaction in times of crisis and critical incidents may create new norms, procedures, and values. The perception of criteria observed by others to allocate resources or rewards influences a collaborative culture. How a leader creates a budget sends a message. The way leaders reward or punish behaviors through practice, as opposed to what is said, also communicate important beliefs. The role modeling, teaching, and coaching of the leader impact a collaborative culture. A leader's visible behavior communicates informal, powerful assumptions and values to others. The perception of criteria observed by others that leaders use to recruit, select, promote, retire, and excommunicate members of the organization informs a collaborative culture. These primary culture mechanisms directly impact the collaborative culture of an organization.

District leaders also need to be aware of secondary articulations and reinforcement mechanisms to continually reinforce or constrain change (Schein, 2004). Some of these cultural artifacts may be difficult to interpret despite being highly visible. District leaders reinforce assumptions through utilizing organizational design and structure, as well as procedures or routines that formalize the process of attention to what is important. If the systems and procedures of the school district are inconsistent, subcultures develop. Rites and rituals of the school district may assist in deciphering, communicating, and reinforcing cultural assumptions. The physical design of space, facades and buildings convey philosophy. Stories reinforce assumptions about important events and people to develop the history of the organization. Culture becomes a tool

through which a leader can foster change (Marzano, Waters, and McNulty, 2005). Finnan and Meza, Jr. (2003) state that culture can be “supported and encouraged” not “forced or manipulated” in a non-linear fashion based upon “individual change since culture resides within people” by building on strengths of the culture, understanding the power, and political structure of the school district (p. 102).

The leadership behaviors associated with fostering school district culture include: (a) cohesion among staff; (b) a sense of well-being among staff; (c) an understanding of purpose among staff; and (d) a shared vision of what the school [district] could be like (Marzano, Waters, & McNulty, 2005, p. 48). Promoting cohesion, purpose and shared vision through collaboration is difficult to attain. According to studies by Copland (2003), Schmoker (1999; 2004) and Sarason (1971) is still observable in many school districts today, the school district cultures are isolated and fractioned with relationships between district leaders and staff being mostly separated by position. District leaders successful in shaping collaborative cultures use a subtle kind of leadership that engages, facilitates, and encourages, other members of the school district. Leadership truly becomes collaborative in nature (Fullan & Hargreaves, 1996).

Distributed Leadership

Introduction

Using a collaborative culture as a tool to influence an organization ties into leadership. Influence affects sustained school district reform in many aspects of leadership (Marzano, Waters, and McNulty, 2005). Framing leadership through interactions with others, culture, and collaboration ties into distributed leadership.

Defining Organizational Leadership

Defining leadership depends upon the context and perception of the individual (Bolman & Deal, 1997; Davis, 2003; Leithwood & Duke, 1999; Leithwood & Riehl, 2003; Morgan, 1997; Yukl, 2002). Even though no consensus exists, “most definitions of leadership reflect the assumption that it involves a process whereby intentional influence is exerted by one person over other people to guide, structure, and facilitate activities and relationships in a group or organization” (Yukl, 2002, p. 2). While all definitions add breadth to leadership, directional influence denotes the most necessary component (Leithwood, Jantzi, & Steinbach, 2000; Leithwood & Riehl, 2003).

New Leadership Focus for School Districts

According to Beachum and Dentith (2004), Burch and Spillane (2004), Copland (2003), and Preskill and Torres (1999), management theorists view of traditional school district leadership in which hierarchical formal decision makers and positions of power were set by individualistic leaders were inadequate in reforming school districts and affecting school district culture. “Instead of this individualistic and nonsystemic worldview, which has dominated Western management practices for decades, the new and emerging model calls for an integrated, pluralistic approach to leadership” (Preskill & Torres, 1999, p. 161). Ogawa and Bossert (1995), Hallinger and Heck (1999), Murphy and Datnow (2003), and Preskill and Torres (1995) also support the notion of leadership shaping systems and school districts in a non-traditional interaction medium through roles and people in all levels of the school district - from the teachers in the classroom through the superintendent of schools.

Leithwood and Riehl (2003) defined leadership in the following context:

“Leaders act through and with other people. Leaders sometimes do things, through words or actions, that have a direct effect on the primary goals of the collective, but more often their agency consists of influencing the thoughts and actions of other persons and establishing policies that enable others to be effective” (p. 8).

Conzemius and O’Neill (2002) describe this phenomenon as “building leadership capacity” (p. 7) within a school district. Lambert (1998) describes leadership capacity as the “reciprocal learning processes that enable participants to construct and negotiate meanings leading to a shared purpose of schooling...that leads to constructive change” (p. 5). Beachum and Dentith (2004) also supported the facilitation of leadership capacities within the school district to “build more collaborative and democratic arrangements with teachers and others to achieve the enormous ambitions of schooling and respond to students’ diverse needs” (p. 276). Murphy and Datnow (2003) state that in order to have successful reform, “building dense leadership organizations...through practices that help forge ‘communities of professional practice’” (p. 266). Since the reciprocal influence is relational throughout the school district, distributed leadership most closely describes this paradigm (Watson, 2005). Many reform authors reviewed by Murphy and Datnow (2003) also contend that distributed leadership is more compatible with reform.

Distributed Leadership as the New Paradigm

According to Spillane (2006), three elements are necessary for distributed leadership: (a) “Leadership practice is the central and anchoring concern; (b) Leadership practice is generated in the interactions of leaders, followers, and their situation; each element is essential for leadership practice; and (c) The situation both defines leadership practice and is defined through leadership practice” (p. 4). However in comparing distributed leadership with other current, associated terms, such as: collaborative leadership, shared leadership, co-leadership, democratic leadership, and situational leadership, distributed leadership is more relatively defined. For example, according to Spillane (2006), the amount of collaboration within the distributed perspective is determined by the situation. Consequently, collaborative leadership is not equal to distributed leadership. While both can have similar leadership qualifiers, collaborative and distributed leadership are not always at the same level on a continuum of interaction. Distributed leadership involves situational factors, therefore creating a non-equal relationship. In discussing transformational and transactional leadership, distributed leadership can be transformational as well as transactional. Also, the leadership practice is not relegated to the superintendent or principal but allows for any key players to demonstrate leadership whether through design or by chance. Thus in examining distributed leadership through the relational interaction of leaders, followers and situations, distributed leadership offers a continuum of leadership practice or framework that is situationally and contextually based.

Framing leadership through interactions.

Through the use of distributed leadership as a framework to focus on the “interactions in leadership practice” (Spillane, 2006, p. 85) at the collective level in addition to component parts, researchers are able to systematically think about the practice of leadership. The empirical knowledge base demonstrating the leadership practice aspect of distributed leadership in both thinking and activity is lacking depth (Spillane, Halverson, & Diamond, 2001; Spillane, 2005; 2006). However, some researchers have connected the interactions among leaders, followers, and situations. In 2003, Camburn, Rowan, and Taylor conducted a study of more than one hundred United States elementary schools. These authors determined that leadership functions were usually distributed among three to seven formally identified leadership positions in each elementary school. Instead of leadership being tied to one administrative position, leadership functions were distributed among principals, assistant principals, coordinators, mentors, consultants and other staff members.

Portin, Schneider, DeArmond, and Gundlach (2003) interviewed individuals in a study of twenty-one K-12 schools in four United States cities showing that leadership is distributed among appointed leaders in addition to any individual capable of influencing others within the school. Dissertation research by Watson (2005) indicates, “leadership is everywhere, it is an emergent quality of professional interaction” (p. 277). Dissertation research by Lucia (2004) demonstrates that distributed leadership needs to be comprised of a rotating and blending of roles through conscious layering and deliberate engagement of staff members. Spillane’s research (2006) further contends that the “distribution of

leadership differs, depending on the leadership function or routine, the subject matter, the type of school, the school's size, and a school or school leadership team's developmental stage" (p. 33).

Framing leadership through culture.

Investigating leadership practice by analyzing more than the action of individuals or what people do is critical for distributed leadership. However, the analysis requires focusing on the interactive web between leaders and followers as "leadership practice is stretched over leaders" (Spillane, 2006, p. 57) given key aspects of the situation, including organizational routines, material artifacts, language, structures, tools, and culture (Spillane, Halverson, & Diamond, 2001).

Schein (2004) supports the concept of culture being a necessary component in defining leadership. An example of this requisite integration of culture with leadership can be found in the conceptual foundation for distributed leadership. This foundation is based on distributed cognition and activity theory; "social context [or culture] becomes an integral component...for intelligent activity" (Spillane & Halverson, & Diamond, 2004, p. 13). Consequently, in studying and understanding district leadership, the culture and situation must be analyzed because of the sense-making component related to cognition (Spillane, 2006). Marzano, Waters, and McNulty (2005) support this concept in that culture can negatively affect a second-order change, a dramatic change in the way of doing business, and impact reform negatively.

Framing leadership through collaboration.

Sense-making requires dialogue and collaboration. Collaboration occurs through the shaping of culture and the construction of meaning in an organization depending upon open, social exchange in a community of knowledgeable peers speaking the same language (Bruffee, 1999; Soder, 2001). Bruffee describes this process as “acculturation,” with Morgan (1997) and Nonaka & Takeuchi (1995) mention similar group processes through “redundancy.” Redundancy facilitates frequent social exchange to create a common ground while developing creativity, comprehension, trust and purpose. Results from dissertation research by Maher (2000) support the generating of shared leadership through the sharing of values, ideas, and commitments.

Schein (2000) discussed dialogue theory that emphasizes conversation because “we cannot appreciate another culture if we are not aware of our own cultural filters....Once assumptions are surfaced and stated, mutual understanding increases and a basis exists for finding common ground” (p. 20). Analyzing of the school district and encouraging staff to analyze their relationships and practices help improve the quality of the school district culture (Copland, 2003; Conzemius & O’Neill, 2002; Fullan & Hargreaves, 1991). School district leaders need to “foster respect, trust, and strong, personal connections among staff by being nonjudgmental and focusing on the positive; and by organizing staff into grade-level or ‘vertical’ (cross-grade) teams to accomplish specific instructional tasks” (Marzano, Waters, & McNulty, 2005, p. 19).

Teaming

Introduction

Leading collaboratively involves influence through teams and facilitation of a collaborative culture. Teaming becomes a tool for continuous school improvement through inquiry (Preskill & Torres, 1999). A culture of continuous school improvement lends itself to sustained reform resulting in a change in school district culture.

Organizational Teaming

Collins (2001) and Bolman and Deal (1997) addressed the importance of organizations fostering teamwork in order to capitalize on the talent of the organization in a global marketplace, rather than capitalizing on individualistic talent that could leave the organization at any time. W. Edwards Deming (1986) advocated building intellectual and professional capital through teamwork. Katzenbach and Smith (1993) viewed the learning of the organization through teams as enduring while allowing for the any skills and experiences of individuals on the team being surpassed by the collective skills and experiences of the team. Yukl (2002) indicates many organizations are leaning toward giving teams more responsibility.

Yukl (2002) describes several distinct types of teams that can typically be found within organizations: (1) functional teams, (2) cross-functional teams, (3) self-managed teams, (4) self-defining teams, and (5) executive teams. Each team has a differing level of influence over the mission of the organization, team membership, and team existence. Teams also differ in the formal position of the leader, the manner in which the leader was selected, duration of the teams' existence, team membership stability, and member

diversity. Bolman and Deal (1997) agree that having the task and circumstance determine the type of team needed to accomplish the goal.

High Performing Teams

According to Katzenbach and Smith (1993) “a team is a small number of people with complementary skills who are committed to a common purpose, set of performance goals, and approach for which they hold themselves mutually accountable” (p. 112). Organizations must be able to determine the difference between a pseudo team and a high-performing team (Schmoker, 1999). Katzenbach and Smith (1993) conducted research on high-performing teams. High performing teams share a common purpose in response to a demand or an opportunity usually given by higher management. Common purpose is translated into specific, measurable performance goals. High performing teams are of manageable size, usually two to twenty-five people with the right mix of expertise. Members of high performing teams hold themselves collectively accountable with a commitment to relationships.

High performing teams are not commonplace. In many cases, the appearance of teamwork is the true state of the organization (Schmoker, 1999). Preskill and Torres (1999) supported this concept in that many times organizations have not put the structures and systems in place to support teams. Lencioni (2002) described five basic pitfalls associated with the lack of genuine teamwork in organizations. These five interrelated dysfunctions of a team are commonplace and happen naturally: lack of (a) trust, (b) conflict, (c) commitment, (d) accountability, and (e) results. However, if left unchecked, a single dysfunction deteriorates the teamwork like a broken link in a chain.

When considering these five dysfunctions, the key component to a cohesive team is trust, the foundation upon which any team is built. For each of the five dysfunctions of teams, Lencioni provided team activities to facilitate overcoming the dysfunctions. Lencioni's perception of the five dysfunctions of teams supports the research by Katzenbach and Smith (1993) by providing a model with tools and team activities that can facilitate the development of a high performing team.

Preskill and Torres (1999) identified ideals for effective team functioning. Supporting Lencioni's foundation for teaming on trust and extending Katzenbach and Smith's (1993) high performing team characteristics, Preskill and Torres included collaborative inquiry, democratic participation, efficacy, humility, reciprocity, deliberation and appreciation. Neck and Manz (1994) discussed effective team functioning through the use of "teamthink" (p. 934) in which team performance is enhanced through divergent thinking, open communication, celebration of diversity and uniqueness, and open discussion surrounding issues of doubt within the team. Ineffective team functioning was described as "groupthink" (p. 934) a situation in which the team creates a bond, but in striving for this unified stance, fails to explore or discuss alternatives. Becoming an effective team is not immediate, simple, or easy.

Team Development

Hackman and Johnson (2000) indicated that groups change and mature over time. Bales (1970) developed a guide for analyzing the interaction between members of a group. Of the twelve categories, four deal with social dimension of the group and eight relate to the task of the group. Bales indicated that in order for a group to be successful, a

balance must be reached between social concerns and tasks of the group. Group members need to have a positive relationship within the group in order to work hard for the group. According to Fisher (1970), a group participates in four phases, orientation, conflict, emergence, and reinforcement, of group decision-making. In the orientation phase, the members are tentative and uneasy, and group members are guarded in their discussion to avoid offending fellow group members. In the conflict phase, members of the group express strong opinions and produce evidence to support that opinion. Many times the strong opinion will typically be followed by a negative opinion. In the emergent phase the group begins to show support for one solution or decision. In the final state, the reinforcement phase, consensus develops around the solution or decision with the interactions being mostly positive and tension being dissipated.

Davis (2003) expressed similar group stages through forming, storming, norming, and performing. During the forming stage, the group members are testing the interdependence among the group while defining the task at hand. The storming stage involves the group expressing emotions and conflict. Norming is the beginning of group cohesion with the establishment of rules. The performing stage follows with the group determining the emergence of solutions. When a group member enters or leaves the group, the rest of the group will adjust roles and norms accordingly.

Team Skills

Teams are clear in the establishment of team norms or basic rules in which the team operates (Conzemius & O'Neil, 2002; Preskill & Torres, 1999). Team members need to have a clear understanding of acceptable behavior. The team norms assist in

focusing the team and provide a method for handling conflict. This set of team norms is an application of organizational culture (Cook & Yanow, 1993).

In addition to the team norms being clearly understood by team members, the purpose of the team must also be clarified for the team to be effective. This purpose can be clarified through the use of specific, measurable goals that assist the team in accountability, tracking progress, and supplying aspiration of meaning (Conzemius & O'Neil, 2002; Katzenbach & Smith, 1993; Schmoker, 1999). Fullan (1991) further contends that if the goals are written in a too general method, vision is clouded and complete comprehension is misled, resulting only in misunderstanding.

Leadership in Teaming

While little research exists in identifying effective leadership in teaming, Ford and Randolph (1992) determined the following skills were relevant for team leaders. Leadership in teaming requires technical expertise in communicating technical matters with diverse team members. Administrative skills in planning and organizing project activities, as well as selecting qualified members and budgetary issues are also needed. Team leaders need interpersonal skills in order to understand needs and values of team members in order to influence others, resolve conflicts and build cohesiveness. Cognitive skills are needed in order to understand internal and external interrelationships and systems thinking. Political skills are also needed to develop coalitions and gain resources, assistance, and approvals from relevant parties. Davis (2003) analyzed studies based on teams and found the old vision of top-down hierarchical leadership is ineffective for team collaboration. Instead, a collaborative leader with skills of collaborative processes in

influencing a diverse conglomeration of people with many interests into finding a common interest is needed. In some cases, leadership naturally emerges from the expertise of group members as the collaborative processes occur.

Teaming in the School District Setting

In the school district setting, Lortie (1975) and Sarason (1971) discussed how teaching typically was an isolated profession in individual classrooms. Isolationism has been described as a “cellular structure” (Lortie, 1975) in which education is being conducted by a teacher alone in a room in charge of students. Isolationism interferes with the creation of a common language throughout the organization through the limitation of dialogue among organizational members (Lortie, 1975). DuFour (2005) and Schmoker (1999) contend that this isolationism, continually reinforced by the culture of the school district, prevents teaming, in the true sense of the word, from occurring in the educational setting. This isolationism interferes with Bruffee’s (1999) view of creating a common language through collaborative discourse and reacculturation in which members of various knowledge communities distribute knowledge between knowledge boundaries until a new, shared boundary is formed that encompasses all members.

Distributed Leadership and Teaming

In 2003, The National Commission on Teaching and America’s Future stated that distributed leadership was key to building learning communities within school districts. Dissertation research conducted by Watson (2005) also supports distributed leadership through the use of learning communities within school districts. Results from Watson’s dissertation indicated that only through collaborating could new knowledge be created

out of existing knowledge. Watson (2005) also concluded “the formal leadership structure...could have enhanced the success, effectiveness, and depth of learning of ...teams” (p. 276). Learning communities are key to developing a continuous cycle of improvement within school districts in order to meet the needs of a continuously changing society (Preskill & Torres, 1999). This continuous cycle of improvement is a form of inquiry, which can become a type of action research (Coghlan & Brannick, 2005; Herr & Anderson, 2005; Lezotte & McKee, 2002).

Action Research

Including issues about methodology in chapter two is unusual. However, because action research emphasizes cyclical inquiry, action research methodology epistemologically and ontologically fits within the learning organization. According to Shani and Pasmore (1985), action research is:

An emergent inquiry process in which applied behavioral science knowledge is integrated with existing organizational knowledge and applied to solve real organizational problems. It is simultaneously concerned with bringing about change in organizations, in developing self-help competencies in organizational members and adding to scientific knowledge. Finally, it is an evolving process that is undertaken in a spirit of collaboration and co-inquiry (p. 439).

Both Coghlan and Brannick (2005) and Herr and Anderson (2005) relate action research to research focusing on knowledge and/or theory in action. In comparison to traditional research in which the focus is creating knowledge, action research emphasizes research as an action and an outcome through a cyclical process of inquiry. Shani and Pasmore

(1985) further define the theory of action research process to include the context of factors concerning the project, the necessity of quality of relationships between the researcher and members participating in the study, the dual role of the inquiry and implementation process, and the dual outcome of application of the outcomes learned in addition to the creation of new knowledge as a result of the inquiry.

Researcher Roles in Action Research

Action research takes on different roles for the researcher than traditional research (Coghlan & Brannick, 2005). The topic selected for research by the researcher is an ongoing part of the inquiry process. The role of the researcher changes from traditional research in the process of utilizing data to provide feedback to the participants in the study in order to change the inquiry process of the system being studied. The method of how the researcher participates differs from traditional research in how data are collected, utilized, and reviewed by the participants in the study in order to develop further action. These three roles differ from traditional research. Action research exists to solve a problem while contributing to knowledge.

An action researcher participates in a continuous spiral of actions throughout the entire research process (Coghlan & Brannick, 2005; Herr & Anderson, 2005). These two sets of authors use different terminology to describe these action cycles, but the meaning of the cycles is similar. Coghlan and Brannick utilized diagnosing, planning action, taking action and evaluating action. Within these four cycles, a mini-cycle of experiencing, reflecting, interpreting, and taking action occurs. These four cycles and the set of mini-cycles occur in a meta-cycle of inquiry during the content, process, and

premise reflection of the research conducted. Herr and Anderson discussed: (a) “developing a plan of action to improve what is already happening; (b) acting to implement the plan; (c) observing the effects of action in the context in which it occurs; and (d) reflecting on these effects as a basis for further planning, subsequent action and on, through a succession of cycles” (p. 5). Both sets of authors show a cycle, however, Coghlan and Brannick (2005) clearly illustrated the interworkings of the cycle through the reflection process of action research.

Patton (1997) supports the utilization of action research in organizations in order to “systematically collect[ed] and socially construct[ed] knowledge [and] to create a learning organization” (p. 99). Bradbury & Reason (2006) describe the reframing of knowledge as a “redescription” (p. 24). Patton (1997) and Preskill and Torres (1999) connect action research to participative evaluations and inquiry within an organization. Through using a participative process involving stakeholders, evaluations become useful and meaningful to the participants. The evaluation and inquiry also creates an ongoing learning culture and organization.

Summary

In Chapter Two, a review of related literature was presented to provide the conceptual and theoretical underpinnings for the study. Increased accountability through NCLB causes new challenges for school districts (Heath, 2003; Petersen & Young, 2004). NCLB changes the measurement tools by which schools are compared and evaluated. These external forces of federal and state mandates, community demographics in race and work force, and increasing population combine with internal forces such as

student demographics, performance, school curriculum, etc. to create requisite variety within the school district (Morgan, 1997; Tierney, 1988) and a need for reform. When considering these forces in relation to the Age of Information (Adams & Hamm, 2005) with information doubling every three to four years (Preskill & Torres, 1999) and the history of school reform, school districts are not conducive to reform (Berends, Bodilly & Nataraj Kirby, 2002; Fullan, 2000; Schmoker, 2006). School districts have great difficulty closing the “knowing-doing gap” (Pfeffer & Sutton, 2000) or going from “tacit to explicit” knowledge (Nonaka & Takeuchi, 1995). School district reforms implemented do not create the cultural change needed for continuous school district improvement, resulting in the inability to sustain reform (Fullan, Rolheiser, Mascall & Edge, 2002). Schmoker (2006) contends that “our chief obstacle in the prevailing perception that because most educators work hard and with dedication, we are within reason doing most of what’s necessary for good schools” (p. 4).

Consequently, sustained school district reform needs to result in comprehensive continuous school improvement (Conzemius & O’Neill, 2002; Preskill & Torres, 1999) and learning communities evident in the collaborative culture and “way of doing business” within the school district (DuFour, Eaker, & DuFour, 2005). Leadership within the school district shapes and facilitates a collaborative culture and learning community. Distributed leadership embraces the reciprocal influence of interactions of leaders, followers, and the situation. Distributed leadership allows for key players to demonstrate leadership whether through design or by change (Spillane, 2006).

In creating a collaborative culture and learning community through teaming, sensemaking, inquiry, participation and reflection among people sets the stage for the learning of the organization. However, teaming and collaborative cultures are not typical for a school district. Usually, teacher isolationism prevails stiling the collaborative discourse of reacclturation and preventing a common language (Bruffee, 1999). Collaboration through teaming and the building of learning communities within the school district is key to developing a continuous cycle of improvement (Preskill & Torres, 1999) that promotes cultural change as a result of the inquiry.

Next Step

This literature review helped us understand the kind of organizational learning the district engaged in during the last two years. The review indicates that the fundamental approach to cyclical inquiry lends itself toward this research project. This study on the implementation of district-wide teaming with teacher leaders was the basis of this dissertation built on what the district did until the middle of 2007. The focus on cycle two of the action research study is explained more clearly in the next chapter.

CHAPTER THREE

Research Design and Methodology

Introduction and Context

The purpose of this action research study investigated the planning and initial implementation of the Maxville strategic planning and restructuring response to CSIP as the process unfolded using the conceptual underpinnings of the appropriateness of teaming, use of distributed leadership, and changing of school culture for sustained reform. Two research questions guided the study: (a) To what extent, if at all, have the preK-12 vertical teams understood the characteristics and principles of teaming; and (b) What is the experience of the vertical team in the organizational learning to function during a radical transition from top-down leadership to teaming. These research questions were addressed in cycle two of this action research study.

