Theses and Dissertations (All)

6-8-2010

The Perceived Impact of the Curriculum Administrator in Facilitating a Vision of Learning in Small, Rural Pennsylvania School Districts

Mary A. Wolf
Indiana University of Pennsylvania

Follow this and additional works at: http://knowledge.library.iup.edu/etd

THE PERCEIVED IMPACT OF THE CURRICULUM ADMINISTRATOR

IN FACILITATING A VISION OF LEARNING IN SMALL, RURAL

PENNSYLVANIA SCHOOL DISTRICTS

A Dissertation

Submitted to the School of Graduate Studies and Research

In Partial Fulfillment of the

Requirements for the Degree

Doctor of Education

Mary A. Wolf

Indiana University of Pennsylvania

May 2010

Indiana University of Pennsylvania
The School of Graduate Studies and Research
Professional Studies in Education

We hereby approve the dissertation of

Mary Arrington Wolf

Candidate for the degree of Doctor of Education

__December 1, 2009__   _____Signature on File_____
                             Dr. Cathy C. Kaufman
                             Professor of Professional Studies in Education, Advisor

__December 1, 2009__   _____Signature on File_____
                             Dr. Joseph F. Marcoline
                             Associate Professor of Professional Studies in Education

__December 1, 2009__   _____Signature on File_____
                             Dr. Sue A. Rieg
                             Professor of Professional Studies in Education

ACCEPTED

_____   _____
Timothy P. Mack, Ph.D
Dean
The School of Graduate Studies and Research

Title: The Perceived Impact of the Curriculum Administrator in Facilitating a Vision of
          Learning in Small, Rural Pennsylvania School Districts

Author: Mary A. Wolf

Dissertation Chair: Dr. Cathy C. Kaufman

Dissertation Committee Members: Dr. Joseph F. Marcoline

                                     Dr. Sue A. Rieg

One important element of school district reform involves quality district leadership. Researchers have shown that effective school leadership requires numerous responsibilities including knowledge of curriculum, instruction, and assessment (Marzano, Waters & McNulty, 2005). Principals typically have difficulty being strong leaders in this particular area due to the high demands placed on them to manage their buildings. Many large school districts employ a curriculum administrator who is responsible for coordinating curriculum at the district level, relieving principals of that responsibility. However, many small rural school districts lack the resources to hire curriculum administrators and the task of coordinating curriculum is typically assigned to the building principals, teachers, or overlooked.

This qualitative study examined the perceptions of rural school administrators, teachers and school board members in relation to the effectiveness of curriculum development, implementation and evaluation, and the impact these practices have on the vision of student learning in school districts with a curriculum administrator and without a curriculum administrator. The most critical finding suggests that in districts with a curriculum administrator, the position had a positive impact on the district's curriculum

iv

and academic program. Another important finding was that the vision of student learning was achieved at a higher level in districts with curriculum administrators than districts without this organizational structure.

The results of this study provide insights into the organizational structure, belief systems, and curriculum development procedures in both types of districts, as well as performance data on the Pennsylvania School System of Assessment.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I am so grateful to my dissertation chair, Dr. Cathy Kaufman, for your continuous guidance and encouragement, and committee members Dr. Marcoline and Dr. Rieg for your support and direction. Your advice provided a pathway for me to find the answers to the questions I was asking.

I thank the superintendents, principals, curriculum directors, teachers and school board members who participated in both the pilot and the study. I am so grateful to each of you for your participation, time and interest.

To my colleagues and the board of directors at Clarion-Limestone School District, I thank you for supporting me though my coursework and study.

To the IUP faculty and the students of Cohort VII, thank you for your teamwork. I miss our time together and know that without your support, this experience would not have been possible.

Finally, to my husband, Joe and daughters Paige and Kelsey. Without your encouragement, this dissertation would still be a work-in-progress. Thank you, Joe, for taking on the role of Mr. Mom; Paige, for sacrificing the computer, and Kelsey, for determining my progress based on the page number!

