

THE ROLE OF THE DISTRICT ADMINISTRATION IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF PROFESSIONAL LEARNING COMMUNITIES

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to focus on outcomes, behaviors, and attitudes which have occurred or been developed in schools which have successfully implemented Professional Learning Communities (PLC). The researcher also studied the role of the district administration in assessing the readiness for change as well as their role in the implementation and support for PLC.

The three school districts selected for this study were considered representative of the state from which they were selected because geographically the nine RPDC areas from which the schools were selected represent a cross section of all districts in the state. A superintendent or superintendent designee and one board member from the three different school districts were selected to participate in interviews. In addition, a focus group from each district was selected including representatives from the PLC leadership teams of the individual schools. Data collection methods included audio-recording interviews and observations of individuals in the school setting. The study findings revealed four themes. They were: 1) the changing dynamics of leadership, 2) the development of a sense of collective efficacy and responsibility for student learning, 3) emphasis on collaborative teams versus isolation, and 4) the use of data to drive improved instruction. The implications of this inquiry for practice in education could impact K-12 institutions as they attempt to address the pressures of improving student achievement.