Action research has five basic goals: (a) “the generation of new knowledge; (b) the achievement of action-oriented outcomes; (c) the education of both researcher and participants; (d) results that are relevant to the local setting, and; (e) a sound and appropriate research methodology” (Herr & Anderson, 2005, p. 54). The cyclical nature of action research conducted by organizational insiders allows for researchers to study within a context and setting in order for the research to make a difference within the place of work. Action research requires a reflective process and strong design method with or by other insiders of the organization through a collaborative effort between others with similar stakes in the organization. This reflective process through collaboration relies

upon an exchange of dialogue and discourse. By being an insider of the organization and participating collaboratively with my peers, my study became a participative action research study (Coghlan & Brannick, 2005). I was actively involved within the organization, participating in the discourse, planning, action, and evaluation of our district decisions.

Rigor and Trustworthiness or Validity of Action Research

Herr & Anderson (2005) have connected validity criteria for action research to the five goals of action research. In order to demonstrate validity and trustworthiness in action research in relation to the generation of knowledge, dialogic and process validity is needed. Dialogic validity or “the ‘goodness’ of research is monitored through a form of peer review” (p. 57). Process validity is determined through the framing of a problem that allows for continuous learning of the person or organization. Process validity increases as triangulation is created through the use of multiple perspectives or variety of methods, such as observation, interviews, and artifact review. Because of the variety of data collection techniques, goal five of action research of having a sound and appropriate research methodology is addressed (Herr & Anderson, 2005).

In relation to the second goal of action research, achievement of action outcomes, outcome validity becomes relevant. Outcome validity determines how the action resolves the problem of the study. Outcome validity is determined by the integrity or quality of action and data upon which the outcome is based. Reframing of problems to increase complexity may lead to new problems through inquiry also impacting outcome validity (Herr & Anderson, 2005).

Catalytic validity addresses the third goal of action research, education of both researcher and the participants (Herr & Anderson, 2005). Through the education and the process of action research, the participants and researchers demonstrate openness for inspiration and transformation. Providing opportunities for collaborative discussion allows for shared ideas and voice, which leads to democratic validity.

In addressing goal four of action research, results that were relevant to the local setting, democratic validity prevails. The ethical and moral constructs that surrounds equal representation, equal voice, and collaborative discourse reflects democratic validity. Through collaboration, stakeholders identify issues and problems relevant and applicable to the organization (Herr & Anderson, 2005; Patton, 1997; Preskill & Torres, 1999).

Coghlan and Brannick (2005) and Reason and Bradbury (2001) support the five types of validity expressed by Herr & Anderson (2005). Coghlan and Brannick discuss rigor through the use of action cycles, multiple data sources, evidence to challenge and interpret assumptions, and existing literature to challenge and/or support outcomes. Reason and Bradbury discuss validity and quality through questions of knowing, significance, outcomes, relational practice and emergence.

Methods

This participative action research study was designed to provide informed direction toward the development of teaming through interventions with teachers at a district level. As a researcher, I was working as an insider in collaboration with other insiders (Anderson & Herr, 2005) as part of two distinct teams within Maxville's School

District. This research was framed in solving a problem and confronting a problem at the district level.

Participative action research consists of at least two iterations of a cycle comprised of four basic steps: a) diagnosing; b) planning action; c) taking action; and d) evaluating action (Coghlan & Brannick, 2005). These iterative cycles that comprised this study are described below in relation to the Maxville School District and the CSIP Process. For a chart of these cycles, please refer to Appendix A.

Cycle 1-Describing the Culture and Structure at the District Level

Diagnosing.

Cycle one began in November 2004, with the formation of a Steering Committee whose first task was to collect and share research on current practices. The Steering Committee read and discussed research concerning Preskill and Torres (1999) learning organizations, Katzenbach & Smith's (1993) effective teaming, Copland's (2003) development of a cycle of inquiry, and Hargreaves and Fullan's (1998) article on assessment literacy. The district gathered comprehensive data incorporating all programs and processes within the Maxville School District through a Mock MSIP review using modified state mandated forms from January 2005 to September 2005.

In describing the next steps with which the district was involved, the steps of diagnosing to planning were not always chronologically linear. An action might have brought other data forward that changed the plan and thus created a different action. Therefore, some of the following events might not be in chronological order because events were happening simultaneously in different steps of the action cycle. To diagnose,

the district created a Strategic Steering Committee, a thirty-member committee representative of the school community, which includes community members. This committee analyzed the data presented by the superintendents, and created a diagnosis of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT) analysis of the current state of the district.

Planning action.

Some of the planning of action took place before the Strategic Planning Committee meeting. In describing planning action, some activities occurred within two parts of the action cycle simultaneously. For example, hiring outside consultants from a state university from March 2005 to January 2006 resulted in the district taking action. However, the purpose of hiring the outside consultants was to plan what steps the district was to take. Based on reading Preskill and Torres' (1999) current practices in learning organizations, Copland's (2003) cycle of inquiry, and Deming's plan, do, study, act cycle, the Steering Committee created a strategic planning structure promoting a learning organization in March 2005. This strategic planning structure was revised on October 2005, January 2006, and August 2006 based on feedback and input from the District Leadership Team and Steering Committee (See Appendix B). The strategic planning structure was the structural plan for implementing a continuous learning cycle within the district.

I read and introduced the *Handbook for SMART School Teams* by Conzemius and O'Neil (2002) in October 2005 to the Steering Committee. After the introduction of this book, the two superintendents embraced the development of a learning organization

through teaming because the book specifically addressed the “how to” and practical components to the process. This handbook was utilized as a foundation to plan for the professional development of administrators within the district.

In addition to diagnosing district concerns, the thirty-member Strategic Planning Committee, which consisted of representatives from administrators, teachers, community, and high school students from each building, also assisted in developing a mission, vision, and set of guiding principles for the district. The Strategic Planning Committee identified the main areas of concern to be addressed in the five SMART goals (attendance, communication arts, mathematics, collaboration, and finance) later finalized by the Steering Committee. The Steering Committee met regularly from November 2004 to the present time ranging from one meeting per week to one meeting per month depending on the course of action. Feedback from the District Leadership Team, consisting of all principals, directors, and assistants, was received in reference to professional development, direction of the district, implementation concerns, and strengths of reform efforts being actively considered after each action.

Taking action.

Many actions occurred simultaneously while diagnosing and planning were also in progress. The actions were district level actions focused on: (a) a new mission, vision, and set of guiding principles; (b) professional development surrounding school reform, teaming, learning communities and collaboration; (c) storage and accessibility of student data; (d) creating district level focus teams and (e) facilitating efficient and strategic communication during this process. The first action involved outside trainers from a state

university to facilitate the Strategic Planning Committee meetings from September to November 2005 to develop vision, mission, guiding principles, and input for strategic and specific, measurable, attainable, results-based, and time-bound (SMART) goals. In December 2005, the School Board adopted the mission, vision, guiding principles, and SMART goals.

District Leadership Team meetings involving principals, directors and assistants from each building began in January 2005 and continued monthly to present time. During the District Leadership Team meetings, a professional development component targeted school reform, teaming, learning communities or collaboration. The purpose and function of the District Leadership Team was to provide professional development on a continuous basis to administrators while simultaneously applying the professional development through collaborative discourse of current situations within the district. Other areas of professional development included administrators attending the Professional Learning Communities workshops with DuFour, DuFour, and Eaker in July 2006 and a Schmoker (2006) in-service on his new book “Results Now”.

The District Focus Team meetings started in June 2006 and continue to the present time. The District Focus Team, representative of the school community, parents, school board member, and student, focused on one of the five SMART goals for the district. The District Focus Teams analyzed data concerning that goal, identified outcomes from which the goal would be measured, and created an action plan at a district level. From June 2006 to present, the District Focus Teams has filtered data and

information to the school buildings and has reported monthly to the District Leadership Team (See Appendix B).

Due to making decisions and leading with data, Maxville altered student data storage and accessibility from December 2005 to the present time. Years of data by student from MAP, Terra Nova and demographics were put into a database. Maxville utilized Pearson Inform, to manipulate the data, and Pearson Benchmarks, to give and/or score common assessments, as the software to perform these functions. By October 2006, administrators and teachers were trained. Buildings developed common assessments to address the essential outcomes identified within the Grade Level Expectations from the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education.

Encouragement of efficient and strategic communication throughout Maxville resulted in developing a district-wide system for maintaining notes and important information so that all data were available to administrators through the use of technology and shared access to common drives. Communication of the strategic plan resulted in evaluation of current communication practices. A communication plan was discussed making the strategic process information available to different audiences within and throughout the school community through e-mail, posters, brochures, flyers, district newsletters, and website.

Evaluation.

Several evaluations of Cycle One have been conducted to date. In August 2006, the Steering Committee informally evaluated the progress of learning communities, common assessments, and teacher exposure to new cultural concepts being introduced in

the district, in each building by reviewing conversations with individual principals as a precursor to determining the next steps in planning in August 2006. The Steering Committee looked specifically for evidence that principals were implementing concepts of: setting up a routine teaming structure within the building, developing building norms, discussing consensus, using basic teaming tools in meetings, leading through data and SMART goals.

Using the information presented at the DuFour Conference in San Antonio, the Steering Committee analyzed the progress of the district, Strategic Planning Structure, and artifacts from buildings in reference to learning community characteristics of regularly planned teaming structures, in which all teachers were on horizontal and vertical teams, teaming norms, consensus, essential outcomes, and common assessments. Consequently, the Steering Committee realized the Strategic Planning Structure was too restrictive for the buildings. Top-down leadership determined the team structure in the buildings; this decision was misaligned with the district focus of leading through teams. In reevaluating the process, the Steering Committee proposed to the District Leadership Team that the focus teams be changed to learning communities at the building level. The District Leadership Team agreed to the proposal. This change allowed for more autonomy in individual buildings to determine the teaming structure necessary for the building to meet district SMART goals. Some of the buildings were in different stages of implementation of learning communities. In August 2006, district level personnel presented an introduction to teaming structure and culture to teachers.

On October 8, 2006, administrators filled out a learning communities checklist (See Appendix D) identifying the cultural process of changing to a learning community. No learning communities existed within Maxville in October 2005, and the culture of the district supported top-down leadership with collaboration focused on student achievement in isolated pockets, by October 2006, secondary buildings were implementing learning communities that focused on a regularly scheduled collaboration teaming time, identification of essential outcomes by course, creation of common assessments by the teams, and analysis of the results of the common assessments by the teams. Elementary buildings were in the planning stage in which conversations were beginning to develop a collaboration time, identify essential outcomes for the core subject areas, create one common assessment, and utilize team analysis of the results of one assessment.

In gathering data for the annual evaluation of the Strategic Planning Committee, the District Focus Team leaders met to discuss creation of an agenda for the meeting. Two of the five SMART goals were met within the established timeline as identified within the goal; all goals were eligible for evaluation. The two that expired were communication arts and math. The District Focus Team leaders felt these two goals were top-down in nature and that the strategic planning structure had to be changed, along with the goal to truly create a team-led organization. A proposal for that change was discussed and was presented to the Strategic Planning Committee as described below.

In creating the structure for a learning organization, an annual evaluation of SMART goals by the Strategic Planning Committee involving representatives from

community, school board, and district administration, teachers, and students was planned. This annual event with the Strategic Planning Committee created an annual evaluation cycle concerning the SMART goals. In November 2006, the five SMART goals created the previous year were analyzed, reevaluated, and rewritten for the next year. The five District Focus Team leaders presented data on each of the SMART goals.

The Strategic Planning Committee determined if the goal was worthy of continuing, revising, or rejecting. The assistant superintendent introduced new ideas and suggestions for change to the strategic planning structure to the Strategic Planning Committee. Instead of focusing on only two content areas, communication arts and mathematics, a district focus team focused on data and assessment. Under the Data Analysis and Assessment Team, preK-12 teacher teams representative of all content areas would be responsible for the district-wide SMART goal for that content area. In this manner, the district would not lessen the importance of any content area, and teachers would have input into the creation and decisions of the district focus for a three-year goal. The teacher leaders of the PreK-12 content area teams would also be members of the Data Analysis and Assessment Team.

Given that two years prior the district had no systematic teaming within the district, the previous year was spent on preparing the district administration to work in teams. Individual buildings were in different levels of implementation of teaming. The next focus was the implementation of the preK-12 vertical teams in order to have teaming reach all levels of staff and support the district goal of team-led leadership.

Cycle 2 – Facilitating the Culture and Teaming throughout the School District

The main difference between Cycle One and Cycle Two was the level of implementation. In Cycle One, the main focus for Maxville was to prepare administration and set up district-wide teams so principals and directors could personally experience team-led leadership. In the district-wide teams, the principals and directors were participants in a team, as well as being the team-leaders in the district focus teams. Evaluation of Cycle One focuses primarily on administrators. Cycle Two focused on implementing the preK-12 vertical content teams and the evaluative Data Analysis and Assessment Team. The preK-12 vertical teams were led by teacher leaders. The teacher leaders of the preK-12 vertical teams were also the team members of the Data Analysis and Assessment Team. Evaluation of Cycle Two focused primarily on the teacher leaders and team participants of the preK-12 vertical teams understanding, implementing, and experiencing teaming.

Diagnosing.

During the evaluation step for Cycle One, the Steering Committee, Strategic Planning Committee, and District Leadership Team participated in diagnosing exercises for Cycle Two. For this step, the Steering Committee and I created a diagnostic Team Feedback Survey utilized to determine the extent to which the team members have been involved in the Strategic Planning Process of teaming during the last two years and the team members' background knowledge of teaming processes. Information from Cycle One evaluation was examined to create the survey. The survey consisted of elements the Steering Committee wanted the team members to understand of teaming. The feedback

survey assisted in determining a teaming background knowledge base and individual perceptions of teaming from the members of the preK-12 vertical teams. The survey consisted of questions related to different levels of expertise in teaming for the purposes of district teams within Maxville with responses identified on a likert scale.

A pilot of Team Feedback Survey was conducted with ten participants. Dialogue between myself and the individuals taking the Team Feedback Survey occurred, and feedback was considered. The Steering Committee and I looked at the Team Feedback Survey to clarify and rewrite items (Appendix E). The Team Feedback Survey was developed based on literature and experience through the district's professional development for teaming. Conversations concerning the pilot survey revolved around the following topics: (a) Did the results assist in developing professional development; (b) Did the elements on the survey represent the most important concepts based on research and previous teams implemented within the district; (c) Did the participants understand the terminology of the survey; and (d) Did the survey cover concepts from a very basic understanding of teaming. See Appendix F for specific details. The team survey was utilized to plan team meetings topic agendas to include pertinent professional development needed for the team to complete the purpose and goal of the team.

Participants were 78 Maxville teachers and 9 administrators who were members of the preK-12 vertical teams (See Appendix H). Surveys with an informed consent letter (See Appendix G) were given to the whole population and were anonymous. Surveys were placed in the participants' mailboxes and returned to the teacher leader with no contact with the researcher until all surveys were collected. The preK-12 vertical teams

were selected by the Steering Committee with input from the principals. The preK-12 vertical teams were combining vertical committees of curriculum and instruction, professional development, and technology that were previously led by the assistant superintendent. The preK-12 vertical teams had representatives from every grade level and building in the district and ranged in size from twenty to twenty-four members (See Appendix H). The teams involved in this study covered the following areas: communication arts, mathematics, science, and social studies. The preK-12 vertical teams selected a teacher leader who was also a member of the data and assessment team. All preK-12 vertical teams did not start at the same time. The district started with the math, communication arts, science, and social studies vertical teams at the end of March 2007.

Planning action.

Based upon the Team Feedback Survey given to the vertical team members, the Steering Committee, Data Analysis and Assessment Team, and District Leadership Team also analyzed the data from the Team Feedback Survey to suggest professional development for teacher leaders and preK-12 vertical teams. I analyzed the data from the three teams and summarized the data in a table. In July 2007, the Steering Committee reanalyzed the data in reference to teacher leader performance in applying the team processes. Professional development activities prior and during the vertical team meetings were planned. A teacher leader resource guide was planned that summarized basic team concepts. Future preK-12 vertical and Data Analysis and Assessment team meeting agendas were brainstormed based on the information from the Team Feedback Surveys and team performance. Individual trainings for the teacher leaders with the

assistant superintendent were planned. The timeline for planning action was from April 2007 to July 2007.

Taking action.

As the researcher and as team leader of the Data and Assessment Focus Team, I coordinated with the assistant superintendent to conduct the professional development necessary to initially implement the preK-12 teams. My role as researcher and member of an insider/outsider team participating in taking action was one of facilitator, coach, and team leader. I planned the agendas, provided for collaborative discussions, modeled teaming tools in the focus team meetings and provided professional development and resources to the team members. Vertical team meetings were scheduled and members notified. Individual trainings for the teacher leaders were held with the assistant superintendent prior to each vertical team meeting. Three to four three-hour vertical team meetings were held by each content area vertical team: communication arts, mathematics, science, social studies. The Data Analysis and Assessment Team met for two three-hour meetings. Two teacher leader interviews were conducted. A teacher leader resource guide was created. Personal journaling was conducted. Taking action occurred from April 2007 to September 2007.

Evaluation.

For evaluation, another teacher in the district conducted two forty-five minute interviews with five preK-12 vertical team leaders following an interview protocol (See Appendix I). Another teacher conducted the interviews due to my position as supervisor and administrator at Maxville. As a researcher, conducting the interviews personally

would have been unethical because as supervisor, my interviewee might have felt pressured to participate and answer in a particular way. The first interview was conducted after participating in professional development in order to refine the questions based on identified themes. The Steering Committee discussed the themes in the first interview to refine questions for the second interview. All participants were informed that participation in the research process was voluntary and confidential. Any publications involved the use of pseudonyms and no identifying characteristics were included (Appendix J). Questions on teaming were focused on how the team leaders experienced teaming as our organization was transitioning from a top-down to a team-led organization. Questions determined to what extent the transition occurred. Questions described the experience of members working in teams, utilizing team processes, and team values.

Evaluation included an analysis of the Team Feedback Survey by the Steering Committee, District Leadership Team, and Data Analysis and Assessment Team. Teacher leader interviews were analyzed by the Steering Committee. The Steering Committee also conducted a second analysis of the data from the Team Feedback Survey, Teacher Leader Interviews, and data from the Collaboration Focus Team Survey in relation to team performance during the vertical team meetings. Personal journaling was also kept by the researcher as team leader of the Data Analysis and Assessment Focus Team, team participant of the Communication Focus Team, Steering Committee, District Leadership Team, and other miscellaneous teams. Evaluation occurred from April 2007 to September 2007.

Summary

The four steps of diagnosing, planning action, taking action, and evaluating were completed. Cycle Two explored the implementation of the preK-12 vertical teams and Data Analysis and Assessment Team. Professional development focused primarily on teacher leaders and team members in the utilization of teaming processes. The analysis of data is shown in Chapter Four.

CHAPTER FOUR

Analysis of Data

Introduction and Context

Coghlan and Brannick (2005) and Herr and Anderson (2005) describe action research as an evolving, emergent journey. Reframing research as the project unfolds through systematic generating and collecting of research data leads to further evaluation, planning and action. Cycle One and Cycle Two of the action research study were framed within the broad framework of sustained district reform. The goal of Cycle One was the implementation of teaming at a district level with a focus on professional development for administrators through the creation of a district-wide teaming structure and cyclical strategic process from November 2004 to March 2007. The goal of Cycle Two was to focus the study on teacher leaders and team professional development to implement preK-12 vertical teams from March 2007 to September 2007. Cycle Two flowed from the district-wide, on-going, cyclical reform movement. Cycle Two studied the attitudes and perceptions of teaming of teachers participating in newly implemented district-wide teams. The following data represent the perceptions of teacher leaders with analyses completed by different teams.

Because action research was a journey, the act of gathering data affects the results of the study; each action within the study changes context (Reason & Bradbury, 2006). The data were organized through overlap and nonlinear movement of the diagnosing, planning action, taking action, and conducting evaluation steps of Cycle Two to determine the extent to which the goal was achieved.

Cycle 2 – Facilitating the Culture and Teaming throughout the School District

Diagnosing

Team Feedback Surveys (TFS)

During the evaluation step for Cycle One, the Steering Committee, Strategic Planning Committee, and the District Leadership Team were also participating in diagnosing exercises for Cycle Two from January 2007 to July 2007 (Appendix A). The Steering Committee and I created the Team Feedback Survey to determine the perception of preK-12 team participants' background knowledge of teaming concepts utilized by district.

The pilot of the Team Feedback Survey was conducted with ten participants. Conversations concerning the pilot survey revolved around the following questions: (a) Did the pilot Team Feedback Survey results assist in developing professional development; (b) Did the elements on the survey represent the most important concepts based on research and previous teams implemented within the district; (c) Did the participants understand the terminology of the survey; and (d) Did the survey cover concepts from a very basic understanding of teaming? All the items on the pilot survey were reworded to have similar language of "I understand." Systems thinking and the stages of team development were added.

Team Feedback Surveys (Appendix E) were distributed to the whole population of the four preK-12 vertical teams, communication arts, mathematics, science, and social studies, consisting of 87 team participants. In April 2007, the surveys were placed in the participants' mailboxes with an informed consent letter. Within a week, the participants

returned surveys to teacher leaders who had no contact with the researcher. The purpose was to determine the professional development needed by each vertical teams and teacher leaders in order to achieve the goal of Cycle Two.

All Team Feedback Survey results.

Team Feedback Survey had an 88.5% return rate. Some items on the survey were left blank by team participants. Each team participant marked one choice on the seventeen items on the survey. Consequently, when adding up the percentages across the columns, the percentages will not equal 100% unless all participants in the team turned in the survey and completed all items. Percentages of perceived team participant understanding were figured by taking the total team members and dividing by the number of items marked on the Team Feedback Survey. Choices on the Team Feedback Survey ranged from understanding the concept “not at all,” “to some extent,” “well,” or “well enough to teach others.”

Forty-four percent of the participants attended a district level team in the past two years. Sixty-three percent of the team survey participants had been on a building level teams. These two percents do not total 100% because some participants attended both district and building level teams. Items in which all teams perceived the least understanding in the “Not at All” category ranged from 35% to 61% were: (a) systems thinking; (b) team stages of forming, storming, norming, performing; (c) collaboration; (d) teaming tools of fist-to-five and Strengths-Weaknesses-Opportunities-Threats analysis. If less than a third of the team members had no concept of the items on the Team Feedback Survey, when the teams were split into small groups, the teams were less

likely to function based on lack of background knowledge. In the “Well” category, items perceived with the highest percentages ranging from 47% to 56% were: (a) brainstorming; (b) team norms; (c) purpose of preK-12 team; (d) analyze and use data to make decisions; (e) current mission, vision, and guiding principles; and (f) researched based interventions. About half the team members had a basic understanding of these items on the Team Feedback Survey and could be expected to use these concepts in a team setting with support. In the “Can Teach Others” category, only two items were perceived by team participants from 26% to 29%: consensus and brainstorming (Appendix K). Very few team members felt they had an understanding in which they could lead the team through this process.

Team Feedback Survey analyzed by the Steering Committee.

Based on the April 2007 Steering Committee team meeting notes, the Steering Committee reviewed Team Feedback Survey data and focused on concepts perceived to be least understood to determine professional development needed. The Steering Committee utilized data from the evaluation of Cycle One by embedding the professional development within the work and expected tasks of the team. In Cycle One, administrator professional development for teaming occurred for a year. Despite the training and expectations to implement the concepts at the building level through Building Leadership Teams, implementation of the concepts varied; some concepts were implemented fully, some minimally, and some not at all. The Steering Committee wanted to create a need among team participants to know and apply the information immediately in the team setting to create meaning and relevance to the team members.

The Steering Committee considered the Team Feedback Survey categories of “well” and “can teach others” to be synonymous with the ability to apply the concept in a teaming situation. Except for nine out of the seventeen concepts on the Team Feedback Survey, about 40 to 60% of the team members perceived an understanding of these concepts (See Appendix K, L, M, N, & O). Team survey participants perceived a need for professional development with the following items on the Team Feedback Survey: (a) collaboration; (b) team stages; (c) plan, do, study, act cycle; (d) systems thinking; (e) action plans; (f) strategic and specific, measurable, attainable, results-based, and time-bound (SMART) goals; (g) Strengths-Weaknesses-Opportunities-Threats analysis; and (h) team agendas; and (i) fist-to-five. The results of this analysis and needs of professional development were summarized in Table C.