This doctoral dissertation is dedicated to my deceased mother, Donna Bump, who always believed in me and encouraged me to think beyond my goals. When I started, she told me that she was proud; I know that she is overjoyed that I have finished.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES

CHAPTER I

THE PROBLEM

Statement of the Problem

Student achievement of the standards set by each state is the major focus of

current educational reform. The intention of the No Child Left Behind law is for all

school districts to be accountable for their performance by measuring progress against

standards. In order to demonstrate performance, schools and districts must meet

Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) benchmarks. School districts are continuously

searching to find reform efforts that will greatly impact student achievement. One

important element of reform involves quality district leadership. There are numerous

suggestions of what characterizes an effective leader, and research supports the fact that it

is inconceivable to expect one person to posses all of the qualities and skills necessary for

complete, responsible leadership. Marzano, Waters, and McNulty (2005) state: "Perhaps

this wide array of behaviors explains why it is so difficult to be an effective school

leader. The variety of skills a leader must master is daunting indeed" (p. 62). Principals

admittedly have difficulty being strong leaders in the area of curriculum and instruction

due to the high demands placed on them to manage the building and students.

The organizational structure varies across small and large districts. Many large

school districts employ a curriculum administrator, such as a curriculum coordinator,

director of education, or assistant superintendent, who is responsible for coordinating

curriculum at the district level, allowing the principals to manage their buildings. By

working at the district level, this person can see a holistic, big picture versus a building

principal who tends to focus on issues at the building level. However, many small, rural

school districts lack the financial resources to hire curriculum administrators. The pressure is on school boards to downsize or maintain a low number of administrators. In these districts, the task of coordinating curriculum is typically given to the building principals, distributed to teachers, or accomplished by no one. Rural principals are expected to be directly involved in monitoring and modeling for teachers, whereas in large districts, the leadership of building principals follows a more top-down approach (Leithwood, Louis, Anderson & Wahlstrom, 2004). Is it difficult to develop and implement curriculum in small, rural districts without a curriculum administrator? Does the presence of a curriculum administrator assist the district with facilitating the district's vision of student learning? In this age of stronger accountability and high expectations for student achievement, would small, rural districts benefit from having a curriculum administrator who is responsible for conceptualizing, guiding, and implementing curriculum programs for the district?

Purpose of the Study

There are few curriculum administrators in small, rural Pennsylvania school districts, likely due to a lack of budgetary resources and an understanding of the importance of the position. In large districts, curriculum administrators are common and associated with providing the link to effective implementation of curriculum changes. There is little research to connect the role of curriculum administrator with student learning in small, rural schools. The purpose of this qualitative study is to understand the organizational structure as it relates to curriculum development, implementation and evaluation, as well as the impact on the learning environment in small, rural Pennsylvania school districts with and without a curriculum administrator.

Background

It is commonly observed that district level supervisors serve as an important link between teachers and new materials, ideas, and policies developed outside the classroom (Fullan, 1982). Curriculum administrators are responsible for improving the overall quality of the local district's instructional program. They must look at the system through the perspective of a holistic, big-picture lens. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics (2009, p. 1), the position "plays a large role in improving the quality of education in the classroom" and the job outlook for a curriculum specialist is highly favorable with a projected increase in employment at 22 percent through 2016. "Although budget constraints may limit employment… a continuing emphasis on improving the quality of education should result in an increasing demand" (Bureau of Labor Statistics, p. 2). Research findings support the statements made by the Bureau. Eilers and Camacho (2007) studied the factors that contributed to a school's effectiveness and found that when a curriculum specialist works collaboratively with the principal to improve instruction, dramatic changes in student achievement are evident. In this study, the principal stated that the curriculum specialist was the missing piece in what he needed to accomplish. The specialist worked with staff to align, develop and implement curriculum according to state standards and expectations. "Reform depends on leadership of a system, including the principal and district staff members who collaboratively work with school staff" (Eilers & Camacho, p. 635). In a synthesis of research gathered through the McRel Regional Educational Laboratory, it is clear that implementing a standards-based curricula can improve student learning. "The majority of studies addressing student achievement found positive relationships between standards-based curricula… improved

student achievement on tests, [and] teacher instruction as well" (Lauer et al., 2005, p.54). In addition, the study found that curriculum that is closely aligned with frameworks and assessments is most effective. Despite the relevance and potential importance to the most fundamental process of schooling, the position of curriculum administrator may be the least well understood and the most frequently overlooked of the professional roles that exists in schools (Wimpelberg, 1987).

