

Public Abstract

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Graduation Term:SP 2009

Department:Educational Leadership & Policy Analysis

Degree:EdD

Title:The Role of the District Administration in the Establishment of Professional Learning Communities

New measures of accountability are forcing school districts to take steps to improve the quality of education for their students. With the passage of the federal No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) in 2001, school districts who receive federal funds are threatened by sanctions based on low student performance on standard tests developed by individual states. These sanctions include loss of funds and loss of accreditation. Many educational researchers and school administrators indicate the best chance to improve student achievement is the development of Professional Learning Communities (PLC).

This qualitative study focused on outcomes, behaviors, and attitudes which have occurred or been developed in schools which have successfully implemented PLC. Study findings revealed four themes - 1) the changing dynamics of leadership, 2) the development of a sense of collective efficacy and collective responsibility for student learning, 3) emphasis on collaboration versus isolationism, and 4) the use of data to drive improved instruction. It is hoped that this research will provide guidelines and suggestions to schools wishing to develop PLC as a means of providing improved education for all students.