Table C

Comparison of Vertical Team Professional Development Needs to Team Participation

Team	Comm. Arts	Mathematics	Science	Social Studies
Return Rate	22/22	20/24	17/20	18/21
Team Participation in District	59%	42%	15%	36%
Team Participation in Building	50%	67%	35%	67%
No. Concepts ≥33% on TFS	12/17 from 39% to 82%	12/17 from 46% to 71%	11/17 from 35% to 75%	14/17 from 38% to 76%
No. Concepts ≥50% on TFS	9/17 from 61% to 82%	8/17 from 50% to 71%	9/17 from 50% to 75%	11/17 from 52% to 76%
No. Concepts ≥75% on TFS	3/17 from 78% to 82%	0/17	1/17 at 75%	2/17 at 76%
Professional Development Needs of the Vertical Teams >40% on Not at all and To some extent	Collaboration Team stages PDSA cycle Systems think Action plans SMART goals SWOT analysis Fist-to-Five	Collaboration Team stages PDSA cycle Systems think Action plans SMART goals SWOT analysis Team agendas	Collaboration Team stages PDSA cycle Systems think Action plans SMART goals SWOT analysis Fist-to-Five	Collaboration Team stages PDSA cycle Systems think SWOT analysis Fist-to-Five

The Steering Committee selected the 17 concepts on the Team Feedback Survey due to previous experience of implementing teams in Cycle One. The purpose of the Team Feedback Survey was to assess the background knowledge of the team participants to identify needs for professional development. The Steering Committee assumed that if the team was able to apply the concepts on the Team Feedback Survey, the team would be able to accomplish the “work” of the team expected by the district. The Steering Committee comparison resulted in discussion of the relationship between district and building level team participation to team survey participants’ perceived knowledge of teaming concepts.

The Team Feedback Survey did not support the assumption that more district team and building team participation required less professional development due to previous experiences and background knowledge. The district and building level team participation had no relationship with the number of perceived concepts of understanding by item on the Team Feedback Survey over 33%, 50%, or 75%. For example, the Science Team had the least amount of district and building team participation and had less professional development needs than the Mathematics Team, which had more previous team participation. The concepts on the Team Feedback Survey were compared with 33% of team understanding in that if a third of the team understood the concept, when the teams split into small groups, these small groups would be able to function with supports from the team leader. Fifty percent would require less supports from the team leader, and 75% would be ideal for team ability to accomplish the “work” identified by the district. Overall, the Team Feedback Survey demonstrated the team survey participants’

perceived understanding of the following concepts: (a) team norms; (b) vertical team purpose; (c) consensus; (d) brainstorming; (e) small group input to final product; (f) current Maxville vision, mission, and guiding principles; (g) analyzing and using data; and (h) researched-based interventions.

Planning Action

Planning action occurred from April 2007 to September 2007. Based upon the Team Feedback Survey, professional development was planned based on the perceived need for understanding for the teacher leaders and vertical teams. All vertical teams needed professional development in collaboration, team stages, plan, do, study, act cycle, systems thinking, and Strengths-Weaknesses-Opportunities-Threats analysis. All vertical teams except the Science team needed strategic and specific, measurable, attainable, results-based, and time-bound (SMART) goals and action plans. Vertical teams showed different needs in teaming tools: (a) Communication Arts Team, fist-to-five teaming tool; (b) Mathematics Team, team agendas; and (c) Science Team, fist-to-five (See Table C).

Calendar dates of the vertical team meetings were set; team members were selected by the Steering Committee with input from principals; and members were notified. In order to demonstrate district support for teaming, substitutes were provided during the contracted work day for the sixteen, three-hour meetings. During the half-day training with the assistant superintendent, substitutes were also provided. With teachers sharing substitutes across the district, vertical teams were scheduled to meet in the morning and the afternoon. The assistant superintendent planned individual trainings with the teacher leaders to plan agendas, professional development for team members, and

team processes. The team agendas and assistant superintendent personal notes were kept as documentation for the individual trainings.

Taking Action

Taking action for Cycle Two consisted of conducting preK-12 vertical team and District Analysis and Assessment Team meetings from March 2007 to September 2007. Professional development (Table C) was embedded within meetings and within teacher leaders' individual interactions with the assistant superintendent prior to each vertical team meeting. The District Analysis and Assessment Team, the teacher-led, evaluative team consisting of teacher leaders over the preK-12 vertical teams (See Appendix Q), also conducted professional development for teacher leaders as outlined in team meeting agendas.

PreK-12 Vertical Teams

The sixteen, three-hour vertical team meetings occurred between March 1 and September 30, 2007. Each team meeting was documented through team agendas and detailed meeting notes. The first team meeting of each vertical team was conducted by the assistant superintendent. During the first meeting, the assistant superintendent led the teams through: (a) the development of team norms, (b) introduction to the purpose of the team, (c) review of the mission, vision, and guiding principles of the district, (d) initiation of basic team activities to help members get to know each other, begin trust building, start the sharing of ideas, and elect a teacher team leader.

The assistant superintendent met individually with the teacher leaders prior to the second, third, and fourth team meetings to discuss and co-plan team agendas. During

these meetings, the teacher leaders were prepared for the next step in the teaming process. The assistant superintendent facilitated the gathering of data for analysis. Substitutes were provided for the teacher leader during this training. During the second, third, and fourth meetings, the assistant superintendent attended the meetings as a facilitator and provided support for the teacher leader. Team participants had release time from the classrooms, with substitutes provided, to attend the second through fourth team meetings.

In reviewing all vertical team meeting notes taken by the team recorder from March to September 2007, the teams accomplished the following task consisting of three parts: creating (a) a content area SMART goal, (b) a baseline for the goal by analyzing district data, and (c) an action plan to reach the goal. Teaming tools utilized included fist-to-five, brainstorming, team agendas, and small group input to final product to accomplish the first task through the voice of all.

Data Analysis and Assessment Team, May 2007 and August 2007

The Data Analysis and Assessment Team, an evaluative team over the preK-12 vertical teams consisting of all vertical team teacher leaders, met for a three hour meeting in May, 2007. The Data Analysis and Assessment Team, a newly created team, provided another opportunity for teacher leaders to experience the process of starting a new team. Team norms were developed; the method for consensus was discussed; and team roles were identified (Appendix P). A visual representation summarizing the purpose of the team was created after team discussion (Appendix Q). The Data Analysis and Assessment Team analyzed Team Feedback Survey data to determine further professional development for teacher leaders and team members. The team members

were given graphs (Appendix R, S, T, U) showing the percentage of understanding for each of the concepts.

Given the survey results and team experiences, District Analysis and Assessment Team was asked to address the question, “What do you need as a teacher leader to meet the needs of the vertical teams and assist them in being effective?” District Analysis and Assessment Team identified the following items for professional development for the next school year: (a) Strengths-Weaknesses-Opportunities-Threats analysis; (b) collaboration; (c) SMART goals; (d) action plans; (e) researched based interventions; (f) lingo and terminology; (g) giving the teachers the “why” so they can figure out the “how”; and (h) getting teachers to “buy in” (District Analysis and Assessment Team meeting notes, May 8, 2007).

District Analysis and Assessment Team questioned the validity of the survey because team members did not truly understand the concepts behind the terminology on the Team Feedback Survey. A teacher leader shared when taking the Team Feedback Survey, that admitting “not knowing” a concept was very uncomfortable. Since teams were working together, team members could be more honest. District Analysis and Assessment Team members mentioned sometimes teachers ignore surveys because surveys are not perceived as relevant due to results not typically being shared. District Analysis and Assessment Team reviewed SMART goals. Team leaders could not define SMART goals. Yet, each of the four content area teams created a SMART goal in previous vertical team meetings. During the District Analysis and Assessment Team meeting, SMART goals from four vertical teams were evaluated before these goals went

to the Board meeting. Even though the teams discussed SMART goals meetings and created and evaluated SMART goals, the team leaders stated they could not define a SMART goal.

After the District Analysis and Assessment Team, summarized team meeting notes, which reviewed the team's discussion and decisions, were sent to each teacher leader. The team meeting notes were enclosed with reading material on: (a) SMART goals, (b) collaboration, (c) the plan, do, study, act cycle, and (d) Strengths-Weaknesses-Opportunities-Threats analysis.

In August 2007, another District Analysis and Assessment Team meeting was held. This meeting was planned based on the information shared from the teacher leader interviews, the Team Feedback Survey, and the previous District Analysis and Assessment Team meeting. During the meeting, each action taken by the team was explained in terms of why we were doing the process and benefits to the teaming process. Teacher leaders were given a Teacher Leader Resource Guide that explained all 17 concepts in outline form with handouts the teacher leaders could utilize for teams. Teacher leaders were given choices of different brainstorming processes and selected one to use in the meeting. The action plan for the District Analysis and Assessment Team SMART goal was created in part. Many conversations occurred describing the difference between the vertical teams and the District Analysis and Assessment Team. The agenda and team processes utilized in the District Analysis and Assessment Team meeting were processes the teacher leaders needed to lead the next vertical team meeting.

Evaluation of Cycle Two

Steering Committee Analysis of Team Feedback Survey and Vertical Team Performance

In July 2007, the Steering Committee discussed data gathered from the Team Feedback Survey, including the analysis by the District Analysis and Assessment Team, the District Leadership Team, and the April 2007 Collaboration Focus Team Survey in relation to team performance that concerned vertical teams. These data were collected for district context of teacher perception of teaming and collaboration as compared to the Team Feedback Survey team member perceptions.

Analysis of the Team Feedback Survey data by the District Leadership Team was reviewed by the Steering Committee. Based on District Leadership Team meeting notes, administrators expressed concerns with the Team Feedback Survey data. Administrators stated that the use by teachers in different buildings of different or no terminology caused skewed results.

In July, 2007, the Steering Committee reviewed data from the Collaboration Focus Team Survey. The Collaboration Focus Team Survey was created by an adhoc team, of which I was a part, incorporating the collective ideas identified by the Collaboration Focus Team. The Collaboration Focus Team Survey, which evaluated an action step of the Collaboration SMART Goal, was distributed to all certified staff in March 2007 through the intranet and garnered a 69% return rate. Results of the Collaboration Focus Team Survey were tallied by the adhoc team using Microsoft Excel.

The Collaboration Focus Team analyzed and shared data with the District Leadership Team and Board to provide support for collaboration time within the school

day for the 2007-2008 school year. Collaboration Focus Team members offered comments during the Board presentation. One teacher shared her thankfulness of being on a team where her voice was heard and valued. The following information on the ten items similar to the Team Feedback Survey were included. Thirty-one percent of the teachers indicated the collaboration process for student achievement was valued. Sixty-eight percent stated that teachers did not have enough background knowledge to determine if professional collaboration was an appropriate use of teachers' time. Voice was valued by 57% of the teachers. Teachers agreed that current district technology supported collaboration with 22%. Twenty-eight percent of the teachers agreed that professional development should be directed at improving collaboration skills. Only 21% agreed that current district professional development improved collaboration. Forty-five percent agreed that teaming skills were necessary for effective professional collaboration (See Appendix V).

The Collaboration Focus Team analyzed the data and made the following conclusions. Professional development was needed to show teachers what collaboration resembles and how it functions. Additionally, because the software programs being utilized for data collection and common assessments were not working as smoothly, efficiently, and conveniently as desired, more technological support was identified as a need. The collaboration time in the district calendar for the start of the 2007-2008 school year needed to be protected by the district and used appropriately. Professional development needed to be continual to bring all new teachers up-to-date and to move current staff to our goal of a collaborative community. Public relations with the

community needed to be systematic to increase community awareness of these cultural shifts in our district (Collaboration Focus Team Meeting Notes, April 2007).

Several categories emerged from the comment section on the Collaboration Focus Team Survey. Teacher comments focused directly on collaboration showed support: One teacher supported faculty collaboration by stating,

“Moving to faculty collaboration and moving away from teaching in isolation is one of the best things this district has done in my nearly 20 years here. It is making a difference in student achievement and learning and will continue to do so. It is also renewing teachers. It is great to teach in a district that strives for improvement that is based on research. I know not all teachers grasp it at this time, but they will.”

Another teacher stated, “...I have seen how collaboration has really drawn our group closer together.” A teacher moving into the district stated,

“I have worked in a different state and different districts and I really feel [Maxwell] does the best job with giving the teachers enough time to work as a team and collaborate on the students goals. Coming in as a new teacher to the district, I felt that it was a much easier transition because there is the extra support and help of a team and you are not just out there to learn and work on your own. It also helps with accountability because there are natural checks and balances when everybody is working together.”

Another category described the impact of leadership on collaboration. One teacher stated, “I believe the idea [of collaboration] has been presented to all. Some

teachers understand and others are shutting it out and continuing down the same old road....We have a long way to go to...improve student achievement.” This comment was supported by another teacher stating, “I believe that professional collaboration can be a powerful tool in the education process, but building administration must do more to prove support by action and not just words.” Another teacher stated, “In order for collaboration to be effective, all members of the collaborative team must be working towards a goal. Unfortunately, we still have certain teachers that want to use this time to complain about kids.” This teacher comment was mixed about leaders valuing input, “I feel the building and district administrators value our input, but they don’t come asking for it. They tend to value it, if we offer it.”

Teaming tools came through as another category in the comment section. One teacher stated,

“More professional development is needed in the area of what makes up a team and how the team is to function....faculty members [don’t] have a good understanding of team dynamics and that it is okay to disagree with another team member as long as everyone listens to what each team member has to say.”

Another teacher commented,

“There is by far not enough information or direction as to how this is to work or what we are to do. I feel as though we are put in a meeting and told to sink or swim. Also information is not flowing smoothly, because in a meeting we have 10 people and 10 different ideas of what is supposed to be happening. We need more concrete direction what we are to do and how you want it done.”

Another category that surfaced supported that some teachers are having difficulty leaving isolationism to a collaborative culture. One teacher stated, “I think the premise of learning communities is good, however, like I said, we can have all the researched based ‘whatevers’, but the best research is performed by the teacher in the classroom. She should be knowledgeable enough to know where each of her students are and where they need to go.” Another teacher supported this by saying, “...I am the student’s sole teacher. I believe I should be like the child’s therapist....Let me support the kids....Let me teach skills...” Some teachers seemed more comfortable with the isolationism.

Steering Committee analysis.

The Steering Committee compared data in Appendices L, M, N, O, V, and Table D. Table D showed data collected on a scoring guide created by the Steering Committee to evaluate the performance of teacher leaders and teams through the tasks accomplished by the teams. The assistant superintendent scored the assessment because of involvement with individual teacher leader training, facilitating, and supporting teacher leaders during team meetings. The criteria on the scoring guide ranged from one being low, to four being high on the independence of the team and teacher leader to complete the team “work” assigned by the district from April 2007 to July 2007. The other Steering Committee members questioned the assistant superintendent as to how the scores were determined. The assistant superintendent responded with, “If the team was able to complete the task assigned to them using team processes without my assistance in the meeting, I scored them high with a 4. If the team was unable to complete the task

assigned without my help in the meeting, I went lower on the 1-4 scale depending on the level of assistance” (Steering Committee meeting notes, 7/10/07).

Table D

Performance of Teacher Leaders (TL) and Vertical Teams Scoring Guide Summary

One is low independence Four is high independence	Communication Arts	Mathematics	Science	Social Studies
Team - Analyze Data Compare, Make Inferences, Evaluate	3	4	2	2
Team - Create SMART Goals	4	4	4	4
TL - Use of teaming tools	4	3	3	2.5
TL - Facilitate meetings effectively	3	2	1	1
TL - Facilitate consensus	4	4	4	4
Average Overall Team Score	3.6	3.4	2.8	2.7

In the Steering Committee meeting, conversations for teams and teacher leaders centered around the following: (a) teacher leader strengths and weaknesses; (b) use of teaming processes; (c) assistant participation in the meeting; and (d) team and teacher leader performance in comparison to the Team Feedback Survey (Steering Committee meeting notes, 7/10/07). Since the assistant superintendent attended each meeting, the assistant superintendent shared observations, and the Steering Committee asked questions to clarify the information.

In discussing the strengths and weaknesses of the teacher leaders, having co-teacher leaders for one team appeared to create conflict between the two leaders. Of the five leaders, some were confident about leading with their own ideas of what the team should do; others were more insecure. Three teacher leaders were able to keep the meeting focused on the agenda; two teacher leaders needed assistance from the assistant superintendent in redirecting the meeting. All teacher leaders were open to ideas presented during the teacher leader individual training and were willing to use team processes to accomplish a team task. Two of the teacher leaders, who were able to converse with the assistant superintendent during the individual training about the teaming concepts and planned the agenda easily, were unable to implement the processes in the team meeting. The assistant superintendent co-facilitated the meeting during these times.

All teacher leaders utilized the teaming processes of norming, fist-to-five, small group to large group input, creation of SMART goals, and analyzing data. Some teams demonstrated more independence with utilizing these team processes. Two teams required the assistant superintendent to co-facilitate the team process when creating SMART goals. Three teams required assistance from the assistant superintendent with analyzing data, an activity that seemed to be the most difficult team process. One team made inferences on data from personal feelings and observation rather than using the data to create the inferences. One team was led step-by-step by the assistant superintendent to compare, make inferences, and evaluate the data.

In comparing the Overall Team Score in Table D with the Number of Concepts $\geq 33\%$, $\geq 50\%$, and $\geq 75\%$ understood on the Team Feedback Survey in Table C, no consistent pattern emerged. The Overall Team Score for Communication Arts was 3.6 with the highest number of concepts $\geq 75\%$. Conversely, the Overall Team Score for Social Studies was 2.7, with the most team concepts $\geq 50\%$ of the four teams, and two concepts $\geq 75\%$. Mathematics had the fewest number of concepts $\geq 50\%$ and $\geq 75\%$ but was the second highest performing with a 3.4 on the Overall Team Score. The Overall Team Score on all four teams exhibited no pattern when compared to the professional development of the teams. Social Studies needed the least amount of professional development of all four teams but scored the lowest on the Overall Team Score.

The Steering Committee evaluated the decision to embed professional development activities into team meetings and the method of working individually with each teacher leader. The Steering Committee approved of continuing this method as new vertical teams are started in the fall of 2007. By conducting professional development in this manner, the Steering Committee felt the professional development was more meaningful and relevant. The Steering Committee suggested that after the team members had some experiences working as a team, the teacher leaders in the District Analysis and Assessment Team should decide additional professional development. The Steering Committee continued to support the need for the assistant superintendent to individually train and prepare teacher leaders during the next school year in order to provide scaffolding for the teacher leaders. By adding that level of support for teacher leaders, the Steering Committee felt more confident that the teaming processes would be more

closely followed and the vertical teams would not develop bad habits or revert to former practices under a new name. The next section focuses on the teacher leader interview data conducted in June, 2007.

Teacher Leader Interview Data

Interviews were conducted with five vertical team teacher leaders by another teacher in the district trained through the Educational Leadership and Policy Analysis doctoral program through the University of Missouri-Columbia (Appendix I). By having a teacher interview teachers, indirect or direct power influences were minimized. Teacher leaders were assigned to a specific vertical team, any reference to a particular team or building was changed to a generic reference to protect teacher leader anonymity. The 45-minute interviews were conducted over a period of one week. The participant interviews were audio taped and transcribed. Systematic coding of data permitted the emergence of categories. Through open and axial coding strategies the data were color coded into categories by the teacher interviewing the participants and myself (Merriam, 1998). The following categories of comments emerged from this iterative process.

Purpose.

The purpose of the vertical teams was to provide a district perspective among teachers. The five teacher leaders interviewed demonstrated an understanding of a district perspective view. Teacher Leader Three stated, "...you are getting ... the big picture more often, educationally.... that has probably been the missing component as far as creating a continuous flow of education....The vertical team will give us ... what is happening with all students." Teacher Leader Five stated, "Instead of working by

building or by grade level, now we are working as a district. Not to just promote one section of the student body, but to have them all move forward in the same way.”

Teacher Leader Five said, “...using this community to look at information...interacting with people from all different grade levels” as a major difference than previous meetings. The focus was to get “all of us [district personnel] lined in the same direction” (Teacher Leader Four, June 2007). “Everybody’s focus becomes narrower and more concentrated and not being so scattered” (Teacher Leader Three, June 2007).

The teacher leaders stated similar purposes of the content area vertical teams. Teacher Leader Three stated, “The purpose is to organize the focus, scope, and sequence of [content area], so that we ... address student learning without having holes and to not have repetition....To create commonalities so that the focus is the same.” Teacher Leader One mentioned, “We need to communicate better between schools....So I assume we are a place to gap some of those bridges....Everyone knows that we are supposed to talk together, work together, and we want to do better [improve student achievement].” Teacher Leader Two stated, “...the purpose was to ensure that kids were getting all the information and that there were no gaps.”

Despite similar understanding of purposes, teacher leaders also expressed skepticism. Teacher Leader Three stated, “...with just three meetings, you don’t really have a good handle on what can be accomplished.” Later in the interview, Teacher Leader Three also stated, “I would like to see us get more unified as far as what we are.”

District perspective.

To create opportunity for a district perspective on district matters, vertical teams were created with equal representation of grade, building, and program. The teacher leaders addressed this difference in the district culture through the following comments. “Well nothing has ever been that...large with representatives from all the grade levels. That is one major difference (Teacher Leader One, June 2007).” Teacher Leader Two also mentioned this difference,

“There is one from every grade level and....from early childhood, special education people, each area represented, geography, [alternative school], administration....This is a bigger group than in the past...preK-12 is such a wide variety and it’s good to hear. I’m learning a lot about what is going on in the [buildings] and the things that they do, and more of an understanding.”

Teacher Leader Four talked about the benefits of equal representation, “I think it is more inclusive. To get from the preK perspective up through government and the advanced placement courses....That is kind of a blanket. You see how the teachers accept the responsibility of teaching the kids.” Teacher Leader Five mentioned, “Ideas from different age groups prek-12, it’s going to be a major bonus for us.” Equal representation provided a district perspective and opportunity for voice through the use of teaming tools.

Teaming tools and processes.

Vertical teams met three to four times each, with the District Analysis and Assessment Team meeting twice, the end of September, 2007. Categories emerged from

the teacher leader interviews with teaming tools and processes: (a) trust, (b) norming, consensus, (c) utilization of data, (d) SMART goals, and (e) collaboration.

Teaming tools and processes – trust.

All five teacher leaders mentioned trust as they described team meetings and team participation. Teacher Leader One stated, “Everyone is becoming more comfortable...people are beginning to talk outside of their own building a little bit... I think people are beginning to open up and say what is really on their mind.” Teacher Leader Five stated, “I think we are a lot more open than we were. A lot of people were reserved. They didn’t want to step on toes.” Teacher Leader Five also mentioned, “Really we became a team. We came as a group of individuals and when we left, we felt like we were all a part of the same goal.” Teacher Leader Five stated,

“...the second meeting that we had, I was pretty nervous because you are meeting with the [administrators] are in there and you are trying to make a positive...persona of professionalism and leadership....Some of the team members were apprehensive to ask questions. They don’t want to seem like, I don’t know what that is...I think that once we get over the shock of being a new team and having so many voices that are calling for the same thing to happen [we were more open].”

Teacher Leader Two supported this previous statement, “That is very intimidating to be on a team with an administrator [but] they were very helpful.” Teacher Leader Two also stated, “Sometimes I feel that because I am a lower elementary teacher, I may not get the respect... because I just teach addition and subtraction and I am not trained in

calculus....So far, everyone has been very nice.” Teacher Leader Three also mentioned another apprehension, “...teams will benefit...district students and teachers...most once the teachers get over the idea of thinking...teaming leads to dictating.... they feel ...they are going to be controlled. I think what it actually does is to free the teacher.”

Teacher Leader Three was excited about teaming, “I’m excited about the possibilities if we can get everybody on board...That will be the key factor...[to] get everybody feeling like it...[is]a good thing. This has been a good enough thing that I am committed.” Teacher Leader Three shared a personal change she had experienced, “...I just felt so strongly about that, and feeling so strongly about that, it has led me to be more outspoken.” All team leaders shared that team participants were developing a respect for one another in addition to feeling more willing to openly discuss matters within the team. Norming laid the groundwork for this respect and openness.

Teaming tools and processes - norming.

The teacher leaders were comfortable discussing norming to set boundaries. Each team had its own set of norms. Teacher Leader Three stated, “I think setting the norms for the meeting is good because it gives everyone a common understanding.” Another leader applied the function of the norms outside of the team meeting, Teacher Leader One said,

“In one of these little meetings outside the vertical team meetings, someone said, ‘I didn’t like what so and so said’ I reminded with this small isolated group that what we promised, that we would be open about what we felt, and that nobody would be judged, or have to worry about it and anything else.”

Vertical team meeting notes, March to May 2007, indicated the norms of starting and ending on time, having a published agenda, taking meetings notes, and being respectful and open in communication were similar between teams. Teams also discussed what consensus was and how consensus was reached.

Teaming tools and processes – consensus.