Although there are numerous studies that link student achievement to effective leadership, attempts have been made to indicate that district administrators have no impact on student achievement. William Bennett (1999), who served as United States Secretary of Education from 1985 to 1988, refers to public school administration as the "blob" or <u>blo</u>ated educational <u>b</u>ureaucracy; "that ever-increasing population of nonteaching personnel" (p. 44). Bennett advocates the following:

> Competency testing for teachers, opening the teaching profession to knowledgeable individuals who have not graduated from "schools of education," performance-based pay, holding educators accountable for how much children learn, an end to tenure, a national examination to find out exactly how much our children know, and parental choice of schools. (p. 44)

The term has been used by both advocates and supporters of public school administration. Since then, the public has been calling for reductions in the number of school administrators so funds can be shifted to the classroom. This trend continues through the present day as demonstrated by a recent movement by the governor of Pennsylvania who is advocating massive district consolidation and drastic reduction in administration in an attempt to recover from a deficit state budget.

Efforts to challenge the perception of administration overload have been made in several studies and reports. In a report by The Educational Research Service (2003), six misperceptions are challenged:

1. Administration is an unnecessary burden on the schools and should be curtailed.

2. There are too many administrators.

3. The number of administrators is growing rapidly and at the expense of instruction.

4. School administrators are being paid too much.

5. Increasing amounts of school budgets are going to administration.

6. A lot of money is spent on administration that could be better spent for other purposes.

A report compiled by the National Center for Education Statistics for the U.S. Department of Education provides important information related to personnel. During the 2002-2003 school year, only 4.0 percent of the personnel salary budget went to central-office administrators. Principals and assistant principals added only another 5.4 percent to this figure.

Another study discounted the theory of the administrative blob by examining education income and expenditures over a five-year period and analyzing the implications of shifting funds away from school administration:

Expenditures on administration tend to be modest by comparison to benchmarks for other organizations ... Further, the percentages spent on administration in [some] districts is so low that, if the ... central office was eliminated, there would

be very little money to disperse to school sites. [This] research has found little empirical support for the theory of the educational administrative blob. (Odden, Monk, Nakib, and Picus, 1995, p. 165)

The Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development established a Task Force on Research on Central Office Supervision to examine the possibility of documenting the effectiveness of supervisory personnel. The task force concluded in its final report that it may be impossible to develop a general measure of central office supervisor productivity and effectiveness (Blumberg, 1984). However, Marzano, Waters and McNulty (2005) found a significant relationship between district leadership and student achievement. They suggest that administrators are effective when they fulfill key leadership responsibilities, and their effectiveness is related to student success. Although significant, there continues to be little research that directly relates the impact of the role of a curriculum administrator on student learning. This study will attempt to build on the research base that exists related to the effectiveness of central office and school level administrators and provide a link between the presence of a curriculum administrator with achieving the vision of student learning in an organization.

Research Questions

There are several questions that the researcher is seeking to answer. The first question relates directly to the impact on student achievement, while the remaining questions relate to educational organizational functions. The following are the research questions for this study:

1. In what ways does a curriculum administrator contribute to the facilitation of the vision of student learning in small, rural Pennsylvania school districts?

6

2. In what ways do administrators identify with the balanced leadership model in small, rural Pennsylvania school districts with a curriculum administrator and in districts without a curriculum administrator?

3. In what ways is a distributed leadership model practiced in small, rural Pennsylvania school districts with a curriculum administrator and in districts without a curriculum administrator?

4. How are curriculum-related job functions accomplished in small, rural Pennsylvania school districts with a curriculum administrator and in districts without a curriculum administrator?

5. How does the administrative team function in small, rural Pennsylvania school districts with a curriculum administrator and districts without a curriculum administrator?

6. How is the rationale for having or not having a curriculum administrator evident in the perceptions of the administrators, teacher leaders and school board members?

7. How is data provided by adult professionals regarding beliefs about curricular leadership reflected in student performance data on PSSA scores?

Significance of the Study

Curriculum administrators often are scarce in small, rural school districts. Principals are expected to be the instructional leaders, but often, managerial duties become priority and the monitoring of curriculum development, alignment and implementation often lacks. This descriptive cross-case qualitative study will shed light

on the perceptions of how curriculum changes are instituted and if the learning environment is impacted.

