

Public Abstract

First Name:Chad

Middle Name:William

Last Name:Sayre

Adviser's First Name:George

Adviser's Last Name:Petersen

Co-Adviser's First Name:Jay

Co-Adviser's Last Name:Scribner

Graduation Term:SS 2007

Department:Educational Leadership & Policy Analysis

Degree:PhD

Title:The Superintendent's Maintenance and Influence on Classroom Instructional Capacity: A Mixed Method Study

The primary objective of this investigation is an increased knowledge of the dynamics of these interactive relationships and the influence of the district superintendent on school improvement centered on instruction and student learning. Using the conceptual lenses of superintendent instructional leadership and instructional capacity, this investigation explored the attitudes, opinions and teachers' views of their superintendent's ability to influence classroom instruction. Specifically, we wanted to know the ability of the superintendent to teachers' ability to produce worthwhile and substantial student learning.

In this mixed method analysis, data were drawn from seven medium sized school districts in Missouri. In-depth and triangulation interviews with forty-seven classroom teachers were conducted by the authors. Teachers completed a questionnaire designed to examine factors related to teacher's perceptions of the district superintendent's instructional leadership, the superintendent's role in fostering an organizational environment that supported instructional capacity as well as involvement of teachers in their own professional learning and development.

Results of the correlational and regression analysis indicate a significant predictable relationship ($R^2 = .878$; $F(2, 877) = .618$, $p = .000$) between the two independent variables (superintendent's instructional leadership and teacher's professional development and instructional practices) the dependent variable (instructional capacity). Four themes emerged from the interviews with teachers. In these districts teachers perceived the superintendent as a (1. resource managers, (2. models of professional practice, (3. creating change in ideas of teaching and learning, and (4. creating a culture of trust. The paper concludes with a discussion of the theoretical and practical implications from these findings.