In general, the teacher leaders were surprised and positive at using team processes for consensus. Teacher Leader Two mentioned, “I think that different opinions are a hard thing ‘cause some people are very passionate about one thing.” Teacher Leader Five stated the difficulty of consensus, “They [the team members] have been in education for a long time and to see things from a different perspective and to try to get those different perspectives toward the same goal [is difficult].” Teacher Leader Two talked about writing goals, “Of course preK-12, we had 20 concerns...narrow[ed] it down to five with the majority of the people agreeing on it. That was a success.” Teacher Leader Three was very realistic about consensus, “I’ve had enough years of experience to know that sometimes in meetings people nodding their heads ‘yes’, ...never had the intention of following through.” Teacher Leader Three also stated, “...sometimes you get two people who are in strong agreement and a third person...it’s not they are deviating strongly, but they are deviating enough that you are uneasy.” Three of the five teacher leaders discussed the importance of having many viewpoints and putting “all of those minds together to work.”

The teaming tool supporting consensus described by the teacher leaders included “fist-to-five” Teacher Leader Four stated, “Using the ‘fist-to-five’ that has been great and

I don't think that there has been a situation yet where we have had to rediscuss." When asked what teaming tool was the most effective, Teacher Leader Three also stated,

"I think 'fist-to-five,' getting everyone in agreement, moving toward consensus. There were some misunderstandings about that, but that got worked out in conversation....That is the only way, you get less of the nodding of the head and I'm doing my own thing even though I am nodding my head. More apt to get people on board if you can work it out. Sometimes that's what never gets talked about - what was the upsetting component to you, what was the upsetting component to me?"

Teacher Leader Two had a concern with "fist-to-five," "Fist-to-five is good. You can analyze quickly where the team is at if it is being used effectively. I know some people who put their five fingers up without thinking about it."

Teaming tools and processes – utilization of data.

Four of the five teacher leaders talked specifically about the utilization of data through team analysis. The teacher leaders mentioned data as a baseline to guide the creation of strategic and specific, measurable, attainable, results-based, and time-bound (SMART) goals. Teacher Leader Five mentioned learning about team processes to analyze data, "...there are some [team processes] that we really didn't know...different ways to conduct the meeting and ways to use the data, ways to analyze the data." Teacher Leader One made this comment about data, "...we looked at data....and I am not a big data person, but I know that drives where we need to go and what we need to look at." Teacher Leader Four talked about evaluating the data being analyzed, "We don't

know...if it was accurate data, so we chose to look at the CTBS [district achievement test] scores to see how to change.” Teacher Leader Four also mentioned the difficulty of using data to make the SMART goal attainable, “We had a problem trying to figure out what level of performance we wanted from the CTBS...when we looked at individual data points... it seemed we should lower our expectations just a little.” Teacher Leader five was looking forward to the next round of data to analyze, “I’m excited to go through the next round of test scores and data and with it the information.” After analyzing data, the next step for a team was to develop a SMART goal.

Teaming tools and processes-SMART goals.

All five teacher leaders mentioned SMART goals. Teacher Leader Four was surprised that the team was able to accomplish this task of goal setting, “...once we all looked at the data and we understood what it was showing us, it was pretty easy to come together and have a common goal. We’re pretty much all in agreement with the one goal.” The teacher leaders identified the importance of focus through attainable and specific goals that identify the outcome. Teacher Leader Five stated, “...implementing SMART goals, knowing that things have to be attainable and specific. So many times when things are mentioned...there is not really a path to get there...we really don’t know...the outcome.” Teacher Leader Four tied the SMART goals to continuous improvement, “we have been focusing on ways of improvement, we...make sure our goal... that SMART goal, [is] measurable and attainable, and...that we are constantly looking to grow and get better. That’s what...improvement is all about.” Teacher Leader Two mentioned, “Writing our goals was a big success....Of course, preK-12, we had 20

concerns and we...narrowed it down to five with the majority...agreeing.... That was a success....there was a lot of hashing and...conversation about it.”

The teacher leaders also tied the SMART goal process to data. Teacher Leader Five stated, “We accomplished some of our short term goals, using data and creating SMART goals so that they are data driven. They are focused.” Teacher Leader Five also stated, “We can really get down and start putting some plausible numbers...but using the information and the data that we had to go with, it seemed pretty reasonable and something that we can attain.” Teacher Leader Four mentioned, “We are going to look at CTBS [district achievement test] scores. I guess that was our short term goal....We are going to be looking at setting up both the short and long term goals.”

Teaming tools and processes – collaboration.

When interviewing the teacher leaders, collaboration tied to student achievement was evident. The teacher leaders discussed the importance of being focused when collaborating, being work driven, having a purpose and keeping the students’ best interests in mind. Teacher Leader Three stated, “[We want] to create commonalities so that the focus is the same no matter who the teacher.” Teacher leaders also mentioned the importance of striving for the same goal, assessing students the same, and identifying what students have learned. Teacher Leader Five identified deficiencies to work on and said, “...make sure...kids are getting all the information...in a timely manner; and... not falling through the cracks....Make sure the kids... not only get information introduced..., but when they are tested...they...understand and do well.”

Teacher Leader One stated, “We...need to know what everyone learns at every grade....each grade level [has standards], but for some reason...it’s like nobody knows about it or...it is so busy that we forget to write down or read it.”

Teacher Leader Three said,

“the shift is good with SMART teams and professional learning communities to move to what students can actually show that they have learned....maybe something wasn’t covered in depth enough.... if we can just get over that and say OK we’ve got to do this because this is good for kids....Hopefully people will get on the bandwagon because they will see an increase in [student] performance.”

The interviews indicated the importance of communication, dialogue, hearing team members’ opinions, coming together to balance strengths and weaknesses, and creating more time to collaborate. Teacher Leader One said, “ You know as long as we realize that we do have to communicate to get the best education...we can find what we are really working for and do what it takes to get there.” Teacher Leader Five valued collaboration by stating, “I have some friends who are in education in other districts and they talk about getting meetinged (sic) to death. I don’t see that. It is really increasing the child’s performance and that is why we are here.” The next emergent category centered on training and professional development.

Professional development.

When the teacher leaders were asked about district interventions and supports provided, the interviews showed the perception of teacher leaders of no training being conducted for teaming, but the district supported the teacher leaders. TL One stated, “As

far as just participating in the team meetings, I don't remember the specific trainings that I have gone to." Teacher Leader Two added, "...the time off...to prepare [with] our assistant superintendent, I...worked with her to set up the agenda. She was real supportive....talking to [the assistant superintendent] has been all the preparation...I have had." Teacher Leader Four also stated, "[The assistant superintendent] was excellent...told me exactly what I needed to do.... the district...support[ed] sub-time for us....I feel I am getting the information I need. And if I need anything extra, then I...ask [the assistant superintendent]."

Teacher Leader Five mentioned the following,

"I had a chance to meet with... the assistant superintendent, and she went over some things and some strategies for leading. This is the first time I have been a teacher leader. I have been on many committees, but this is my first as a leader of a team.... I ...went to [the assistant superintendent], and she is very personable and honest. If there is something that I am not doing, or...need to do...she is willing to work with me.... The thing for me is someplace to go for information...Really some one-on-one....To have an upper level administrator that you can go to and talk to...I can learn a lot from that."

The next category focused on the frustrations of the teacher leaders with the teaming experience.

Frustrations.

Many frustrations were expressed by the teacher leaders during the teacher leader interviews. Frustrations centered on teaming processes, purpose, using a common language, technology, and leadership.

Frustrations – teaming processes.

Many of the frustrations were based on teaming processes in which Maxville was doing business differently. One frustration dealt with the teacher leaders feeling uncomfortable with team processes. Teacher Leader Two stated, “Sometimes I feel that because I am a lower elementary teacher, I may not get the respect...the upper grades have because I just teach addition and subtraction and I am not trained in calculus...” Teacher Leader Five made a similar comment, “It’s...overwhelming the first couple...times...you meet because you know there are some people who have been in education a lot longer than I have....It was a little intimidating...to meet with that many good people.” Teacher Leader One tied feeling uncomfortable to the building practices, “Well maybe, the other buildings coming to that practice, [of] teaming in general, maybe the district committee [team] will be more natural.”

The teacher leaders also expressed other frustrations around team processes. Teacher Leader One stated, “Sometimes I think we have to spell things out more. I think it is just natural for people to go with the flow and not say, ‘Wait a minute, I don’t know what that means.’” Teacher Leader Three said, “...if you would think that you would walk into some process like this and think that you weren’t going to have...some people are uneasy and there is some debate about including certain things.” Teacher Leader Two

supported this idea by saying, “I think that different opinions are a hard thing. ‘Cause some people are very passionate about one thing....So, we are battling in that area....We have a lot of work to get there.” Teacher Leader One mentioned frustration with follow through of the team’s work, “How will it [team created scoring guide] be promoted within the buildings. I just see it kind of getting lost in the paper shuffle....I hope it doesn’t slip through the cracks.” Time was a factor for Teacher Leader Three, “Some people feel we are meeting too much and I hope they do not feel that way about the vertical team because we have just started.” Teacher Leader Three also stated, “I am not wanting to leave the classroom to come listen to a bunch of people vent.”

Frustrations – purpose.

Two of the teacher leaders are co-leaders for a vertical team. Each expressed a difference of opinion on the purpose of the team. One co-leader stated, “One glitch...we...had is that...somebody who had been to a presentation... thought they should...share what they had learned in a presentation....I didn’t think that vertical team meeting was the place to do that.” The other co-leader stated,

“I’m glad that we’re meeting, and I’m glad that we are trying to all become familiar with what everyone else is doing, but even in just one action, I can see that is not just necessarily true. Not everybody is interested in doing that. I think ...there should’ve been a presentation given during that meeting so that the people in the vertical team could have judged if that was a viable program or not. But it was decided outside the vertical team meeting and I kind of resent that. I know I feel like that was not handled well.”

A co-leader expressed frustration about the purpose of the vertical team when asked how the teacher leader maintains alignment with the district's vision, mission, and guiding principles,

“Oh, with just attending these meetings and not giving up on the meetings even though they can be frustrating or whatnot. We have to stick in there. It's very easy to say, that teacher leader is not doing anything valid and I don't know where we are going...you know as long as we realize that we do have to communicate to get the best education.”

A co-leader stated, “I was wondering if I should continue to participate..., but because of this community..., we are in the beginning stages [of teaming]. If I drop out now, there won't be that...voice....I'm going to stick with it.”

Frustration – common language.

Another frustration was tied to a common language. Teacher Leader Three stated, “...people still didn't understand what I consider to be the basics....acronyms such as SMART goals...people didn't know what they were. Some of the words on that form [Team Feedback Form], no one had a common understanding.” Teacher Leader Four addressed similar comments, “A lot of the lingo some of us knew what it meant and some of us didn't. Some of us had different interpretations. They [team members] actually had two different ideas of what was happening.” Teacher Leader Three also made a similar statement,

“One of the things that we did talk about [at the Data Analysis and Assessment Team] was acronyms. What we use on the high school and middle school and

elementary and some of the acronyms the people really didn't know. And in order to make educated decisions, it would be nice to spend a little bit of time to go over the terminology and acronyms that are used."

Frustrations – technology.

One teacher leader frustration centered on technology. Teacher Leader Three stated, "The hardest thing was to...email...all the team members. Sometimes it took me a couple days to get the email to everyone....Those little glitchy frustrations of trying to be a teacher and a leader."

Frustrations – leadership.

How the district role changed also presented frustrations to the teacher leader. Teacher Leader Three stated, "That is the part I'm uneasy about....the district...should say this is the focus.... The leadership... is decided to be filtering out. That would allow us to create some changes I do not feel that is clear." The frustration mentioned above regarding leadership is an interesting comment. One way to interpret the comment might be the traditional top-down direction of leading changed and leadership was being shared among teacher leaders in the district. Teacher Leader Three also mentioned the district change initiative, "...a district should try to pick a focus and get everybody comfortable with that one focus. It may be a major change, before they try to upset the apple cart again." Another frustration mentioned by Teacher Leader Three, "... in listening to other people...who have gone through professional learning communities. We ...[are] doing it differently....Why?...Maybe we just need some money to hook up with an outside force

and get a lot of training.” Teacher leaders also shared positive comments concerning teaming.

Celebrations.

Part of creating a collaborative culture involved celebration. Several comments for the district to celebrate came forward during the interviews. Teacher Leader One stated,

“I taught at another school for many years...in another state in Springfield, Illinois. And it is nothing like it is here. We were very much an isolated community. I mean, I liked the people that I talked with. I had a good experience there and it was a good place to teach in my early years, but there was no kind of communication or teachers participating or being a part of the decision making process. The teachers who did participate in the decision making process were the department chairs. So this is very new to me as a regular [building, content area] teacher that I should be a part of something like this, very positive experience in this district.”

Teacher Leader Two shared, “I think it [teaming process] is going to be a great learning experience for myself and everyone else once we really get into it.” Teacher Leader Five mirrored this previous statement, “This is exciting. This is an opportunity for me to learn and to...even though I am a team leader, there are others in the teams that are leaders, too.” Teacher Leader Two also commented on the team being teacher led as a positive step, “I think we are going to have a little more input maybe with where we are headed.”

Teacher Leader Three summed up the celebrations by stating, “I think again that it

[teaming process] will eventually free the teacher. It is a lot of work to do, the planning of it initially, but it will free the teacher.”

Second Teacher Leader Interview Data

In September 2007, the second interview was conducted by the same teacher who conducted the first interview. The thirty-minute teacher leader interviews, conducted over a period of one week, were audio-taped and transcribed. The interview centered on one basic question specifically reviewing each professional development intervention with the teacher leaders to identify the interventions that made the most impact on learning to be a teacher leader. The interventions discussed with the teacher leaders were: one-on-one training with the assistant superintendent, assistant superintendent support during the vertical team meetings, vertical team meetings, Data Analysis and Assessment Team meetings conversations, Data Analysis and Assessment Team meeting handouts, Teacher Leader Resource Guide, and other interventions needed.

The overall message given by the teacher leaders for professional development was to keep the information comprehensive but not too detailed. Too much information and paper was overwhelming, but some information was needed for reminders and reference. The intervention found to be most effective was working with the assistant superintendent one-on-one to plan for meetings. The next most effective intervention was the District Analysis and Assessment Team meetings because teacher leaders were having conversations about processes among the teacher leaders. Practicing analyzing the data in the District Analysis and Assessment Team meeting before the vertical team meetings was helpful. One teacher leader said, “Because the data was explained to me in

the meeting, I feel a little more confident about bringing that data to the vertical team.” The teacher leaders felt supported by having the assistant superintendent in the vertical team meetings; if a team process wasn’t working properly, immediate assistance was available. Just one intervention was not effective, rather a combined web of interventions was necessary to meet all the needs of the teacher leaders in different ways. The next section describes the analysis completed by the Steering Committee on the teacher leader interviews.

Teacher Leader Interviews and Steering Committee Analysis

The Steering Committee discussed teacher leader interviews. Based on the Steering Committee meeting notes, the beginning conversation revolved around the absence of extreme negativity. Apprehension and doubt showed in the words of the teacher leaders, but no teacher leader described the experience as not worthwhile. During the interview process, all of the teacher leaders mentioned uneasiness with the team process, describing a fear of conflict, a fear of being honest, and a fear of being open in the team meetings. This uneasiness showed a deviation from our traditional district culture of isolationism and top-down leadership. Teacher leaders were not accustomed to these team processes.

Despite the uneasiness, the teacher leaders were very positive toward the teaming processes of collaborating across the district, the sharing of ideas, of district alignment, and working together to increase student achievement. The teacher leaders expressed the value of all voices in a team, as well as the difficulty of bringing people with different

perceptions together. Teacher leaders were beginning to see that teacher instruction needs to change to help the students achieve.

The Steering Committee discussed the impact of these many conversations being conducted in different team meetings toward aligning our vision of a collaborative culture for the future of our district. The interviews of the teacher leaders showed this evolving team process created a sense of the unknown because no one dictated the outcome of the team. The teams had “work” to accomplish, but no specific guidelines with the outcome, only with the process. This ambiguity created discomfort for our teacher leaders.

The Steering Committee was surprised by the idea of the teacher leaders’ perception of having had no training during this time period. Yet further discussion connected this perception to our former district culture of bringing in outside speakers and sending teachers to seminars. The teacher leaders did not connect the individual meetings conducted by the assistant superintendent in our district in a one-on-one setting as training. These meetings with the assistant superintendent were seen as support, rather than professional development.

Many key concepts identified in the Team Feedback Survey showed through in the conversation of the teacher leaders. Using a district view in addressing a concern, improving communication, and the importance of a district view came through in all five interviews. Using collaboration to create a focus student achievement came across in the interviews. The teacher leaders described the importance of being focused, using data to create goals, and writing measurable, attainable goals based on the data. They described

the benefits of many teaming tools and how the tools were used effectively so the team accomplished “work.”

The Steering Committee was excited to see a beginning cultural change in words teachers used, in what was valued, and in the continual tie to student achievement. The interviews illuminated misperception and various degrees of understanding of certain words, acronyms, and concepts throughout the district.

The Steering Committee learned and made recommendations from the evaluation of Cycle Two. In order to support teacher leaders and teaming, maintaining the Strategic Planning Structure by Maxville was important to continue to delve deeper into collaboration. Since the district structure changed, Maxville needed to revisit the stipends that teachers received to ensure alignment with the Strategic Planning Structure. In district decisions, Maxville should maintain a systems focus to incorporate, not duplicate district efforts. At the district level, Maxville needed to continue to reinforce teaming through the support for teacher substitutes for training, planning and attending vertical team meetings during the school day. Annually, Maxville needed to revisit the representation on the vertical teams as members change. To ensure accountability, the district should follow through with the District Analysis and Assessment Team to obtain high quality actions from the vertical teams.

Within the teams, the Steering Committee learned that an awareness of trust and conflict as a team component was needed. Assessment literacy for data analysis was needed. The Steering Committee wanted to maintain embedded professional development in the teams. Basic teaming processes to promote voice needed to be utilized. Because of

the current culture of Maxville, the Team Feedback Survey given at the beginning of team development was not effective because of lack of trust and background knowledge and different interpretations of concepts exist among participants. Data from the Team Feedback Survey would be more meaningful and relevant after basic trust developed within the team and the team had exposure with working together in the team.

When working with teacher leaders, the Steering Committee learned that professional development must be specifically spelled out and not simply be an action or process in which the teacher leaders participated. All important professional development needed to be outlined in writing for future reference. The district must continue to provide technology and data support for teacher leaders so the work is doable for the teacher leader. The common language needed to be in written form in a Teacher Leader Resource Guide to provide reference for the teacher leader. Even when the teacher leader could speak the language and described the team processes and steps, the actual implementation of team processes in a team environment was different. The Steering Committee did not realize the length and amount of follow-up and accountability required by the district to insure implementation of teaming processes. The next section highlighted my personal journaling as a researcher participating in and having conversations with people involved in the research.

Personal Journaling

I included my personal reflections as a component of the action research process. In the past two years, I participated on many of the district level teams in various capacities. However, for Cycle Two, I focused on the teams connected to Cycle Two. If

there were other situations or data that would add dimension or context to the research, I included that information through my personal journaling.

Team Feedback Survey, April 2007.

When reflecting upon the creation, use, and analysis of the Team Feedback Survey, I learned much. The amount of time needed for conversation and bringing groups of people together while continuing to meet the everyday responsibilities of keeping the school district running was more than I planned. I relinquished timelines due to the realization that the product was not the most important part of the process. The participation in the process itself which created the opportunity for discussion and sharing of values and beliefs among team members was of prime importance. If a timeline was bound by a specific date, I gave much more time than initially anticipated.

I was surprised by the extent in which the teacher leaders indicated team members were uncomfortable “not knowing” a concept. The Team Feedback Survey created anxiety among the members of the Data Analysis and Assessment Team. As the leader of the Data Analysis and Assessment Team, I shared the district vision and commitment to the team processes and reviewed the five-year Collaboration SMART goal communicating that every staff member in the district was not expected to be an expert on the concepts on the Team Feedback Survey since the district was in year two of this goal. This discussion lessened the anxiety of the team, based on my observation of the nonverbal language of the team. However, the team’s anxiety was not completely dissolved; the team leaders are still waiting to see how that information is going to be used and acted upon. I felt my role as team leader in this instance was to relieve anxiety,

create meaning for the survey, and model the team processes for the teacher leaders. I felt the Team Feedback Survey assisted in creating awareness for teaming processes. The Team Feedback Survey provided: (a) data for the Steering Committee to individualize training with teacher leaders and teams; (b) data to analyze and focus conversations around during the Data Analysis and Assessment Team; (c) a framework for reflection between the knowledge base of the teacher leaders and the vertical teams; and (d) Steering Committee reflection on the effectiveness of the embedded professional development within the teams and individually with the teacher leaders.

Teacher Leader Interviews, June 2007.

Since the interviews were conducted by a teacher in the district, my experience with the interviews dealt with data and interaction with the teacher interviewer. The word interventions in the question, “How did the interventions that addressed the weaknesses in the Team Feedback Survey work?” caused confusion. I would have preferred to conduct the interviews myself to have obtained a fuller picture including the nonverbal communication. However, as an administrator with evaluative responsibilities with the district prevented me from ethically doing so. The interview questions reminded me of the delicate balance of communication between individuals. Sharing of information and having conversation rarely translated to actual communication. Despite our conversations in the meetings, during one-on-one trainings, and experiences in the meetings, many meanings were associated with our teaming words and meanings. Individual conversations assisted in clarification of concepts with team members. The teacher leader interview assisted in providing teacher leaders an opportunity to individually reflect and

providing the Steering Committee with data to analyze on the teacher leaders' perspectives on the initiation of this teaming process which started in the spring of 2007.

Collaboration Focus Team Survey, February –May, 2007.

I included the Collaboration Focus Team Survey in my reflections because this survey was another systematic collection of data created and edited by teams during the Cycle Two. Many positive conversations were held to create, edit, and analyze the survey. I saw the team participant experiences ripple through the school district affect our district culture. I was a member of the adhoc team and we spent much time conversing about the meaning and relevance of topics recommended by the Collaboration Focus Team and how to measure those topics. We brought resources to the meeting and shared those resources to determine how to create a survey that would be easily understood by teachers and not misinterpreted. I learned that the experience of relating to other members on a more personal level to accomplish work and value input needed to be a positive experience for every team member.

Data Analysis and Assessment Team leader.

As the leader of the Data Analysis and Assessment Team, I joined my fellow Data Analysis and Assessment Team members in setting up an accountability and evaluative system to warehouse and analyze the baseline data, SMART goals, and action plans from the building level to the district level goals. I felt excited by the opportunity to train, model, and work with the teacher leaders and move toward team-led leadership. As team leader, I modeled the facilitation of team processes with each component of the agenda (See Appendix P). Being team leader required much preparation.

During this first Data Analysis and Assessment Team meeting in May 2007, we analyzed the Team Feedback Survey. I expected the team members to say the teacher leaders now understood many of the 17 concepts on the Team Feedback Survey because the vertical teams accomplished work related to those concepts, such as creating SMART goals. However, even though the vertical teams created SMART goals, the teacher leaders were requesting more training. The experience of doing team “work” together seemed to create a greater need to know or to have an awareness of than previously, but not a deep understanding of the concept. In one of these team meetings, a teacher commented, “Will you just tell us what you want us to say?” This comment showed me that our teachers were so used to being told what to do, that the ambiguity of being part of a team process was uncomfortable. Teachers were accustomed to wanting the answers, not being a part of the answer. I felt many emotions while planning and facilitating this first meeting. I felt fear that I would make a mistake in front of all these new team members or not have enough time to prepare as needed. I was excited to start such a journey with and creating new relationships with the team.

The second Data Analysis and Assessment Team meeting was held in August 2007. Based on the information received from the first teacher leader interview, this Data Analysis and Assessment Team meeting was organized differently. Each step and team process utilized in the Data Analysis and Assessment Team meeting was discussed with reasons identified as to why the process was used to benefit the team and what other processes could be utilized. I assumed by modeling the appropriate processes, the teacher leaders would generalize and apply the information; this assumption was not the case.

The teacher leaders needed specific attention drawn to what was happening in the meeting. Because of the conversations in the Data Analysis and Assessment Team meeting, I felt more confident the teacher leaders understood the team processes. After I would initiate the conversation, the teacher leaders would explain the processes more fully between themselves as they processed the information as a team. The Teacher Leader Resource Guide, handed out at this meeting, also outlined the team processes practiced since the beginning of the vertical teams. I felt very positive about this team meeting due to the increased participation from the teacher leaders.

Member of different district level teams.