It is anticipated that the results of this study will be applicable to the educational field as they will provide insight to the practices related to the learning environment that occur in both the presence and absence of a curriculum administrator. Small, rural school districts may benefit from understanding the results as they typically struggle with economic conditions that limit their human resources, particularly curriculum administrators.

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework that will be used in this study is based on the literature related to areas of curriculum and instructional leadership and rural schools. Organizational and rural school leadership theories overarch the other related models developed by leading researchers, including transformational leadership, balanced leadership and distributed leadership. The systems thinking framework relates to the role of a rural curriculum administrator as this position serves as the connecting piece between administration and teachers. Leadership responsibilities should be well-balanced and distributed among administrators and as a team, together the administrators can function in a transformational environment.

Rural School Leadership

Rural school leadership is one of the underlying contributors to the theoretical framework. The study will examine and compare administrative practices amongst rural school districts with differing organizational structures. Understanding the needs and unique qualities of rural schools provides insight to current practices. However, research

on rural schooling is limited, though increasing as the awareness level for the need to research rural schooling is increasing.

The research supports the major issues surrounding rural education. Arnold, Gaddy, and Dean (2004) report that in rural districts, there are fewer administrators and they typically assume dual roles. For example, an administrator may serve as instructional leader, athletic director, and even at times a substitute bus driver. "It's not uncommon for a district superintendent to serve concurrently as an elementary principal, high school principal, athletic director or curriculum specialist" (Tobin, 2006, p. 63). They also "receive less compensation, and have greater visibility in the community" (Arnold et al., 2004, p. 23).

The role of administration in large school districts is different and unique compared to the role in small districts. Gardener and Edington (1982) compare the difference as they focus on geographic isolation, limited resources, and staff limitations which inevitably lead to an increase in the responsibilities of rural administrators. The demands associated with declining enrollment and inadequate federal and state funding are additional issues faced by rural administrators. The increase in state and federal mandates requires districts to compile and report information regardless of district size. Expectations placed on all districts are difficult to achieve in a rural district with a small central office staff.

When central office administrators are lacking, principals must take additional responsibilities at the building level. In addition to serving as managers, they must be instructional leaders by working directly with staff, and understanding the process of

instruction and assessment. Having a curriculum coordinator complements the leadership role of the principal, and allows the principal to be both a manager and leader.

In rural districts, fewer people are willing to take the job of administrator as it is a complex, difficult job. Schools perform better with quality leadership; however, studies continue to prove that school reform efforts are limited when a weak central office exists (McLaughlin, 2003).

Organizational Theory

Organizational theory is another underlying component of the theoretical framework. The administrative configuration and relationship to organizational learning are aspects of the study that will be examined. The majority of research on organizational theory is based on the work of Peter Senge (1999b), whose work on systems thinking has widened the perspective on how others should view their organization. Change and improvement are possible when the system is viewed as a whole instead of as small parts. In the curriculum administrator's role, it is important to view the district as a whole and connect the small parts for system-wide improvement to be lasting and effective. In systems thinking, "people learn to better understand interdependency and change, and thereby to deal more effectively with the forces that shape the consequences of our actions" (Senge, p. 32).

Balanced Leadership

Balanced leadership is a theory developed by Waters, Marzano & McNulty (2003) based on 30 years of research that identifies the leadership practices that promote student achievement. The results have provided the basis for the balanced leadership framework. The framework describes the "knowledge, skills, strategies, and tools leaders

need to positively impact student achievement" (p. 2). The researchers found 21

leadership responsibilities that correlate with student achievement: culture; order;

discipline; resources; curriculum, instruction, assessment; focus; knowledge of

curriculum, instruction, assessment; visibility; contingent rewards; communication;

outreach; input; affirmation; relationship; change agent; optimizer; ideals/beliefs;

monitors/evaluates; flexibility; situational awareness; and intellectual stimulation.

According to their research, effective leaders must possess all 21 responsibilities, which

is nearly impossible for one person. In a balanced leadership model, team leaders are

chosen to function together based on the strengths of each individual team member.

Teams are balanced so a leadership team is able to possess all 21 leadership

responsibilities.

