

Public Abstract

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Title:The Role of Professional Learning Communities in Changing High School Educator Behaviors and High School Student Outcomes

The purpose of the study was to investigate if high school administrator's and teacher's behaviors changed with the implementation of professional learning communities and what high school student outcomes occurred.

Qualitative research was done by interviewing principals, teachers, and students (who were at least 18 years old).

Administrator's and teacher's behaviors did change. Administrators became more team oriented in their leadership, building leadership teams formed, teachers were now asked for their input on school wide issues, and learning became the focus. Teachers collaborated and planned more with each other, tried more teaching strategies, worked to make the curriculum more rigorous, focused on what students learned, and took the stance that it was not acceptable to fail.

Student's had to keep up with a faster pace in the classroom, which meant putting more effort into homework and paying more attention in class. Student grades did improve and State test scores went up. Students became more excited about learning and more challenged.

Implications of the research are that principals need to be more participative in their leadership and leadership preparatory programs should include leadership models that emphasize participative leadership models. With collaboration being the key to successful professional learning communities teacher preparatory programs need to teach the skills of collaboration. Professional development needs to focus on student learning and what to do when students do not learn. Most importantly, students need to be involved in the process of professional learning communities to better understand what is happening in their school and why.