From September 2006 to the present time, I was a member of the Collaboration Focus Team. This team created the collaborative structures for the 2007-2008 school calendar during Cycle One and Cycle Two. I witnessed the impact of this reform on administrators. This team, primarily administrators with some teacher, community, and board representatives, created an action plan for moving the district to a collaborative community. In this team, administrators were exposed to step by step examples, given access to PowerPoint files already created, and given team processes to lead a faculty to be collaborative. However, some of the administrators were having difficulty visioning how the principal role changed when using teacher leaders and how to prepare the teacher leaders because multiple teams were occurring simultaneously. Some principals were talking the talk and using the lingo but were also having difficulty putting the concepts into daily practice.

As a member of the Communication Arts Vertical Team from March 2007 to present, I participated in the teaming processes under the direction of a teacher leader. The process of watching a teacher leader growing, team members sharing across the district, and team members accomplishing “work” was exciting. The frustrating component of this process was access to data in disaggregated form in order to analyze more accurately. The software we used to store our data needed to disaggregate student data by specific disability, not simply by a general disability label. At this time, we would have to add that piece of data in by hand. This process was time consuming and discouraging to teams. The data needed to be easily accessible and usable, and needed to avoid tedious processes such as writing in items by hand.

As a member of the Steering Committee from November 2004 to present, I was part of the conversation with our superintendents from the very beginning to create a collaborative culture through teaming. I saw a pattern emerge when we applied new skills foreign to our culture; we took two steps forward and one step backward many times. The Steering Committee analyzed data on a continual basis to learn and reflect. I felt we developed a level of trust enabling us to share our opinions freely, to disagree openly, and to support each other. However, times still existed when I was honest with the team, shared my opinion, and then felt nervous afterward. The team member roster of the Steering Committee was modified due to a personnel change in the district, and we reestablished trust due to this change. I felt as though I am mapping out a new frontier. I became accustomed to not knowing the answers, not knowing the final outcome, and relying on a process which required diligence and consistency in implementation.

Analysis of all Data

The Team Feedback Survey, Collaboration Focus Team Survey, two interviews of teacher leaders, teams' analyses of these data, and personal journaling were analyzed in whole to determine in summary what was learned. Three major themes emerged from the data set collected in Cycle Two: (a) valuing of teaming, (b) the difficulty teacher leaders and team members demonstrated in applying the team processes, and (c) the extreme discomfort and distrust team participants experienced with team processes. As a researcher, I was informed by the literature on school district reform to make sense of the data in Cycle Two. The first theme discussed was the valuing of teaming.

Valuing of Teaming

The data from the teacher leader interviews (June, 2007) and Steering Committee evaluation of Team Feedback Survey (July, 2007) indicated a valuing of teaming. Team participants stated a collaborative structure that spanned the district within the contracted school day was appreciated, valued, and needed to be protected. Team participants mentioned the value structure supporting spaces for conversation through teaming across and between buildings within the district in a consistent manner that was equally representative of grade levels, programs, buildings, and community. Teacher leader demonstrated a sense of belonging to a district perspective and initiative to help all kids learn (Teacher Leader interviews, 2007). One teacher leader stated, "I was wondering if I should continue to participate..., but because of this community..., we are in the beginning stages [of teaming]. If I drop out now, there won't be that...voice...I'm going to stick with it." Another teacher leader stated, "...you are getting...the big picture more

often, educationally....that has probably been the missing component as far as creating a continuous flow of education....The vertical team will give us...what is happening with all students.” Team participants mentioned that by having teams spanning the district, gaps in students’ learning would become less and teachers could learn from each other with a greater shared vision and purpose (Teacher Leader interviews, 2007).

One teacher leader commented on the very positive experience of having more input into the direction of the district as well as the bonus of having many voices of bringing together different perspectives (Teacher Leader interview, June, 2007).

Comments from teachers on the Collaboration Focus Team Survey showed a valuing of teaming, “I have seen how collaboration has really drawn our group closer together.”

Another teacher who had moved in from another district stated,

“I have worked in a different state and different districts and I really feel [Maxwell] does the best job with giving the teachers enough time to work as a team and collaborate on the students goals. Coming in as a new teacher to the district, I felt that it was a much easier transition because there is the extra support and help of a team and you are not just out there to learn and work on your own. It also helps with accountability because there are natural checks and balances when everybody is working together.”

Teacher leaders were excited about monitoring the SMART goal that was set to identify the progress (Teacher Leader interviews, June, 2007). The teacher leaders valued the conversations to reach consensus on creating goals that were focused on student achievement. The focus was appreciated because the SMART goal was not vague, and

with the action plan, steps were delineated. The teacher leader interviews (June, 2007) indicated the importance of communication, dialogue, hearing team members' opinions, coming together to balance strengths and weaknesses, having a district perspective to close gaps in student learning, and creating more time to collaborate.

Steering Committee analysis of data mentioned the importance of analyzing data by multiple teams across the district provided different perspectives and conversations on similar topics. Statements from team participants indicated that providing substitutes and time to work as a team within the school day allowed for communication that previously never took place. Personal journaling stated the importance of creating the opportunity for discussion of values and beliefs as a critical component of teaming. Overall comments on teaming processes were positive with Maxville being in a learning stage.

Difficulty in Applying Team Processes

Despite the individual teacher leader training and embedded training in the teams, Steering Committee analysis of data indicated that team processes in the Team Feedback Survey were difficult to apply in a team setting without support (Steering Committee meeting notes, July, 2007). All data indicated specific team processes utilized in the vertical teams. Team participants utilized the team processes and participated in the team meetings but did not develop a true understanding of team processes in which those processes could be applied in the team without support. Teacher leaders' perception of a productive team meeting was measured by the team ability to accomplish "work" within each team meeting (Teacher Leader interviews, June, 2007).

Team participants mentioned data analysis as a key tool utilized in teaming to focus conversations within the team (Teacher Leader interviews, June, 2007). However, team participants were confused on how to use data, the meaning of data, and the connection of data to the SMART goal (Steering Committee meeting notes, July, 2007). Having too much data or data with too many details caused confusion and inhibited team use of the data within the vertical teams (Steering Committee meeting notes, July, 2007). The process to analyze the data needed to be clearly identified, doable within the time limit of the meeting, and not associated with tedious processes such as copying many items by hand (Personal Journaling, 2007).

Teacher leader interviews (June, 2007) and Steering Committee analysis of data (July, 2007) indicated the difficulty teacher leaders experienced in true learning of a SMART goal. After the teacher leader and teams were (a) trained about SMART goals, (b) created SMART goals in a team, and (c) evaluated SMART goals in the Data Analysis and Assessment Team meeting, participants still asked for a definition of a SMART goal. Team participants mentioned the connection between a measurable goal and the purpose and “work” of the team. Team participants measured the success of the team in terms of being able to accomplish “work.” Tying student achievement to all SMART goals as the driving force behind all team “work” was identified by team participants. The vertical teams and Data Analysis and Assessment Team demonstrated a basic awareness of the purpose of teams being clarified through the SMART goal and action plan (Steering Committee meeting notes, July, 2007).

Steering Committee analysis of team performance (July, 2007) indicated that the teams needed more time to develop teaming skills currently being used, and that skills were being utilized at a lower problem solving level than desired. For example, team participants were utilizing consensus tools but did not truly demonstrate an understanding of the meaning of consensus. Data indicated that professional development and team meetings were accomplishing work at a much slower pace than planned (Vertical Team meeting notes, April – September, 2007). The team products were slow in materializing; however, the conversations during teaming were invaluable with topics addressing values, attitudes, and beliefs of teachers across the district (Steering Committee meeting notes, August, 2007).

Data from the teacher leader interviews (June, 2007), Collaboration Focus Team Survey (March, 2007), and District Leadership Team analysis of the Team Feedback Survey (May, 2007) illustrated that continual training embedding into the work of the team over time was necessary to provide consistency and to bring the knowledge of team processes to an application level by all team members, as well as the teacher leader. Participants in the study were concerned about the more diverse teams, teams which required more time to build relationships among team members. The Steering Committee analysis of data (July, 2007) determined that because these team processes were not a natural component of the district's current culture, consistency, reminding, and specificity were required to change the culture over time.

Team participants were concerned about the team processes and the need for common language to be consistent between all teams and new staff members entering the

district (Data Analysis and Assessment Team meeting notes, May, 2007). During the preK-12 vertical teams meetings and individual training conducted by the assistant superintendent with the teacher leaders, the professional development did not create deep learning to an application level with the team concepts, based on the Team Feedback Survey (Steering Committee meeting notes, July, 2007). Conflict management was identified as a needed component of professional development by team participants (Data Analysis and Assessment Team meeting notes, May, 2007). Participants mentioned that most of the team members have learned to “not make waves” and felt very uncomfortable with different opinions being stated. Participants also mentioned the benefit of including team stage development in the implementation of teaming in our district (Teacher Leader interview, June, 2007). Team members became more objective with team processes and grew to expect these certain stages and to not be surprised by the team changes over time.

The Steering Committee analysis of the teacher leader interviews (July, 2007), Data Analysis and Assessment Team analysis of the Team Feedback Survey (May, 2007), and Collaboration Focus Team Survey (March, 2007) showed that explicit teaching through the development of a common language was necessary. Teacher leader interviews (June, 2007) indicated that teacher leaders did not view working individually with the assistant superintendent or having training within the team meetings as professional development. Cumulative data indicated that the development of teacher leaders was key to teaming. Providing specific concepts and language for the teacher leaders in writing concerning basic team processes was mentioned by team participants. Study participants mentioned the importance of providing resources and handouts a

teacher leader may need to lead a team. The Steering Committee analysis of data indicated that many conversations and experiences of using team processes were needed before the team was interpreting the language at a similar level.

Data indicated that many levels of support were needed for teacher leaders when the current culture did not support teaming, but is, instead, more top-down. These levels of support included: general professional development, individual professional development, practice implementing processes, feedback on implementing team processes, support in developing agendas which reflect team processes, support in team meetings during the implementation of team processes, people to go to for additional support, and opportunities for teacher leaders to share experiences together and learn from each other (Teacher Leader second interview, September 2007; Steering Committee meeting notes, August, 2007). Team participants demonstrated difficulty in applying the team processes despite training and conversations indicating knowledge of team processes. Data also indicated that training without accountability procedures in place to ensure consistency of implementation resulted in non or partial implementation (Steering Committee meeting notes, August, 2007). Teams were participating in team processes but did not develop a deep understanding of the processes (Steering Committee meeting notes, 2007). Team members were having conversations, but conversations were restricted due to the lack of comfort among team members with the new processes. Team members were becoming familiar with interacting with other teachers from other buildings and with figuring out how these processes would be utilized over time (Teacher Leader interviews, 2007).

Influence of Extreme Discomfort and Distrust

The teacher leader interviews (June, 2007), personal journaling, Collaboration Focus Team Survey (March, 2007), and Steering Committee and District Leadership Team analysis of the Team Feedback Survey (May, 2007) indicated the influence of discomfort and distrust with teaming processes. One teacher leader summed up the discomfort by saying, “ “It’s...overwhelming the first couple...times...you meet because you know there are some people who have been in education a lot longer than I have....It was a little intimidating...to meet with that many good people.” Personal journaling and Steering Committee analysis of data (July, 2007) indicated that even though teaming provided the vehicle and tools for the collaborative conversations among team members to promote shared knowledge, shared learning was difficult to achieve. Discomfort with teaming skills based on trust impacted that learning curve. Cumulative data found that trust as a foundation for team functioning cannot be overstated. In a broad data collection, the Collaboration Focus Team Survey (March, 2007) indicated that teachers did not have the background knowledge or experience to trust that teaming was “beneficial” for the district. Team participants in this study mentioned that not only was the trust among the members of the team important but trust with team processes, decisions, and products were also a requisite.

Data identified the following trust issues found by team participants in Cycle Two of norming, non-traditional leadership roles, and utilization of collected data. Team participants demonstrated a valuing of norming because norming laid the groundwork for openness and respect within the team (Teacher Leader interviews, June, 2007). Team

participants were not comfortable with use of team norms and how norms would be utilized. Nonverbal language and consistency in applying norms was monitored by team members to determine if norms would be enforced (Personal Journal, 2007). However, one instance occurred in which one teacher leader held another teacher accountable based on the team norms. Teacher Leader One, said,

“In one of these little meetings outside the vertical team meetings, someone said, ‘I didn’t like what so and so said’ I reminded with this small isolated group that what we promised, that we would be open about what we felt, and that nobody would be judged, or have to worry about it and anything else.”

Any data that was systematically collected and shared created anxiety due to fear of potential risk of being compared or manipulated. The analysis of data by the Steering Committee (July, 2007) determined that when the collaborative culture was not established but was in flux due to cultural reform, all was questioned by team members. Team participants indicated that consistency with team processes over time was required to overcome this distrust with actions showing that what is being said was backed by consistent actions from district and building level administrators. Team participants exhibited insecurity, confusion, anxiety, and discomfort with these team processes. One teacher leader stated, “Sometimes I think we have to spell things out more. I think it is just natural for people to go with the flow and not say, ‘Wait a minute, I don’t know what that means.’” Another teacher leader statement showed a team member following the group without thinking when using fist-to-five, “I know some people who put their five fingers up without thinking about it.” Data showed that teams need to have regular

opportunities for conversations, time, and space to meet to become routine and renegotiate trust.

The Collaboration Focus Team Survey (March, 2007), teacher leader interviews (June, 2007), personal journaling, and Steering Committee analysis of the Team Feedback Survey and team performance (July, 2007) indicated that team participants were very uncomfortable with the leadership influence in teaming. Teacher leaders were uncomfortable with leading a team member may have more experience, expertise, or rank than the teacher leader. Participants described how leadership filters out in a multi-faceted influence between teams, staff members, and administrators occurring simultaneously in teams (Teacher Leader interviews, June, 2007). Sharing data through conversation across the district was uncomfortable for team members and caused confusion and doubt. One teacher leader stated, "...if you would think that you would walk into some process like this and think that you weren't going to have...some people are uneasy..." Team participants mentioned preference to working independently because of the individual knowledge of the teacher. Some team participants mentioned that having all the knowledge to teach a class was the responsibility of the teacher, not the team (Collaboration Focus Team Survey, March, 2007). Having teachers work in teams with nonhierarchical leadership was not in alignment with Maxville's current culture (Teacher Leader interviews, June, 2007).

Participants discussed administrators taking on consultant and teaching roles to develop skills in others so that teams share, create, and use knowledge (Teacher Leader interviews, June 2007). The data showed the assistant superintendent assisting teams in

using team processes, organizing data, using technology, and appropriating resources. The assistant superintendent monitored the team agendas and notes to provide reminders/refocus through reflective questioning if conversations were not centered on collaboration or to provide more professional development when needed (Steering Committee meeting notes, July, 2007). Team participants discussed changing roles of administrators and teachers with decisions being made by teams led by teachers and being confused as to how the influence between team members and teams really worked. Team participants mentioned being uncomfortable working as a team and not being able to do things independently (Teacher Leader interviews, June, 2007).

Team participants discussed the value of across district communication, learning from each other, and sense-making so that all team members were on the same page (Vertical Team meeting notes, April to September, 2007). However, as indicated on the teacher leader interviews (June, 2007), teachers feared being controlled through teaming. Teachers worried about a top-down dictating pattern coming through the teams. Data indicated that not knowing the outcome of a meeting before the meeting was uncomfortable for team members (Personal Journaling, 2007). Teacher leaders discussed the need for knowing the “why” behind certain district actions to help explain the “why” to other teachers so that everyone was on board (Data Analysis and Assessment Team meeting notes, 2007).

Team participants discussed the purpose of the Data Analysis and Assessment Team as being a team that leads other vertical teams across the district. This idea of leadership created some discomfort, and team members did not have a clear picture of

how their team would work over time. Through the development of the Data Analysis and Assessment Team SMART goal and action plan, those components were created by the team specifying the leadership qualities of the team in specific actions to clarify purpose and role (Data Analysis and Assessment Team meeting notes, September, 2007). The combination of the evaluative teacher team over the teacher-led vertical teams created an essential accountability component of teaming using teachers across the district to guide Maxville (Steering Committee meeting notes, August, 2007).

Summary

Through the dynamic and multifaceted interplay of culture, distributed leadership, and teaming, Maxville set the stage for sustained school district reform. Team participants demonstrated a value for teaming. Understanding team processes in depth was difficult for teacher leaders. Team participants also showed extreme discomfort and distrust with team process. Despite this discomfort and distrust of teaming, beginning implementation of teaming has begun. Actually achieving sustained reform depended upon the effectiveness with which teams perform and collaborate within Maxville. Teaming had to become a way of doing business everyday in Maxville in order to create the continuous learning cycle associated with sustained school district reform.

Chapter Five

Sense-making of the Story, Purpose of the Research, and Contribution to

Actionable Knowledge

Sense-making of the Story and Purpose of Research

Introduction

When conducting action research, Coghlan and Brannick (2005) state, “by separating the story from its sense-making,...you are demonstrating how you are applying methodological rigor to your approach” (p. 129). Chapter Five summarizes conclusions by connecting the common threads to research, and describing what has been learned, and stating the contribution to knowledge in action. Cycle Two of this action research study focused on the initial development of four PreK-12 Vertical Content Area Teams. This action research study focused on the initial interventions undertaken by Maxville to facilitate teacher leader success in leading a team using collaborative teaming practices that encourage voice and democratic practices (Conzemius & O’Neill, 2002; Preskill & Torres, 1999).

The purpose of the study was to investigate the planning and initial implementation of the Maxville strategic planning and restructuring response to CSIP as the process unfolded using the conceptual underpinnings of the appropriateness of teaming, use of distributed leadership, and changing of school culture for sustained reform. Two research questions guided the study: (a) To what extent, if at all, have the preK-12 vertical teams understood the characteristics and principles of teaming, and (b) What is the experience of the vertical teams in the organization learning to function

during a radical transition from top-down leadership to teaming. These two questions will be addressed through the three themes that emerged from Cycle Two data: (a) valuing of teaming, (b) difficulty the teacher leaders demonstrated in applying the team processes, and (c) extreme discomfort and distrust team participants experienced with team processes.

Question 1: To what extent, if at all, have the preK-12 vertical teams understood the characteristics and principles of teaming?

The teacher leaders and team members of the preK-12 vertical and District Analysis and Assessment Teams participated in trainings embedded in the “work” of the team. Teacher leaders also had individual training with the assistant superintendent. The extent to which the teams understood the characteristics and principles of teaming will be generalized to the three themes previously mentioned.

Characteristics - Valuing of Teaming

The teacher leaders valued the conversations and completing “work” as a team. The team processes of using norms, creating a SMART goal so that progress was measured appealed to the team participants. Teacher leaders were excited by the possibilities of the vertical and District Analysis and Assessment team.

The team members and teacher leaders demonstrated a basic understanding of the importance of district perspective, alignment and interrelatedness through the purpose of vertical and District Analysis and Assessment Teams. Katzenbach and Smith (1993) state the importance of high performing teams sharing a common purpose. Teacher leaders demonstrated the necessity of district staff being focused in order to close gaps in

students' learning. Having the district equally represented was seen as important to closing the gaps in students' learning. This sense of purpose created a sense of belonging to a vision with the team participants. DuFour and DuFour (2006), and Walters, Marzano, and McNulty (2005) describe a healthy, school district culture as one embodied by a collective vision of all students through student outcomes.

Team members developed a true understanding of what norming was and the importance of norming within the team. One teacher leader applied norms outside of the team meeting by reminding the teacher that during brainstorming sessions, we would be open to ideas and not judge them. Team norming created a safety net and groundwork for team participants by stating the "rules of the team" and a common understanding among people who were not accustomed to working together. Cook and Yanow (1993) discuss team norms as organizational culture applied, so in having norms different from our organizational culture, the teams were challenging the culture. Team practices of having a team agenda, giving the agenda ahead of time to team participants, and keeping meeting notes were also part of the norming team processes that were easily accepted by the team.

The team processes of small-to-large group input were seen as important because of voice. Teacher leaders associated having input from a broad, inclusive perspective as putting more heads together, getting a better handle on information, and closing the gaps in student learning. Bradbury and Reason (2006) state that having multiple voices with equal representation included on teams demonstrated an ethical responsibility of Maxville. The teacher leaders attached voice to the purpose of the vertical and District

Analysis and Assessment teams. Team members were excited about the possibility of having input in the direction of the district.

The teacher leaders stated the importance of communication, dialogue, and hearing team members' opinions. They saw the teams as a way to come together to balance strengths and the necessity of having these conversations to focus the district, identify any gaps across the district and share information. Sharing knowledge and having conversations through building relationships are supported by Fullan, Bertani, Quinn (2004) and Preskill and Torres (1999). Teams did not demonstrate true understanding of team characteristics in which the teacher leaders and team members could independently apply the team processes.

Characteristics - Difficulty in Applying Team Processes

The preK-12 vertical teams demonstrated an experiential knowing with a beginning of presentational knowing (Reason & Torbert, 2001) of many teaming characteristics and principles. Through the use of scaffolding, teacher leaders and team members were able to apply team characteristics and principles within the "work" of the team. The four vertical teams and District Analysis and Assessment Team were becoming more open and developing trust with the process of collaborating, demonstrating commitment, and a sense of belonging with the team.

The professional development during the preK-12 vertical team meetings and the individual training conducted by the assistant superintendent with the teacher leaders did not create deep learning with the teaming concepts on the Team Feedback Survey. Despite the uncompleted, intended result of these interventions, these interventions

served a purpose for the district by providing opportunity for conversation. Bradbury and Reason (2006) support the quality of an organization as being more dependent on open conversation than on obtaining a “right” answer. The more exposure and relevance the common language on the Team Feedback Survey was experienced by the preK-12 vertical teams, the more awareness of the concept developed as well as the team self-determined need to know.

Having the team understand the stages of team formation assisted the team in handling frustrations by adding a component of detachment to team functioning. This finding extended Davis’ (2003) work on the stages of team formation by demonstrating how the knowledge of team formation assists in team development. Continual professional development was necessary and will continue to be necessary to acculturate (Bruffee, 1999) new personnel and move current staff to our goal of a collaborative community. Professional development never ended, but changed through the level of support needed for teacher leaders as Pfeffer and Sutton (2000) contend in closing the “knowing-doing gap.”

In looking at the team processes for which the team had a beginning understanding, further application was needed for team independence. Even though vertical teams demonstrated an understanding of common purpose and focus, the teacher leaders were not able to independently show understanding of the alignment of SMART goals within the teams to vision, mission, and guiding principles of the district. The concept of smaller to larger group input was seen as important, but teacher leaders required guidance in determining the process to facilitate the team in accomplishing this.

Teacher leaders had difficulty applying the training in having 20 people in the room to pull together and share ideas.

Utilization of data was the most difficult team process to apply and required the most scaffolding. Teams made decisions based on feelings and beliefs instead of what the data showed. Data utilized in teaming were key to focusing the collaborative conversation in team meetings. When data were not easy to understand and were too overwhelming, the team had more difficulty in utilizing data. Bernhardt (2004), and Leithwood, Aitken, and Jantze (2006) describe the importance of data needing to be easily accessible, formatted, and presented in a manner that was easily understandable, up-to-date, and accurate. If the vertical teams had not received the support in this area, the team would not have been able to accomplish the team's "work." The vertical teams had a wealth of data available to analyze. The teams required support in evaluating data, making inferences from data, and creating a baseline for developing or evaluating a strategic and specific, measurable, attainable, results-based, timebound (SMART) goal. Fullan, Rolheiser, Mascali, and Edge (2002) mention the idea of assessment literacy being one of the six aspects of school district capacity for sustained reform. Team members were open to learning but continued to need assistance in this area despite team experiences and training. Facilitating data analysis through a team of 20 people was not among the background experiences of the team participants.

Conzemius and O'Neill (2002) and DuFour, DuFour, Eaker, and Many (2006) discuss developing support to utilize data during the team meetings to create SMART goals that focused the purpose of the team. Teacher leaders mentioned a tie between data

and SMART goals as being important for the teams. One deterrent to school reform found by Schmoker (2004) was the tendency for school reform to be too general, non-specific and non-measurable. SMART goals eliminated that tendency. In discussing the creation of a common SMART goal, all teacher leaders identified the importance of the components of SMART goals as being attainable and specific with measurable outcomes. Teacher leaders were surprised that a team could come to common goals that were tied to improvement and data. The “attainable” component of the SMART goal was fully understood by the team members. Teacher leaders understood the overall importance of SMART goals, but did not demonstrate the ability to define and evaluate the components of a SMART goal without support.