The balanced leader knows "when, how and why to do things rather than just

knowing what to do" (Waters et al., 2003, p. 2). The framework identifies changes of task

within these responsibilities as either first order or second order, and a balanced leader

knows how to deal with leading through both first and second order changes. First order

changes are those that stay within the norms and boundaries that are set, for example,

new curriculum materials or strategies. Second order changes are those that are outside of

the norm and may cause disruption, such as performance pay based on merit. The

leader's response to these changes demonstrate whether or not a leader is balanced.

Balanced leaders also utilize taxonomies for leading. The taxonomy for

organizing experiential knowledge (knowing why this is important), declarative

knowledge (knowing what to do), procedural knowledge (knowing how to do it), and

contextual knowledge (knowing when to do it) apply to the 21 leadership responsibilities.

The framework also identifies and orders ten school and teacher practices and student factors influencing student achievement. The top influence is a guaranteed and viable curriculum, followed by challenging goals and effective feedback, parent and community involvement, safe and orderly environment, collegiality and professionalism, instructional strategies, classroom management, classroom curriculum design, home environment, learned intelligence/background knowledge, and motivation.

Distributed Leadership

The distributed school leadership model complements the balanced leadership model in that it also recognizes that it is impractical to expect "one person to single-handedly lead improvement efforts" (Spillane, 2006, p. 26) and provides an alternative practice through distribution of responsibilities. In this model, leadership practice is shared with other administrators and teacher leaders within a school, and schools rely on teamwork and the expertise of many leaders from within to shape, improve and succeed in a focused organization. However, it is more than just sharing responsibilities, it is the result of the interactions of school leaders, followers, and their situation (Spillane, 2006). Gronn (2002) outlines two aspects of distributed leadership. They are leadership behavior and expectations dispersed to many or all of the staff, and more importantly, it is the leadership attributed to members "acting in concert" toward the focus of the organization.

Utilizing a distributed leadership model is ideal for organizations such as schools in which traditionally, one person, such as the building principal, has been responsible for leading all improvement efforts. A shared leadership model in which teachers take on natural leadership responsibilities can lead to overall school improvement. In schools using distributed leadership, everyone is involved and responsible for leadership, focused

on a common mission and purpose, with their expertise, knowledge and skills utilized. Idea-sharing is essential; teachers are discoverers and risk-takers and act as experts contributing to the decision-making process.

Studies have examined distributed leadership in relation to vital leadership components. The following four components are naturally integrated in a distributed leadership model:

1. Sensemaking: making sense of our surroundings

2. Relating: developing relationships

3. Visioning: creating a compelling vision

4. Inventing: creating ways to work together (Ancona, 2005).

As indicated by distributed leadership school studies, a relationship exists between school size and the number of teacher leaders. Camburn, Rowan, and Taylor (2003) found that the distribution of teachers and formal leaders is affected by school size. In larger schools, there are more administrators who carry leadership responsibilities and form larger distributed leadership teams. Although leadership teams may be smaller in small schools, there is a need for distributed leadership teams and smaller schools tend to rely on the expertise of the staff. As smaller districts tend to have fewer administrators, particularly in central office, there is a need to increase the leadership capacity of the school through a leadership distribution model. The distributed leadership model is not a prescription for how to practice school leadership. It can be viewed as a model that provides a framework for thinking about leadership differently (Gronn, 2002).

Transformational Leadership

Transformational leadership is "about the opportunity to transform people, places, and possibilities" (Servais, 2006, p.5), to improve student learning by building relationships, create a trustful learning environment where everyone is a learner, and work toward a common vision. According to Colonel Homrig (n.d.), transformational leaders' goal "is to inspire followers to share the leader's values and connect with the leader's vision. This connection is manifested through the genuine concern the leaders have for their followers and the followers giving their trust in return."

Transformational leadership theory was rooted in the ideas of two theorists: Burns and Bass. Burns (1978) believes that transformational leadership is grounded in moral foundation "in that it raises the level of human conduct and ethical aspiration of both leader and led, and thus it has a transforming effect on both" (p. 20). According to Bass and Steidlmeier (1998), there are qualities that are fundamental to transformational leaders: those who possess charisma or idealized influence (trust between leaders and followers characterized by high moral and ethical standards); inspirational motivation (challenges the follower toward goals); intellectual stimulation (gain sight of the big picture with creative outcomes); and individualized consideration (coaching and mentoring followers). Others have updated the fundamentals of transformational leadership to include six dimensions: creating a shared vision, modeling best practices, setting high expectations for performance, utilizing shared decision-making, providing individual support, and developing an intellectually stimulating environment.