The preK-12 vertical teams and the members of the District Analysis and Assessment Team demonstrated a basic awareness of the general purpose of the teams as clarified through the SMART goal and action plan. Conzemius and O’Neill (2002), Katzenbach and Smith (1993), and Schmoker (1999) clarify the importance of team purpose for team effectiveness. The purpose of the team clarified through specific, measurable goals assisted the team in accountability, tracking progress, and supplying meaning. While Collins (2001) discusses an overall “big idea” that guides all actions and conversations within the organization, Smylie, Wenzel, and Fendt (2003) agree that “sustainable [whole] school development requires ongoing monitoring and assessment of development goals, progress toward achieving those goals, and the effectiveness (or lack thereof) of development strategies” (p. 156).

Characteristics - Extreme Discomfort and Distrust with Processes.

Distrust as evidenced by discomfort existed within the teams concerning collaborative team processes and team norms. A lack of trust affecting team performance was supported by Lencioni (2002). One of the lessons identified through the meta analysis on school district reform completed by Murphy and Datnow (2003) also found that a “platform of trust” (p. 265) was a necessary component of school reform. Maxville teachers did not have the background knowledge or experience to immediately trust the collaborative teaming process as being “beneficial” for the district.

The team norms and processes were different from the current district culture, and current district culture was being challenged. As Schein (1992), Weick (1995), and Yukl (2002) suggest, creating team norms that differed from Maxwell’s culture, anxiety, uncertainty, and confusion were increased through requiring participation in teams. Team members attended to nonverbal, verbal language and team workings to determine over time if the norms would be reinforced. However, one teacher leader utilized the team norms to hold another team member accountable outside of the vertical team meeting. In this one instance, an individual adhering to the newly applied culture of the district demonstrated a skill of being committed to the relationships within the vertical team; a behavior is associated with a high performing team as described by Katzenbach & Smith (1993).

The vertical and District Analysis and Assessment teams utilized the fist-to-five consensus tool during team meetings. Team members demonstrated an understanding of the motions of using fist-to-five and when to use fist-to-five in the team meetings. The

idea of moving everyone in agreement toward consensus and working misunderstandings out through conversation was understood by the teacher leaders and team members. Teacher leaders saw the benefit of fist-to-five in getting a quick overview of where the team is during the meeting. Teams did understand that if so many team members demonstrated a “one” or a “two” or only “threes” in fist-to-five, the team discussion would continue.

Consensus was described by teacher leaders as difficult to attain. Team members exhibited a minimal understanding of consensus as voting on an issue and giving an opinion instead of agreement to support. Agreement to support encompassed the process of not criticizing a team decision outside of the team because all voices were heard and considered, and the team made a decision because of certain reasons and data. If an issue surfaced regarding a team decision, that concern was to be expressed during the team meeting, rather than being expressed in a complaint after the meeting was over.

Groupthink behaviors were displayed when team members were not willing to demonstrate that what was being said was not understood or were following the fist-to-five consensus tool with a five because other team members displayed a five. Groupthink behaviors seem to be associated with the level of trust in the team due to fear of conflict due to lack of trust. The teacher leaders mentioned that in order for the teams to do “work,” a basic trust needed to be present in order for the team members to be honest in the meetings. Lencioni (2002) and Murphy and Datnow (2003) also argue that a level of basic trust is very important.

At this time in Maxville, the Data Analysis and Assessment Teams and preK-12 vertical teams were becoming more comfortable in participating in team processes. The team processes were also becoming more routine. However, deep understanding of team processes in which teams could function independently without support was not developed. Teaming processes provided the collaborative opportunities for the school district to reform (Combs, Miser, & Whitaker, 1999). The traditional culture of Maxville did not provide experiences and background knowledge for team processes at this level. Team participants were open to trying the processes and to learning, but were not able to apply these processes independently at this time. More experiences of applying the processes were needed as well as utilization of processes being utilized across the district in buildings as well as at the district level.

Question 2: What is the experience of the vertical teams in the organization learning to function during a radical transition from top-down leadership to teaming?

The utilization of teaming at a district level with vertical teams led by teacher leaders and the teacher leaders participating in the District Analysis and Assessment Team, demonstrated a beginning school district reform movement at Maxville. Before the reform movement, Maxville had pockets of teaming in different buildings for different reasons. Teaming was not building wide or district wide. The teaming meetings were typically led by administrators, department chairs, teachers with the most experience, or someone appointed by an administrator. Having a district-wide teaming structure and process (Appendix C), provided the space and opportunity for the beginning of the vertical teams. Teams experience with school district reform generalized to the three

themes: (a) valuing of teaming, (b), difficulty in applying team processes, and (c) influence of extreme discomfort and distrust with teaming.

Experience - Valuing of Teaming

Despite the distrust and discomfort exhibited by the teacher leaders and the team members' perception indicated a valuing of teaming. Team participants stated this vertical teaming structure, in terms of preK-12 vertical teams, District Analysis and Assessment Team and time during the contracted school day, was appreciated, valued, and needed to be protected. In the second interview, use of the District Analysis and Assessment Team as an intervention was an opportunity for teacher leaders to learn and share across the district. The team participants appreciated the conversations with other teachers across the district. One teacher leader commented on the input into district direction as well as the bonus of many voices with different perspectives as being very positive. Teams enjoyed completing "team work" together.

Many authors describe the benefits of teams across the district. Fullan, Bertani, and Quinn (2004) mention this connection of schools and programs within the district as an opportunity for "lateral capacity building." Murphy and Datnow (2003) express the importance of focus in a district promoting a structural, symbolic, and cultural link as being more effective for school district reform. DuFour and DuFour (2006), Fullan, Bertani, and Quinn (2004), and Preskill and Torres (1999) contend a district-wide approach to teaming provides opportunities for inquiry and learning across buildings and programs.

Experience - Difficulty in Applying Team Processes

Because the teaming processes were not a natural component of Maxville's current culture, continual professional development embedded into the work of the team with support over time was beneficial but did not result in teacher leader learning in which the teacher leader could apply the team concepts independently. However, the embedded professional development did create continual opportunities for discussion and dialogue between team members. Pfeffer and Sutton (2000) describe this type of embedded professional development through conversation as a vehicle for the sharing of knowledge in a collaborative, comfortable climate to close the "knowing-doing gap" in the actual doing of the task and less in separate formal training. Nonaka and Takeuchi (1999) mention the processes of conversations within the team that were creating the opportunities for discourse, meaning, and learning from "tacit to explicit" knowledge. Data demonstrated that the conversations held during the individual professional development by the assistant superintendent for the teacher leaders was an example of the discrepancy between the "knowing-doing gap" as stated by Pfeffer and Sutton (2000). Despite the teacher leaders demonstrating understanding of the team processes and use of appropriate terminology, some of the teacher leaders were unable to apply that knowledge in the team setting without support.

Facilitation of the attachment of meaning to the teaming processes and embedded professional development was an important piece of implementing teaming. Peterson and Smith (2000) and Schein (2004) utilize sense-making as a mechanism to change culture. The teams participated in sense-making through dialogue and collaboration through an

open, social exchange. Several authors, Bruffee (1999) with “reacculturation,” Schein (2004) with “dialogue theory,” and Bradbury and Reason (2006) with “redescription,” associate dialogue and collaborative processes with reframing conversations to create a common ground resulting in a cultural change of knowledge in action. Bradbury and Reason (2006) went further, suggesting that a leader’s talent to talk differently is more important than arguing well when changing culture.

Professional development was embedded within the vertical and District Analysis and Assessment Team meetings as well as individual sessions with the assistant superintendent for training for teacher leaders. Capacity building continued to be a primary focus for Maxville through professional development and support through scaffolding. Teacher leaders not only needed skills in teaming, but teacher leaders were also given tools to create leadership teams that increased the commitment of educators and improved capacity of the school district as mentioned by Kilgore and Jones (2003). These teaming skills and tools needed to be explicit and needed to utilize a common language as described by Bruffee (1999). Some teacher leaders required additional support involving access to data and use of technology skills beyond their current skill level. Teacher leaders championed the new vision of a collaborative culture through team processes by valuing voice and democratic participation. Murphy and Datnow (2003) support the view that teacher leaders were key to implementing successful school district reform.

The vertical teams utilized teaming tools, analyzed data, and created SMART goals. However, at this time, the teams were “collaboration lite.” DuFour, DuFour, and

Eaker (2007) describe this difference between informing, communicating, cooperating, and collaborating in order to have a high quality of collaboration instead of being “collaboration lite” (p. 171). Teams were developing trust, processes, and relationships, but the teams were too new from a culture that did not support collaboration. While the Maxville culture was moving toward a collaborative environment, this process did not reach all levels of the district. As a whole team, the preK-12 vertical teams demonstrated knowing about action with movement toward knowing in action as supported by Reason (2006). When working with teams, Maxville learned the participation in the process which created the opportunity for discussion and sharing of values and beliefs through relationships to create a shared knowledge and collaborative culture not the outcome was the most important part of the process. DuFour and DuFour (2006) and Fullan, Bertani, Quinn (2004) describe the relevance of team participation over outcome.

Experience - Extreme Discomfort and Distrust with Teaming

Extreme discomfort with teaming processes was experienced by teacher leaders and team members. This discomfort slowed team learning. The culture of Maxville did not support teaming but displayed traditional school culture. Teaming in a traditional culture caused confusion, anxiety, and uneasiness among team participants. Schein (1992), Weick, (1995), and Yukl (2002) describe staff discomfort when the culture of an organization was violated. The team conversations and dialogue of values and beliefs assisted the team in understanding, making sense of and beginning to trust team processes. Trust was conditionally given by team members with watchfulness to witness and experience consistent implementation of team norms. Bruffee (1999), Schein (2000),

and Soder (2001) discuss the need for dialogue for value and belief exchange to make sense of events. Team members were also uncomfortable with conflict and “not knowing” how the team meeting would end. Heron and Reason (2001) and Lencioni (2002) support the need for teams to develop enough trust to be comfortable with conflict within the team.

Distrust existed within the teams concerning influence of non-traditional leadership and utilization of data. Team members demonstrated distrust with non-traditional leadership influences. Maxville’s traditional leadership promoted isolationism within the school district. Moving Maxville from isolationism to a collaborative culture created confusion, doubt, and fear for the teacher leaders and team participants. One teacher stated very clearly that the individual teacher should be able to know what her students need in her classroom. Analyzing data by oneself and knowing where to go next displayed an isolationist approach to student achievement as noted by Lortie (1975) and Sarason (1971). Another teacher supported this by saying a teacher should have the sole responsibility for the student. DuFour (2006) and Schmoker (1999) state the impact of isolationism on teaming at Maxville. Marshall (2003) and Mai (2004) posit that isolationism’s impact on teaming through staff attitude is a major deterrent to school district reform.

Copland (2003), Schmoker (2004), and Sarason (1971) discuss traditional leadership in promoting isolationism. Leadership was not hierarchical when implementing the preK-12 vertical teams with teacher leaders leading these diverse teams. Davis (2003) support the idea that top-down hierarchical leadership was

ineffective for team collaboration. The National Commission of Teaching and America's Future (2003) mention distributed leadership as key to building learning communities within school districts. Murphy and Datnow (2003) examine distributed leadership within successful school district reform and determined nontraditional structures existed in school districts with successful reform.

Since authors believe that leadership with teams was distributed to any individual capable of influencing others within the school district, how these reciprocal influences worked were not congruent with our current Maxville culture. Portin, Schnieder, DeArmond, and Gundlach (2003) and Murphy and Datnow (2003) describe leadership influence as reciprocal and distributed within successful school districts participating in reform. Having teacher leaders lead diverse teams with different years of experience, different ranks and different backgrounds of knowledge was uncomfortable and was an example of non-traditional interaction mediums incorporating leadership through the roles and people in all levels of the school district as mentioned by Ogawa and Bossert (1995) and Hallinger and Heck (1999). Teacher leaders were afraid of being controlled and did not trust teaming. Teacher leaders were aware that the leadership was being filtered out. The traditional top-down direction of leading changed and leadership was being shared among teacher leaders in the district. This diffusion of leadership exhibited qualities of distributed leadership as stated by Spillane (2006).

The evolving team process created a sense of the unknown because no one was dictating the outcome of the team. Maxville team members were so comfortable with someone else making the decision and taking the responsibility for the decision. This

belief was an inaccuracy associated with leadership, an inaccuracy Fullan (2005) expresses as a delusion in school systems with the belief that someone higher in the system making a decision results in a change in organization.

Team participants also distrusted the collected data. When data were systematically collected, anxiety increased because of potential of exposure through the risk of being compared or the possibility of being manipulated. Marzano, Waters, and McNulty (2005) discuss the importance of facilitating relationships among team members by being nonjudgmental and positive. Bernhardt (2004), Leithwood, Aitken, and Jantzi (2006), and Schmoker (1999) warn about the misuse of data and the necessity of utilizing data in a detached, positive, influential manner. Collins (2001) identifies the importance of an organization's ability to "confront the brutal facts" (p. 13) through the appropriate use of data.

The Data Analysis and Assessment Team, a team consisting of teacher leaders, provided time and space for district teacher leader conversations, trainings, and celebrations. This district level team, through the development of the action plan based on the SMART goal, created the time line and artifact requirements for the preK-12 vertical teams. At the individual schools, the time lines and artifact requirements filtered down to the teacher teams involving all teachers in the district. This use of the District Analysis and Assessment Team and the preK-12 vertical teams to make decisions for the district provided an example of "co-construction of leadership across organizational levels" as Murphy and Datnow (2003, p. 276) contends within a school district in Missouri.

Contribution to Actionable Knowledge

Based on Cycle Two of the Action Research Study, what knowledge did we learn to support vertical teaming, team processes, and the teacher leaders? We learned the value of culture, distributed leadership, and teaming through the difficulty teacher leaders and team members experienced in applying team processes and the extreme discomfort and distrust team members experienced with the team processes.

Implications for Other Districts

Based upon this action research study, implications exist for other districts interested in sustained school reform. Setting up structures and spaces for teaming within the school day are imperative to develop teaming. Teaming structures that span the school district and are equally representative provide a district perspective that allows for a tighter focus and link as the school district operates as a whole. If the school district has a traditional culture, innovators should expect extreme discomfort to occur among team members and team leaders. The actual implementation of teaming processes and concepts can feel foreign and trust with team processes typically will occur over a much longer time than anticipated.

A comprehensive, differentiated type of professional development is required to assist with supporting teacher leaders during the transition. Teaching teaming processes in isolation is an illusion. The requisite background knowledge and cultural experiences many times do not exist in the school district setting. Teacher leaders need opportunities to learn by participating and experiencing the team processes. Professional development through coaches and facilitators is needed to provide the support for learning. In addition

to the supported learning opportunities for teacher leaders, an accountability piece through artifacts, feedback, and reflection is also needed to insure consistency and application of teaming processes.

Implications for Administrators Attempting Reform

The extreme discomfort and distrust felt by teacher leaders provides barriers to reform. Administrators require a deep understanding of the use of culture as a tool for reform – a tool in assessment as to where the staff is with the reform, as well as a means for reforming the current culture through expectations, reflective conversations, and celebrations. Communication skills are required in the art of facilitating trust, sense-making, dialogue to exchange values and beliefs and managing conflict in a manner that promotes the reform. Administrators need to demonstrate assessment literacy skills. Not only do the administrators need to be comfortable with these communication and assessment literacy skills, they also must be able to teach strategies and tools to teacher leaders through various types of supports and embedded training in the “work” of the team.

Administrators need to be comfortable with the fine art of facilitating a product through teaming and teacher leaders. Administrators must also be able to hold teacher leaders and many teams accountable simultaneously. The training of skills is continuous, and the administrator needs to feel comfortable with providing that continuous type of support or be able to facilitate that continuous support. During the training, administrators need to remember that without the background knowledge and experiences of teaming that are missing from many of our traditional cultures, teacher leaders will not develop a

true sense of teaming and teaming processes unless these teacher leaders encounter experiences that are shaped and reflected over time in the actions as teacher leaders, not the simply words and talk used.

District initiatives in professional development involve whole team development focused on the “work” the teams needed to complete. For example, if building level teams need assistance analyzing data to create a SMART goal and action plan, a professional development forum would be developed based on team needs. This forum would lead all teams through this process with step-by-step processes written out using the data from their building and facilitators available for questions. When the team left the forum, a step in the process would be completed.

Implications for Preparations for Administrators

A strong theoretical background in action research, culture, reform, organizational learning, and teaming is needed for preparations of administrators. In addition to this background a practical application of ways and methods of accomplishing teaming given different sizes of staff is also needed. In this action research study, in Cycle One administrators demonstrated difficulty in applying teaming processes just as the teacher leaders did in Cycle Two. The extreme discomfort with and distrust of these processes associated with education’s traditional cultures make application of these processes difficult. Administrators need to feel comfortable in providing differentiated support embedded in team “work” for staff over time. Preparation for administrators needs to provide specific tools and methods for applying this support even while the management

obligations of leadership continue to increase. Preparations may include balance of management to instructional obligations of administrators through time management.

A strong understanding of the application of action research in the educational setting is imperative to meet the future needs of education. Action research can provide the process for a district to implement a continuous learning cycle based on data, focused dialogue among colleagues, and decisions based on data used to inform the next focus. Action research can facilitate a framework to diagnose, plan, act and evaluate in a professional, meaningful manner.

Possible Further Research to Investigate District Reform

At Maxville, a third cycle of action research is in process. The diagnosing for the third action cycle has been primarily based upon the evaluation data from Cycle Two with added data from the implementation of new building level teams in all buildings in the district through the vertical teams and District Leadership Team. The planning stage has been primarily focused on professional development of teaming processes that support not just the teacher leaders but also the administrators and building level teams that were implemented in September 2007. Since teaming has now reached all teachers in every building in the district, the professional development and the accountability components have grown exponentially.

As with previous cycles, these stages overlap each other simultaneously. The action stage has begun with additional training for administrators on the “how” of facilitating and monitoring the identification of essential outcomes, creation of common assessments, utilization of data analysis, and creation of interventions and extensions.

Teacher leader training and vertical team training is continuing with individual training with the assistant superintendent, team training during “team work”, and follow through with vertical team action plans and Data and Analysis Team action plans. District level accountability processes are being investigated; professional development is in process; and presenters have been found.

The evaluation component of Cycle Three is based on district level administrator walkthroughs, implementation of the Instructional Practices Inventory throughout the district, building data portfolios, another Collaboration Focus Team Survey to all certified staff, and team artifacts consisting of: (a) data analysis, (b) SMART goal, (c) action plan, (d) common assessments, (e) common assessment data, and (f) SMART goal met/not met. These artifacts filter through the preK-12 vertical teams to the Data Analysis and Assessment Team. Vertical teams will evaluate building level team data pertaining to their content area. The Data Analysis and Assessment Team will analyze the data sent from the vertical teams to discuss district-wide trends between content areas. All data will be discussed in June 2008 among multiple teams to gather all perspectives to plan for the 2008-2009 school year in reference to the different levels of scaffolding needed for teams.

In expanding this action research study to other types of studies, a qualitative study would be beneficial. The study could focus on professional development and accountability with professional learning communities as defined by DuFour (2006). By interviewing superintendents of different size districts implementing professional learning communities, we could determine the differentiated types of district level

professional development strategies and supports needed for administrators, teacher leaders, and teams in order for teaming to be successful based on different sizes of districts. We could also investigate the methods and strategies of accountability for administrators implementing professional learning communities.

A state-wide quantitative study could be conducted to determine the influence of DuFour in the state of Missouri with regard to professional learning communities. All superintendents could be surveyed on professional learning community components that are being implemented within their school system at the district or building level.

Based on the findings, several opportunities for further research exist. This action research project provided an in-depth look at one school district in Missouri in relation to the implementation of district-wide vertical teaming through the supports given to teacher leaders in a traditional school culture. Teacher leaders were also a part of the Data Analysis and Assessment Team, an evaluative team over the preK-12 vertical teams. This study contributes to sustained reform, co-construction of leadership, and teaming in the school district setting.

The purpose of further research comes at a critical time for education. Teaming is key to continuous learning needed for sustained reform. Current traditional school district culture does not support teaming. What is the most effective method to implement professional development to support sustained teaming within the district? How do we hold teams accountable for work traditionally done by one person? How do we hold administrators accountable for implementing teams in a building? Teaming requires administrators and teachers to utilize some skills at a higher level as well as utilizing

different skills in order to be successful in teaming. The final test of teaming is the connection districts' successful implementation of teaming with student achievement. Research dedicated to teaming in the school district setting is beneficial to the future of education in meeting the needs of all students.

What I Have Learned Participating In This Experience

I learned much during this experience. As I became more involved in the implementation of the collaborative process and demonstrated my knowledge level about the collaborative process, I was looked at differently by other administrators and teachers. I realize now that professional development and having conversations without accountability measures and timelines in place, may prepare a foundational knowledge, but professional development and conversation do not begin to affect the culture of the district until specific, detailed accountability measures are in place. I feel that our district could have cut out a year of training in Cycle One that resulted in little change at the building level. Professional development should occur in small doses of whatever the next requirement entails with a deadline for implementation and presentation of evidence, of artifacts and the process utilized, as proof of implementation. This experience has definitely taught me that implemented action outweighs simple discourse every time. Some people did not change their attitudes until the actions resulted in personal experiences that caused attitudes to change. I also learned that just because people can “talk the talk”, doesn't mean they can “walk the walk.” So I also use actions not only the conversations to determine implementation.

In providing professional development for teacher leaders, I learned that differentiation through different types of scaffolding are necessary over time for the learning to be embedded in the action of the adult. With an adult in which we are expecting skills not enforced by the current culture of our district reform may take one or two years. Slipping back into old practices and not following the team processes and tools being utilized is very easy to do. I believe that once the culture is truly collaborative, this professional development curve will be less time consuming.

I have learned to view the connection between reform, culture, and leadership through the following verbal image. In looking at reform, culture, and leadership as a rubber band analogy, culture acts as a rubber band for the school district. Culture allows a stretching of ideas from leadership among staff to occur, but the end of the band is rooted in existing values, beliefs, relationships, and practices. School district reform often does not occur because the values, beliefs, relationships, and practices of the staff remain the same. Therefore, the rooting holds fast to the same core structure. If the school district moves too fast to change the culture and stretches the ideas from the same core structure too far, the band breaks and the culture returns closer to the core. Only through team conversations facilitated by distributed leadership and accountability can the school district create a cognitive dissonance and choose to uproot a value, belief, relationship and/or practice and move the rooted core forward, which allows sustained reform to occur within the school district.

I learned that diligence and unwavering belief in an idea has assisted me in staying the course for this reform movement. My passion for teaming and collaborative

processes gives me the energy to proceed with any wrinkle that materializes. I keep my focus on the goal of a collaborative culture through teaming focused on student achievement for all students. If school districts are to survive in an ever-changing world in which knowledge doubles every three to four years in a global society, we must create district-wide systems that allow our district to learn and grow collectively.

At this moment in time, culture at Maxville still retains a traditional form rooted in past culture of values, beliefs, relationships, and practices. However, new seeds of reform through the use of district level teaming have been implemented. The District Analysis and Assessment Teams and the content area preK-12 vertical teams are currently not high-performing teams with high levels of trust between their team members. However, the foundation for reform has been prepared during this beginning implementation stage. Team members are seeing value in the proposed cultural reform and are accomplishing “work” together. Teacher leaders are excited by the possibilities. Consistency with the team processes will allow the teams to mature over time. Through the work of the teams, a collaborative culture will “co-construct leadership” (Murphy & Datnow, 2003), and together the district will increase student achievement for all.

Appendix A

Maxville School District Action Cycle as of 9/8/07

CYCLE 1 - Setting up the culture and structure at the district level			
Diagnosing	Planning Action	Taking Action	Evaluating Action
Mock MSIP District Review (1/05-9/05)	Steering Committee collected necessary data to prepare for planning of action for the Strategic Planning Committee. (9/06-11/06)	Bringing in outside trainers (3/05-1/06)	After the Strategic Planning there was an evaluation and a vote of approval from the School Board (12/05)
Steering Committee formation (11/04)	Development of 5 District SMART goals (11/05)	Presentation of vision, mission, guiding principles to Board with Board adoption. (12/05)	After providing professional development for administrators, administrators were asked what practices were being utilized in the buildings (1/06-present)
Research on current practices in school reform, teaming, change, and learning communities (11/04-present)	Preparation and planning to train principals and administrators on new current practices on school reform (12/05 -present)	Steering Committee created action plan and timeline for implementing at a district level. (1/05, 9/05, 11/05, 1/06, 9/06)	Steering Committee informally evaluated the progress of each building in terms of learning communities, common assessments and teacher exposure to new cultural concepts being introduced in the district as a precursor to determining next steps in planning. (8/06)
Bringing in outside consultants to help review data and plan process (3/05-1/06)	Steering Committee met regularly weekly to bi monthly to monthly to plan next course of action based on current progress and administrator feedback. (1/05 -present)	Conducting professional development on school reform, teaming and collaboration. (12/05-present)	District-wide survey to teacher on collaboration (10/06)
	Creation of cyclical Strategic Planning Structure (3/05, revised 10/05, revised 1/06, revised 8/06)	District Leadership Team meetings started-Principals/Directors and Asst Principals/Directors. (1/06)	Annual review of SMART goals by Strategic Planning Committee to evaluate district progress (11/06)
Strategic Planning Committee diagnosed major areas of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats from data presented from Superintendent and Associate Superintendent and Assistant Superintendent (9/05-11/05)	Strategic Planning Process mission vision guiding principles (9/05-11/05)	Presentation of vision, mission, guiding principles to teachers and staff members (2/06)	
	Introduced the Handbook for SMART School Teams to the Steering Committee. Provided practical "how to" for learning organization. (10/05)	Attendance District Focus team started meeting. (6/06)	

	Bring in outside consultants from state university to plan action based on diagnosis.	Some Steering Committee members attending Professional Learning Communities workshops with DuFour, DuFour and Eaker (7/06).	
		Collaboration and communication District Focus team started meeting. (7/06)	
		District Focus Teams are filtering data to the building levels. Building level teams will report back to the district. (6/06-present)	
		Reorganized the method and process by which data is collected and stored for easy use of district. (12/05-present)	
		Promoted common assessments across the district (1/06-present)	
		Purchase of Pearson Inform and Benchmark for data and common assessments (6/06) trained administrators (6/06) trained teachers (10/06)	
		Strategic Communication within the district and throughout the community through posters, flyers and brochures (8/06)	
		Creation of PK-12 Vertical teams as a result of 11/06 Strategic Planning Committee. (11/06 to present)	

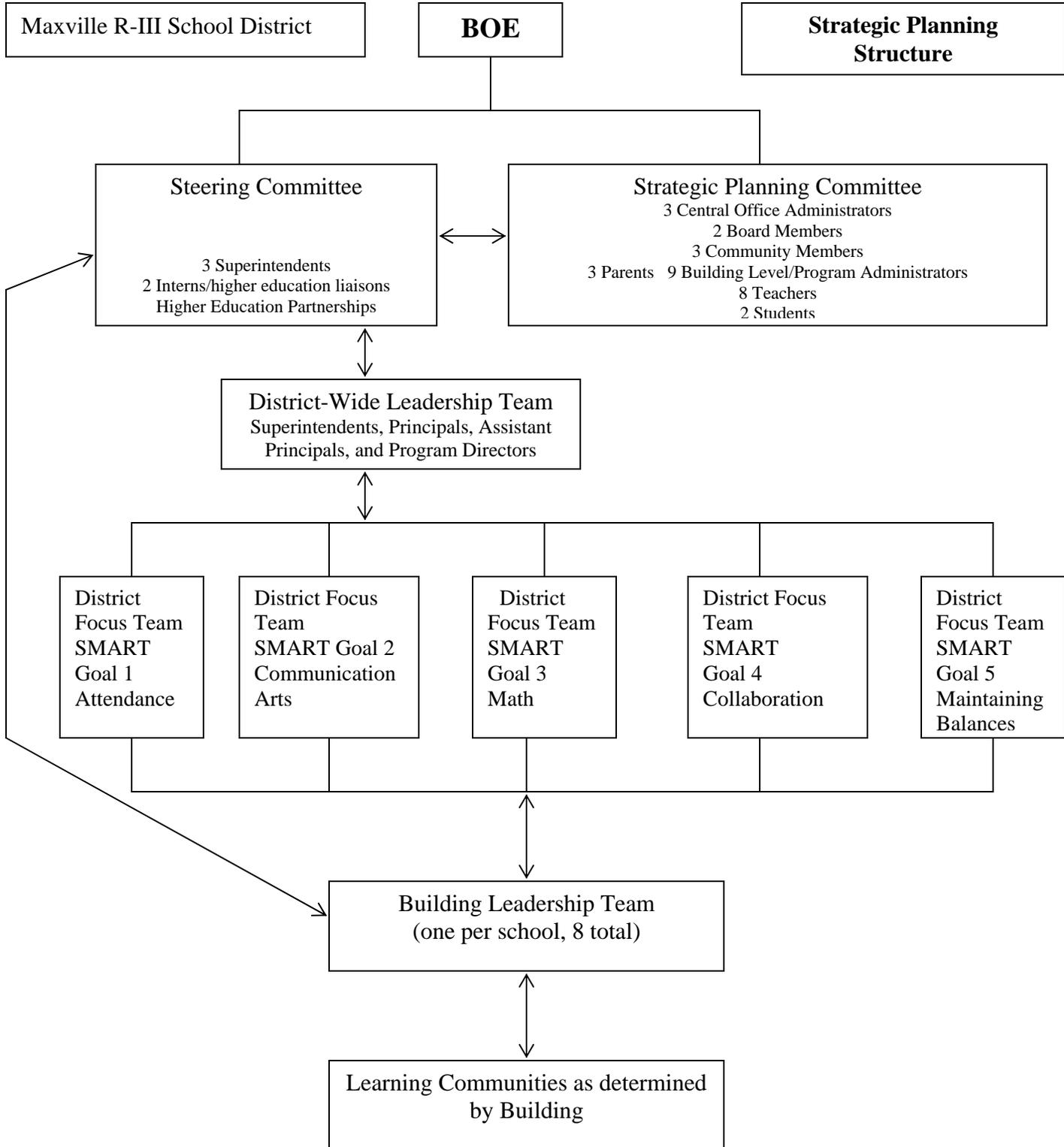
CYCLE 2 - Facilitating the culture, structure and teaming throughout the implementation of PK-12 Vertical Teams led by teacher leaders

Diagnosing	Planning Action	Taking Action	Evaluating Action
Team Feedback Survey was created by the Steering Committee (1/07)	Steering Committee planned professional development based on the Team Feedback Survey (4/07)	Vertical Team Meetings (3 hour meetings) were held (3/07 to present) Communication Arts – 4 meetings Mathematics – 4 meetings Science – 3 meetings Social Studies – 3 meetings	Analysis of the Team Feedback Survey (4/07 – 7/07) by Steering Committee, District Leadership Team, Data Analysis and Assessment Team.
Team Feedback Survey was piloted with 10 individuals (2/07)	Vertical team meetings were scheduled and members notified (4/07 to present)	Data Analysis and Assessment Team meetings were held. (5/07 to present) - 2 meetings and trainings	Analysis of the teacher leader interviews by Steering Committee (7/07)
Team Feedback Survey was distributed to all vertical team members, collected, and analyzed (4/07)	Substitute teachers were obtained for members of vertical team meetings (4/07 to present)	Individual (half day) trainings with teacher leaders were conducted with the superintendent (4/07 to present) Communication Arts- 3 trainings Mathematics – 3 trainings Science – 2 trainings Social Studies – 2 trainings	Analysis of the Collaboration Focus Team Survey by Collaboration Focus Team, District Leadership Team, and Steering Committee (4/07-7/07)
Steering Committee planned new strategies for training based on the teacher leader survey. (8/07)	Individual trainings for the teacher leaders were planned with the assistant superintendent. (4/07 to present)	Interviews were conducted with the five teacher leaders (6/07)	Personal Journaling (1/06 – present)
		Creation of teacher leader resource guide with outline of basics. (8/07)	
		Personal Journaling (1/06 to present)	

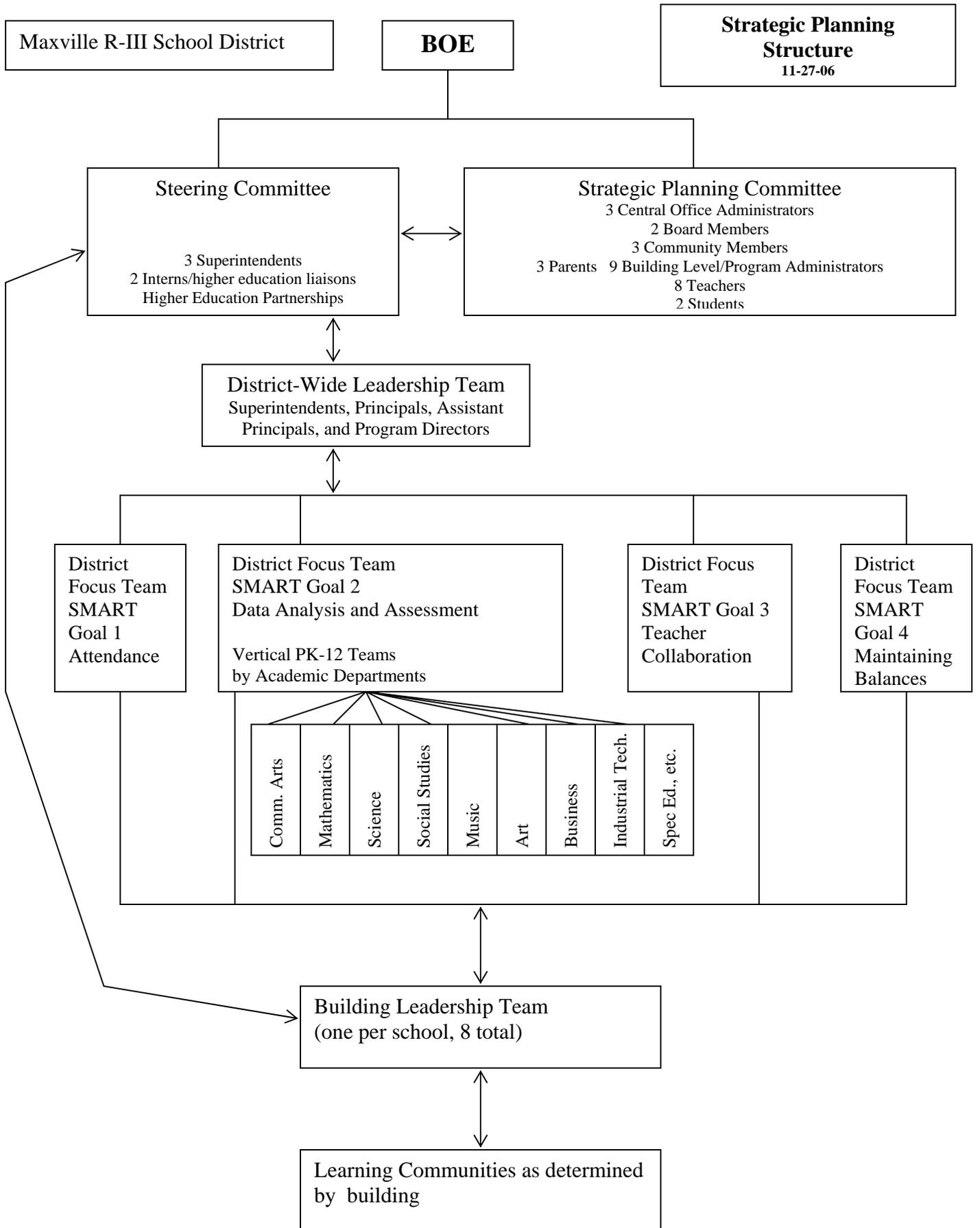
	Collaboration Focus Team Survey team created, team revised and given through the intranet to all certified staff (1/07-3/07)	
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Appendix B

Strategic Planning Structure



Appendix C



Appendix D

District Survey for Administrators on Professional Learning Communities

Implementation

- Create team norms for staff.
- Discuss concept of consensus.
- Discuss basic teaming tools: Fist-to-Five Brainstorming SWOT Analysis
 small group input to final product team agendas
- Creation of Building Leadership Team (BLT) with equal representation
- Introduce concept of Professional Learning Community to: BLT Staff
- Discuss reason “why” behind Professional Learning Community: BLT Staff
- Discuss importance of a “culture of learning”: BLT Staff
- Discuss concept of “all kids can learn” : BLT Staff
- Create school building mission, vision, and values (commitments): Staff
- Discuss SMART goals components and how connected to mission, vision, and values.
- Discuss concept of continuous inquiry cycle- continuous improvement- as compared to school improvement.
- Discuss collaboration definition as defined by DuFour in relation to student achievement.
- Discuss concept of collaboration vs isolation.
- Discuss concept of teaching vs learning.
- Discuss variations of a theme.
- Discuss cultural shifts in learning communities:
 - Shift in purpose
 - Shift in Assessments
 - Shift in response when students don’t learn
 - Shift in the work of teachers
 - Shift in focus
 - Shift in school culture
 - Shift in professional development
- Created structure for horizontal teaming within the school day outside school day
 - grade level teams department teams vertical teams
- All teachers on staff are on a learning community.
- Discussion on importance of celebration for the learning community. Create ways to celebrate successes.
- Discussion of 4 critical questions of learning with staff.
- Identification of essential outcomes in the following content areas: (List)
- Creation of common pacing in the following content areas: (List)

- Discussion of valid, balanced common assessment.
- Creation of common formative assessments in the following content areas (List)

- Develop common scoring guides.
- Discuss process in analyzing data.
- Creation of systematic interventions when students don't learn. (List)

- Creation of systematic extensions when students do learn. (List)

- Discussion of meaning of "Professional"
- Discussion of focus on "results".

What are your current concerns with learning communities? (List)

What strengths do you see in learning communities. (List)

What do you feel that the next step is or more assistance is needed at this time.

Appendix E
Feedback Survey on the Purposes of District Teams

1. I have participated on the following teams (please circle all that apply):
- District Leadership Team
 - District Focus Team
 - Building Leadership Team
 - Building Focus Team
 - Professional Learning Community
 - Other: _____

	Not at all	To some extent	Well	I understand well enough to teach others
I understand the importance and purpose of team norms.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I understand the purpose of this K-12 vertical team.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I understand what consensus means.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I understand basic teaming tools of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fist-to-five • Brainstorming • Team agendas • Small group input to final product • SWOT analysis 	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>			
I understand the current vision, mission, and guiding principles of the district.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I understand how to analyze and use data to make a decision.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I understand the importance of using researched based interventions	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I understand the components of a SMART goal.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I understand the components of an action plan.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I understand the concept of systems thinking	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I understand the plan, do, study, act cycle.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I understand the group stages of forming, storming, norming, performing.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I understand collaboration as defined by DuFour.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Appendix F

Feedback Survey on the Purposes of District Teams attached to research

I have participated on the following teams (please circle all that apply):

- District Leadership Team
- District Focus Team
- Building Leadership Team
- Building Focus Team
- Professional Learning Community
- Other: _____

	Not at all	To some extent	Well	I understand well enough to teach others
I understand the importance and purpose of team norms. (Conzemius & O'Neil, 2002; Preskill & Torres, 1999)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I understand the purpose of this K-12 vertical team. (Katzenbach & Smith, 1993; Schmoker, 1999)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I understand what consensus means. (Conzemius & O'Neil, 2002)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I understand basic teaming tools of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fist-to-five • Brainstorming • Team agendas • Small group input to final product • SWOT analysis (Conzemius & O'Neil, 2002; Ford & Randolph, 1992)	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>			
I understand the current vision, mission, and guiding principles of the district. (Conzemius & O'Neil, 2002)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I understand how to analyze and use data to make a decision. (Bernhardt, 2004; Hargraeves & Fullan, 1998; Leithwood, Aitken, & Jantzi, 2006)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I understand the importance of using researched based interventions. (DuFour, 2006; Schmoker, 2006)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I understand the components of a SMART goal. (Conzemius & O'Neil, 2002)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I understand the components of an action plan. (Conzemius & O'Neil, 2002)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I understand the concept of systems thinking (Preskill & Torres, 1999)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I understand the plan, do, study, act cycle. (Demings, 1986)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I understand the group stages of forming, storming, norming, performing. (Conzemius & O'Neil, 2002; Davis, 2003)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I understand collaboration as defined by DuFour. (2006)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Appendix G

Informed Consent for Surveys

March, 2007

Dear Participant:

Thank you for considering participating in the study of implementation of supports needed for teacher leaders to develop teaming in your school. This study is being conducted as a research project in a doctoral program as part of the dissertation process. The study will be used to enhance the implementation process as well as to identify things that serve to facilitate and act as barriers to the implementation of teaming.

As a study participant, you will respond to survey questions related to teaming. The time allowed for the survey is not expected to take more than five minutes. The survey information will be utilized to plan team professional development. Please read below to understand how your input will be used in the study and how your rights as a participant will be protected.

Participation in this study is completely voluntary. You may withdraw from participation at any time you wish, including in the middle of the survey or after it is completed. If you decide at a later time that you do not want your input included in the study, I will respect that decision. Please do not hesitate to contact me with any concerns or questions about your participation. You may contact me at 573-346-9242. You may also contact campus IRB 573-882-9585 or umcresearchcirb@missouri.edu.

***Participation will not impact your performance evaluation.** Your decision to participate or not as well as any information collected will not impact your performance evaluation as an employee in the school district. The purpose of this study is to enhance and support the implementation of teacher team leaders. In no manner will it be used to evaluate individual employees. If you have concerns about this you may contact campus IRB 573-882-9585 or umcresearchcirb@missouri.edu.

***Your identity will be protected in reporting of the findings.** Your real name may appear in public records as an employee of this school; however, a pseudonym will be used for the school district name in the dissertation document. No mention of the actual district will be included in the dissertation. If at this point you are still interested in participating, please complete the consent form below. Keep the top part of this letter for future reference. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Kristy Kindwall

Consent Form

I, _____, agree to participate in the study of implementation of supports needed for teacher leaders to develop teaming in your school being conducted by Kristy Kindwall. I understand that:

*the survey data is for dissertation use.

*my participation is completely voluntary, and I may withdraw at any point in the study.

*my identity will be protected in reporting of the findings.

*no information collected will be used as part of your performance evaluation as an employee.

Signed: _____

Date: _____

Appendix H
Vertical Team Members by Position and Building Included in this study

1 Elem	2 Elem	3 Elem	4 Elem	MMS	MHS	Admin
Communication Arts		22 total				
PATTeacher (pk) Teacher (k) Teacher (1) Teacher (2) Teacher (3) Curriculum Coordinator elementary	Teacher (k) Teacher (4)	Teacher (3) Teacher (5)	Teacher (4) Teacher (5) Teacher (6)	Teacher (7) Teacher (8)	Teacher (9) Teacher (10) Teacher (11) Teacher (12) Curriculum Coordinator secondary	Director of Special Education Assistant Superintendent
Mathematics		24 Total				
Special Education Teacher (pk) Teacher (k) Teacher (1) Teacher (2) Teacher (3)	Teacher (2) Teacher (4)	Teacher (3) Teacher (4)	Teacher (4) Teacher (5) Teacher (6) Curriculum Coordinator elementary	Teacher (7) Teacher (8) Special Education Teacher	Teacher (9) Teacher (10) Teacher (11) Curriculum Coordinator secondary	Principal Elementary (4) Principal Middle School Assistant Superintendent
Science		20 Total				
Teacher (k) Teacher (1) Teacher (2) Teacher (3)	Teacher (1)	Teacher (4)	Teacher (4) Teacher (5) Teacher (6) Special Education Teacher Curriculum Coordinator elementary	Teacher (7) Teacher (8) Curriculum Coordinator Secondary	Teacher (9) Teacher (10) Teacher (11) Teacher (12)	Principal Elementary (1) Assistant Superintendent
Social Studies		21 Total				
Teacher (k) Teacher (1) Teacher (2) Teacher (3) Curriculum Coordinator elementary Special Education Teacher	Teacher (2)	Teacher (2) Teacher (3)	Teacher (4) Teacher (5) Teacher (6)	Teacher (7) Teacher (8) Curriculum Coordinator Secondary	Teacher (9) Teacher (10) Teacher (11) Teacher (12)	Principal High School Assistant Superintendent

Appendix I
Interview Protocol for Teacher Team Leaders

1. What was the purpose of this PK-12 vertical team?
2. How does the vertical team benefit the district?
3. Describe your experience of being a teacher team leader.
4. How has your team evolved or changed from the first meeting?
5. How has this experience been different than the district's past traditional building or district committee meetings?
6. Did the vertical team accomplish the purpose of the team? If yes, how... If no, why not.
7. Describe any difficulties the team experienced in this process of accomplishing its purpose.
8. Describe any successes the team experienced in this process of accomplishing its purpose.
9. How did the district support you in being an effective team leader?
10. How did the interventions that addressed the weaknesses in the Team Feedback Survey work?
11. What interventions were most effective?
12. What teaming tools did you find the most effective?
13. How have you been able to maintain alignment with the district's vision, mission, and guiding principles?

Appendix J

Informed Consent (Interview)

March, 2007

Dear Participant:

Thank you for considering participating in the study of implementation of supports needed for teacher leaders to develop teaming in your school. This study is being conducted as a research project in a doctoral program as part of the dissertation process. The study will be used to enhance the implementation process as well as to identify things that serve to facilitate and act as barriers to the implementation of teaming.

As a study participant, you will respond to questions related to the process of being a teacher team leader. The time allowed for the interview is not expected to take more than one hour. You may also be invited to participate in a follow-up interview which will be limited to one hour. Please read below to understand how your input will be used in the study and how your rights as a participant will be protected.

Participation in this study is completely voluntary. You may withdraw from participation at any time you wish, including in the middle of the interview or after it is completed. If you decide at a later time that you do not want your input included in the study, I will respect that decision. Please do not hesitate to contact me with any concerns or questions about your participation. You may contact me at 573-346-9242. You may also contact campus IRB 573-882-9585 or umcresearchcirb@missouri.edu.

***Participation will not impact your performance evaluation.** Your decision to participate or not as well as any information collected will not impact your performance evaluation as an employee in the school district. The purpose of this study is to enhance and support the implementation of teacher team leaders. In no manner will it be used to evaluate individual employees. If you have concerns about this you may contact campus IRB 573-882-9585 or umcresearchcirb@missouri.edu.

***Your identity will be protected in reporting of the findings.** Your real name may appear in public records as an employee of this school; however, a pseudonym will be used for the school district name in the dissertation document. No mention of the actual district will be included in the dissertation. Data collected for this dissertation will be kept at the Maxville R-III School District administration building for five years.

If at this point you are still interested in participating, please complete the consent form below. Keep the top part of this letter for future reference. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,
Kristy Kindwall

Consent Form

I, _____, agree to participate in the study of implementation of supports needed for teacher leaders to develop teaming in your school being conducted by Kristy Kindwall. I understand that:

- *the interview data is for dissertation use.
- *my participation is completely voluntary, and I may withdraw at any point in the study.
- *my identity will be protected in reporting of the findings.
- *no information collected will be used as part of your performance evaluation as an employee.