Studies have connected the actions of transformational leaders to student success. Sergiovanni (1990) suggests that in schools with transformational leaders, student

achievement can be remarkably improved. Sagor (1992) found that "schools where

teachers and students reported a culture conducive to school success, a transformative

leader is the principal" (p. 13). In his report, Leithwood (1992) claims that

transformational leadership practices have a significant influence on teacher

collaboration, and "highly significant relationships between aspects of transformational

leadership and teachers' own reports of changes in both attitudes toward school

improvement and altered instructional behavior" (p. 12).

The literature on rural schools and organizational theory are relevant for

understanding the role of the curriculum administrator in small, rural school districts as

this is the person who needs to conceptualize and understand the whole picture rather

than small pieces of the organization. To gain that perspective and impact the learning

environment, the curriculum administrator needs to possess characteristics of an effective

leader as outlined in the balanced leadership framework, work in concert with teams as

suggested in the distributed leadership framework, and be transformational in their work

with others.

Method of Study

To address the impact that curriculum administrators have on the organizational

structure and in facilitating the vision of student learning, this qualitative study will

investigate the perception of administrators, school board members and teacher leaders

included in a sample of six small, rural Pennsylvania school districts: three with and three

without curriculum administrators. Interview questions will focus on the impact the

curriculum administrator has on curriculum development, alignment, and

implementation, as well as its impact on the student learning environment. Upon

completion of the data analysis relative to professional perceptions about the role of the curriculum administrator in the organizational structure of the involved school districts, the researcher will examine data related to student learning, specifically PSSA scores, in both small, rural Pennsylvania districts with and without curriculum administrators.

The sample selection process included identifying all rural Pennsylvania school districts with a student enrollment of less than 1,500 with administrators who were in their present position for at least two school years. Districts were divided into groups with a curriculum administrator and without a curriculum administrator. Qualifying districts were matched according to similar characteristics and selected for the final sample. Data sources included PA Department of Education statistical data, district websites, questionnaire, and verbal interview.

Limitations of the Study

The study may be limited due to several factors. First, it will be difficult to determine if the curriculum administrators included in the sample are truly effective in their roles. Job titles and descriptions may vary greatly from one district to the next. The written survey will attempt to identify commonalities by accepting responses related to specific job roles. Second, validity may be affected if there is not an adequate number of districts willing to participate, and if interviewees are not honest.

Definition of Terms

Administrators- administrators will include those who are responsible for teacher supervision, including superintendent, assistant superintendents, principals, assistant principals, and curriculum administrators.

Balanced leadership- a model which identifies 21 research-based leadership

responsibilities that correlate with student achievement.

Curriculum- the skills and knowledge that students are expected to learn.

Curriculum Administrator- includes persons with titles such as curriculum coordinator,

director of education, and assistant superintendent. This position is administrative; one

who has supervisory responsibilities. Examples of curriculum administrator duties

include:

> Conduct the textbook adoption process, order new textbooks, evaluate
>
> supplementary materials, develop programs of studies, conduct formal
>
> observations of teachers, assist teachers having difficulties, design and conduct
>
> staff development, facilitate teacher attendance at professional conferences,
>
> organize countywide activities, such as art exhibits and science fairs, organize
>
> informational meetings for parents, meet with citizen committees on each
>
> instruction area, analyze achievement data, apply for and manage grant-funded
>
> projects, and complete required state and federal reports. (Grove, 2002, p. 47)

The curriculum administrators included in the study have been employed for at least two

school years in the same school district.

Distributed Leadership- a structure in a school in which administrators rely on many

teachers and other administrators to assist with leadership responsibilities, particularly in

the area of curriculum development for the purpose of this study.

Districts- includes public school districts K-12 in Pennsylvania

PSSA- (Pennsylvania School System of Assessment)- the assessment used by the PA

State Department of Education to determine Adequate Yearly Progress measurements.

The PSSA is currently administered in the areas of reading and mathematics in grades 3-8 and 11.