Signed: _____ Date: _____

Appendix K

Percent of Understanding based on TFS – All Teams

Concept	Not at All	To Some Extent	Well	Can Teach Others
Team norms	5 %	26%	48%	8%
Purpose PK-12 team	1%	30%	53%	7%
Consensus	1%	15%	45%	26%
Fist-to-five	31%	16%	22%	17%
Brainstorming	0%	14%	47%	29%
Team agendas	7%	22%	43%	17%
Small group input to final product	5%	26%	44%	15%
SWOT analysis	61%	16%	5%	6%
Current vision, mission, guiding principles	0%	28%	55%	8%
Analyze and use data to make decisions	1%	25%	54%	9%
Researched based interventions	0%	21%	56%	14%
SMART goal components	5%	41%	41%	3%
Action plan components	7%	46%	31%	7%
Systems thinking	26%	40%	21%	3%
Plan, do, study, act	22%	38%	24%	6%
Forming, storming, norming, performing	29%	38%	17%	6%
Collaboration as defined by DuFour	29%	32%	26%	3%

Appendix L

Percent of Understanding based on TFS-Communication Arts

Concept	Not at All	To Some Extent	Well	Can Teach Others
Team norms	4%	26%	61%	4%
Purpose PK-12 team	4%	35%	57%	4%
Consensus	4%	22%	48%	26%
Fist-to-five	48%	8%	22%	22%
Brainstorming	0%	22%	48%	30%
Team agendas	8%	14%	52%	26%
Small group input to final product	8%	22%	48%	22%
SWOT analysis	70%	22%	4%	4%
Current vision, mission, principles	0%	26%	70%	4%
Analyze and use data to make decisions	0%	30%	57%	13%
Researched based interventions	0%	18%	74%	8%
SMART goal components	9%	48%	39%	4%
Action plan components	13%	61%	22%	4%
Systems thinking	30%	52%	14%	4%
Plan, do, study, act	22%	39%	35%	4 %
Forming, storming, norming, performing	30%	48%	13%	9%
Collaboration as defined by DuFour	39%	30%	30%	1%

Appendix M

Percent of Understanding based on TFS – Mathematics

Concept	Not at All	To Some Extent	Well	Can Teach Others
Team norms	0%	29%	42%	8%
Purpose PK-12 team	0%	29%	50%	4%
Consensus	0%	17%	50%	13%
Fist-to-five	25%	13%	29%	17%
Brainstorming	0%	13%	38%	33%
Team agendas	8%	33%	29%	13%
Small group input to final product	4%	29%	29%	21%
SWOT analysis	58%	17%	0%	8%
Current vision, mission, guiding principles	0%	33%	42%	8%
Analyze and use data to make decisions	4%	21%	54%	4%
Researched based interventions	0%	33%	33%	17%
SMART goal components	8%	38%	33%	4%
Action plan components	13%	33%	33%	4%
Systems thinking	38%	29%	8%	4%
Plan, do, study, act	17%	42%	21%	4%
Forming, storming, norming, performing	29%	46%	4%	4%
Collaboration as defined by DuFour	13%	45%	21%	4%

Appendix N

Percent of Understanding based on TFS – Science

Concept	Not at All	To Some Extent	Well	Can Teach Others
Team norms	15%	20%	45%	5%
Purpose PK-12 team	0%	30%	50%	5%
Consensus	0%	15%	45%	20%
Fist-to-five	35%	10%	20%	15%
Brainstorming	0%	10%	60%	15%
Team agendas	10%	10%	65%	17%
Small group input to final product	5%	30%	50%	0%
SWOT analysis	70%	5%	10%	0%
Current vision, mission, guiding principles	0%	30%	50%	0%
Analyze and use data to make decisions	0%	25%	55%	0%
Researched based interventions	0%	15%	60%	5%
SMART goal components	0%	50%	35%	10%
Action plan components	0%	55%	30%	0%
Systems thinking	30%	35%	20%	0%
Plan, do, study, act	35%	30%	20%	0%
Forming, storming, norming, performing	35%	25%	20%	5%
Collaboration as defined by DuFour	40%	25%	20%	0%

Appendix O

Percent of Understanding based on TFS – Social Studies

Concept	Not at All	To Some Extent	Well	Can Teach Others
Team norms	0%	29%	43%	14%
Purpose PK-12 team	0%	24%	52%	10%
Consensus	0%	5%	33%	43%
Fist-to-five	14%	33%	14%	14%
Brainstorming	0%	10%	43%	33%
Team agendas	0%	29%	29%	24%
Small group input to final product	0%	24%	48%	14%
SWOT analysis	43%	19%	5%	10%
Current vision, mission, guiding principles	0%	19%	57%	10%
Analyze and use data to make decisions	0%	24%	48%	14%
Researched based interventions	0%	14%	57%	14%
SMART goal components	0%	29%	52%	5%
Action plan components	0%	33%	38%	14%
Systems thinking	5%	38%	38%	5%
Plan, do, study, act	14%	43%	19%	10%
Forming, storming, norming, performing	19%	29%	33%	5%
Collaboration as defined by DuFour	24%	24%	33%	5%

Appendix P

Data Analysis and Assessment Team Agenda Maxville School District Meeting Record (meeting notes would be recorded here as well)

Team Name: DAAT Date: 5/8/07 Time: 12:30-3:30 pm Location: Admin. Conf.

Topics	Discussion Points and Decisions
Introductions	Introduce self to group and share something about their family or where they were born.
Team Norms	Creation of team norms Brief discussion on what consensus is for this team.
Team roles	Select – timekeeper Record keeper –
Purpose of Team	Team activity – Discussion in teams of four. Showed/shared handouts Take 10 minutes to go over as a team and present information Share in round robyn with group each of 5 groups
Team results of Vertical Team Survey	Communication Arts Math Science Social Studies Reviewed graphs showing the % of understanding of specific team skills as perceived by the teachers in the PK-12 vertical teams. Divided into groups of 3 or 4, discussed and analyzed data to determine what types of professional development should be our next focus.
Group Discussion	Discuss training that has already occurred within the vertical team meetings. Brainstorm: What do you need as a team leader to meet the needs of the vertical teams and assist them in being effective? Obtain input from each of five groups and discuss.
Assistant Superintendent presents goals created by each vertical team	Brief data review of data supporting the goals Going to review the goals set by the vertical teams Handout of goals of vertical team Evaluate goal to be presented to BOE

Issues/Ideas for Future Meetings (Parking Lot):

Assignments:

What	Who	When

Next Meeting: **Date:** **Time:** **Location:**

Members Present: List would be attached. All vertical team teacher leaders, curriculum coordinators, superintendents attended.

Data Analysis and Assessment Team Purpose

Appendix Q

All arrows pointed in the same direction supporting the vision, mission, and guiding principles of Maxville School District.

Data Analysis and Assessment Team is an evaluative umbrella over all other preK-12 vertical teams.

Big arrows are preK-12 vertical teams

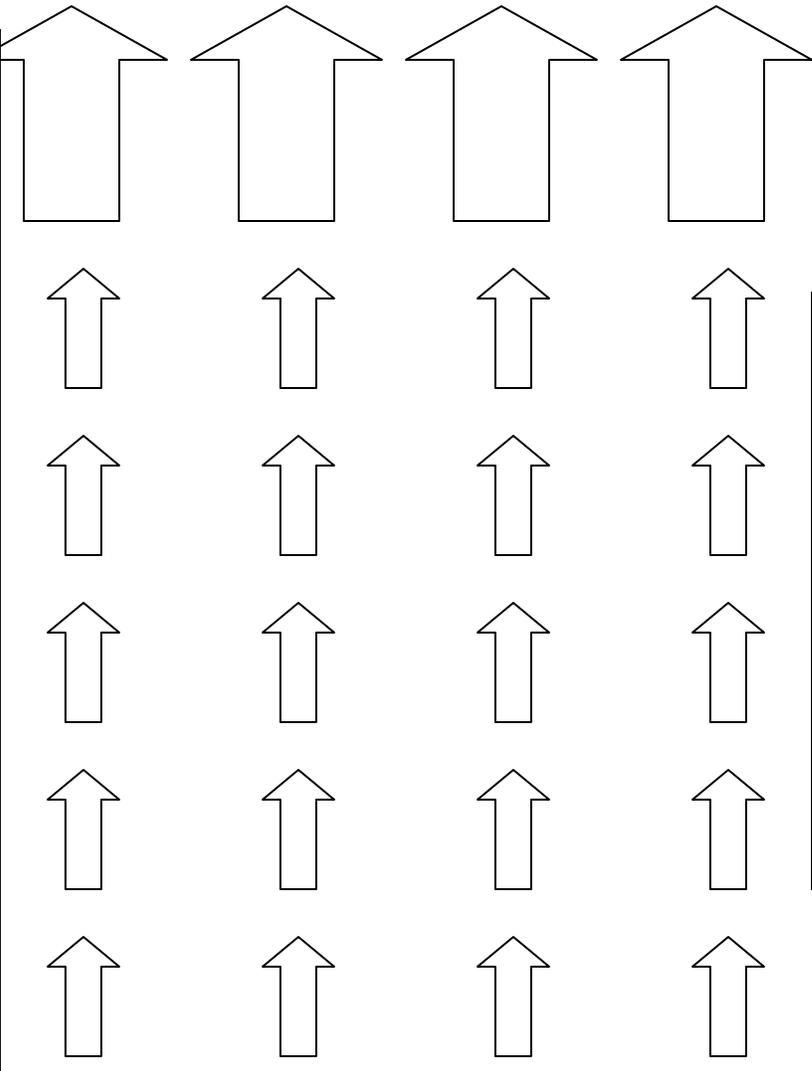
Data Analysis and Assessment Team evaluates through analysis and review of the following artifacts from the preK-12 vertical teams:

- Essential outcomes for each team
- Action plans and SMART goals for each team
- Common assessments (formative and summative) for each team
- Performance data from each team
- MAP/ACT data from each applicable team

The Team

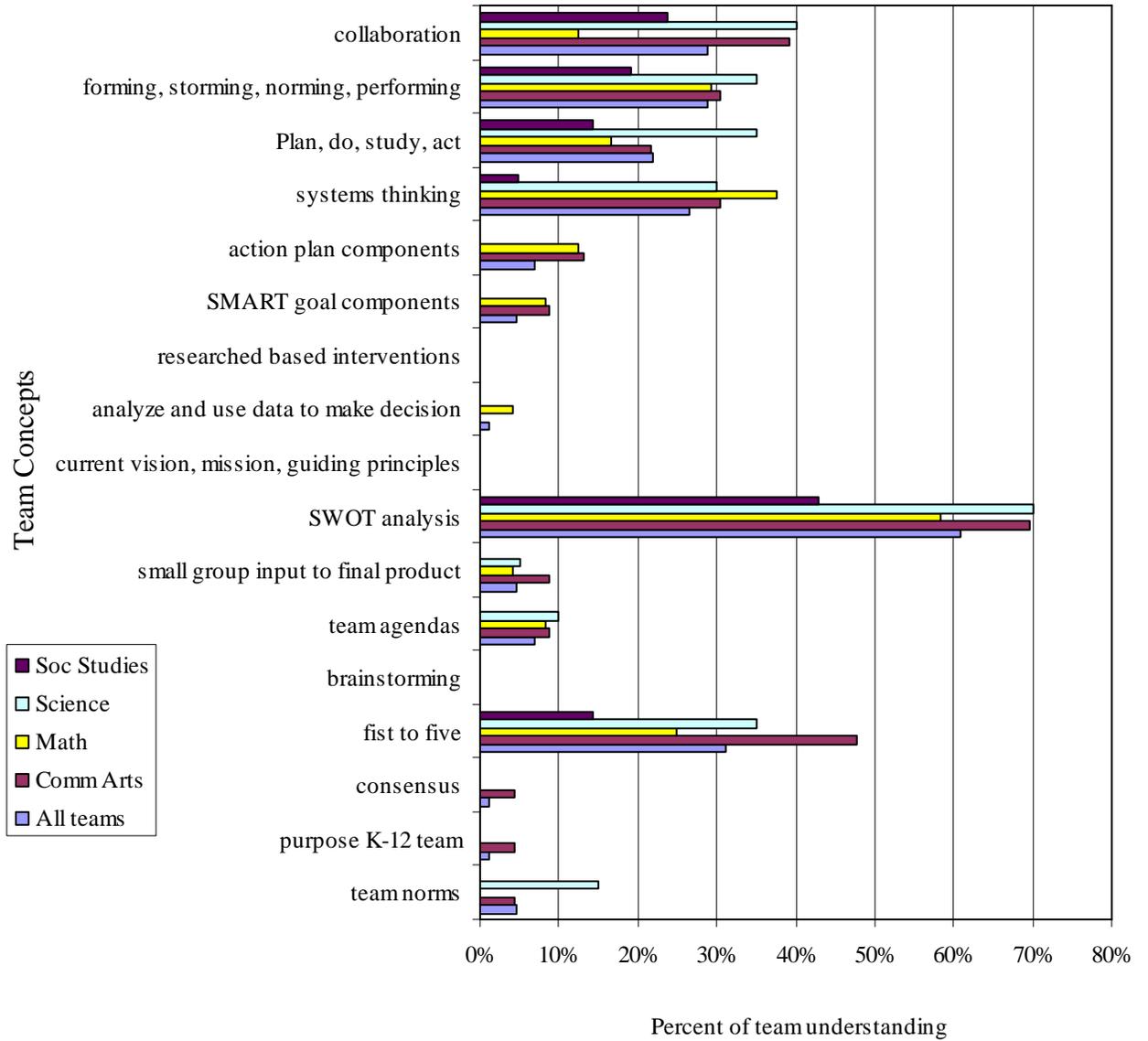
- Warehouses data
- Reviews action plans, SMART goals
- Makes suggestions for improvement
- Addresses concerns from preK-12 vertical teams

Little arrows are the individual school buildings and programs with goals aligned to needs specific to building and program under the content areas preK-12 vertical teams.



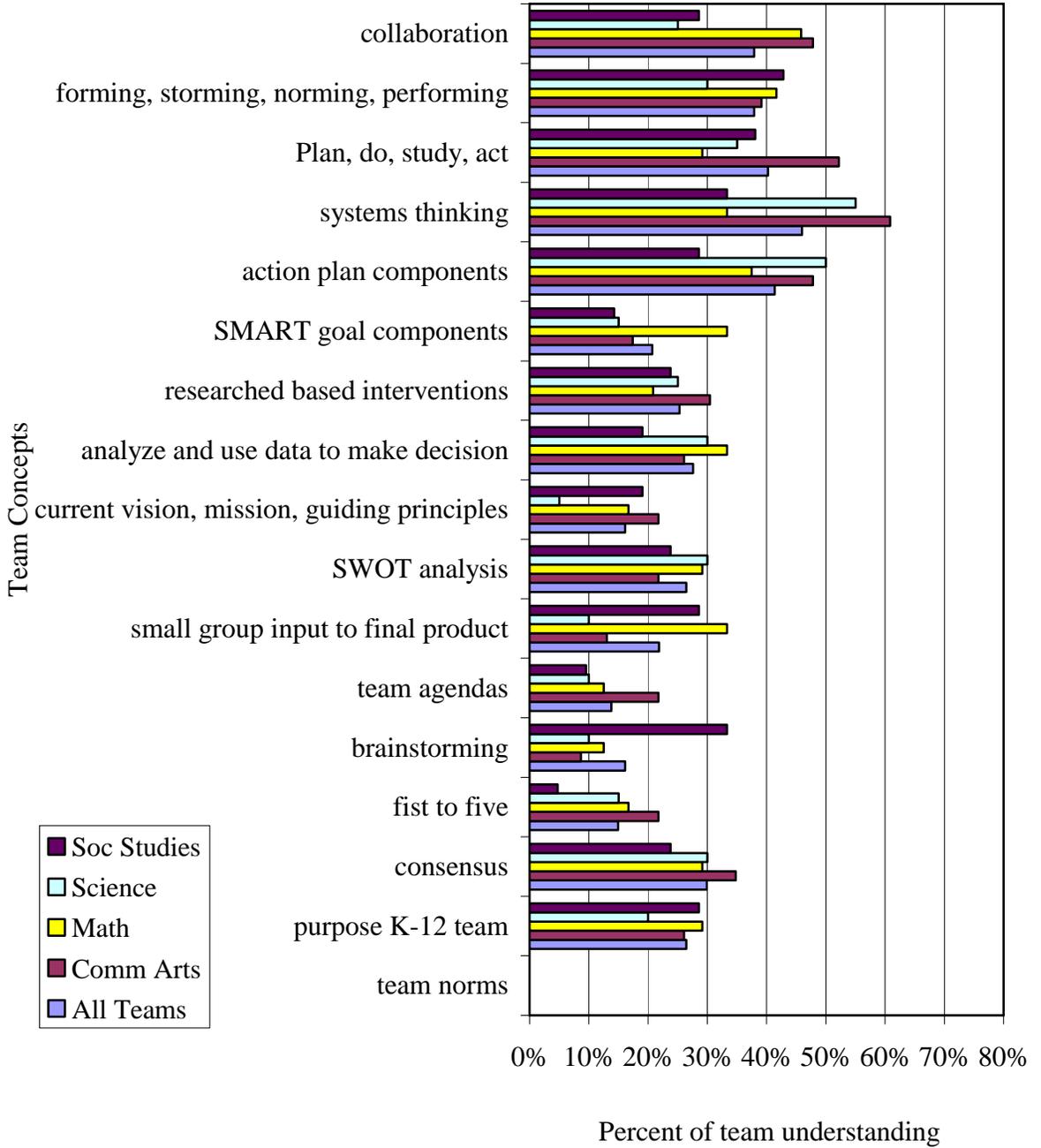
Appendix R

Percent of Team Understanding “Not At All” in TFS



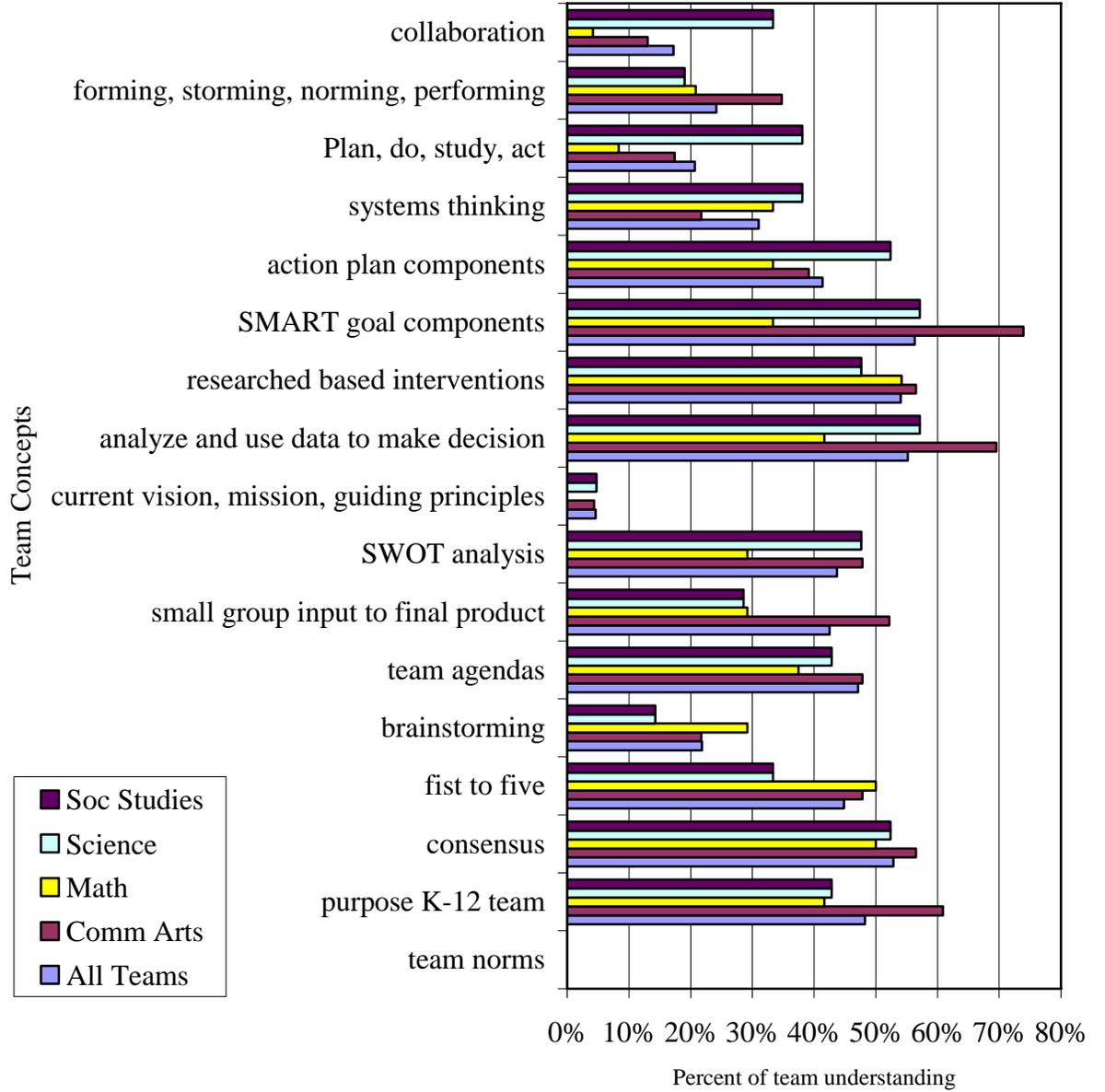
Appendix S

Percent of Team Participant Understanding “To Some Extent” in TFS



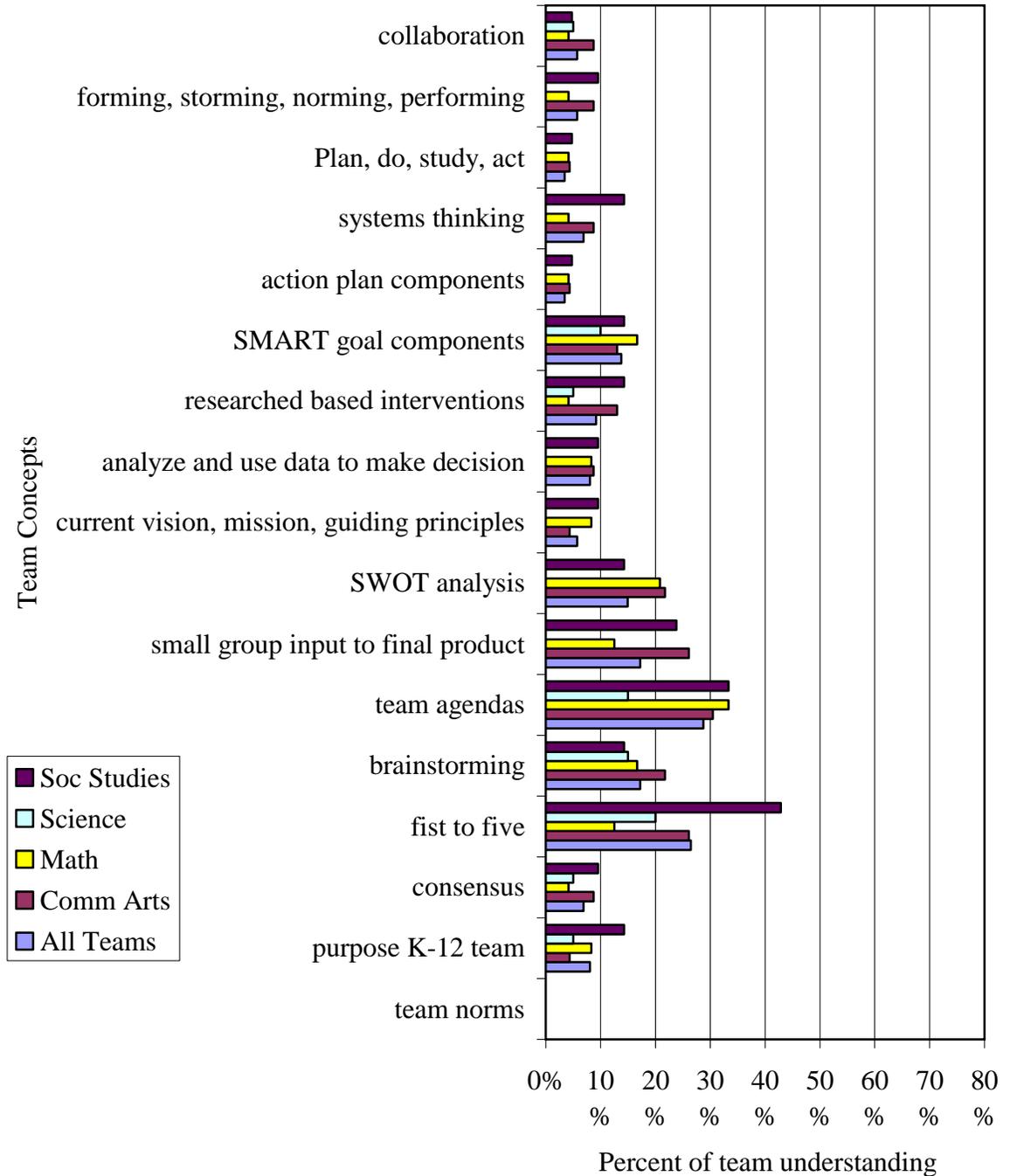
Appendix T

Percent of Team Participant Understanding “Well” in TFS



Appendix U

Percent of Team Participant Understanding “Can Teach Others” in TFS



Appendix V

CFT Survey by CFT Applicable to TFS

Level of Importance - low to high	1	2	3	4	*NI
My level of understanding about the collaboration process for student achievement.	2%	11%	43%	31%	3%
I believe frequent professional collaboration is an appropriate use of teachers' time.	1%	4%	17%	0%	68%
I believe every voice is valued in the collaboration process.	5%	6%	19%	57%	4%
Strongly Disagree to Agree	4	3	2	1	*NI
Current technology and assessment tools support district collaboration.	10%	18%	23%	22%	17%
Professional development should be directed at improving collaboration skills.	13%	10%	36%	28%	3%
Current professional development improves collaboration.	10%	19%	37%	21%	4%
Teaming skills are necessary for effective professional collaboration.	18%	4%	16%	45%	8%

*Not enough background information

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