Rural school districts- defined for the study as districts in Pennsylvania described by the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) to indicate a school's urban, suburban, or rural status, based on its proximity to densely populated areas. NCES has developed eight locale types: Large Central City, Mid-Size Central City, Urban Fringe of Large City, Urban Fringe of Mid-Size City, Large Town, Small Town, Rural: Inside MSA (metropolitan statistical area), Rural: Outside MSA. For this study, school districts considered will include those identified by Standard and Poor's School Matters website as existing in a Small Town, Rural: Inside MSA (metropolitan statistical area), and Rural: Outside MSA.

Small school districts- for the study, include Pennsylvania districts with enrollment of 1,500 students or less.

Student achievement- defined as the percentage of students achieving at the proficient and advanced levels on the PSSA as determined by the Pennsylvania Department of Education.

Teacher leaders- teachers who are identified by administration as formal or informal curriculum leaders, which may or may not include chairs of a department or grade level.

Transformational leadership- the ability to transform others by inspiring, connecting, leading with vision, and creating an environment of trust and lifetime learning.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Introduction

An aligned, focused curriculum is essential for student success. In order to implement a viable and effective curriculum, curriculum leadership is essential in schools. In examining curriculum leadership, the research over the past 25 years has provided insight to the roles and position of the curriculum administrator, yet the effectiveness of employing a curriculum administrator is limited in the literature. The review of literature will focus on the task of curriculum administration, rural schools where resources are limited and curriculum administrators are scarce, organizational theory, and how balanced leadership, distributed leadership, and transformational leadership is linked with student achievement.

The research confirms several leadership factors that contribute to successful schools. Transformational leadership is an effective approach, as well as balanced leadership which endorses 21 specific responsibilities exhibited by effective leaders. The rural school literature tells us that resources are limited. In schools where human resources are scarce, a distributed leadership model, where leadership responsibilities are stretched over several people, may benefit the organization and students. How does a leader, who works in a rural school setting with limited resources, have the ability to possess the 21 leadership responsibilities? This chapter will explore the responsibilities of effective leaders and provide supportive literature on curriculum administrators, transformational leadership, balanced leadership, distributed leadership, organizational

theory, and rural schools in an effort to address curriculum leadership in rural school districts.

<center>Curriculum Administration</center>

The Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development's position on curriculum leadership states, "the essential functions of curriculum development, implementation, and evaluation should be led by professionals with the necessary training and experience" (ASCD, 2007). The areas of administrative personnel, resources, and school reform related to curriculum leadership is an important aspect of leadership which is limited in research. This section will identify the roles and responsibilities of curriculum administrators, relationships with other administrators, and curriculum implementation related to school improvement.

The literature defines the roles of superintendent and principal, but is limited in providing a clear definition of the role of the curriculum administrator in both theory and practice. Studies confirm that much ambiguity exists in the title, position, and related duties due to the numerous roles that curriculum coordinators assume in each district. Wimpleberg (1987) identified the role of the curriculum supervisor to be the least understood and most overlooked of any of the professional roles that exists in schools.

<center>*Roles and Responsibilities of the Curriculum Administrator*</center>

Numerous definitions of curriculum administrators exist in the literature. Studies reveal that the role, job description and title of a curriculum administrator is not based on perceived, performed or defined roles (Bryant, 1984). Researchers recognize that several titles are used to imply a coordinator of the curriculum (Jamar, 1975). Those associated with the position may posses various titles such as curriculum director, director of

<center>20</center>

curriculum and/or instruction, curriculum coordinator, and assistant superintendent for

curriculum and/or instruction (Costa & Guditis, 1984). As the body of literature grows

over the years, the core of the definition remains fairly universal, although not precisely

defined. Pajak (1989) states that the "central office supervisor of curriculum or

instruction is responsible for maintaining and improving the overall quality of the local

school district's instructional program" (p. 2). According to Sabar & Silberstein (1993),

"the curriculum coordinator is a person in charge of consulting with the school staff on

curriculum matters, implementing existing curricula, as well as conducting group efforts

in developing and assessing new curricula" (p. 306). Neff's (1983) study investigated the

everyday activities of three central office curriculum administrators and found that

decision-related activities consumed most of their time.

Lists of related job functions for curriculum administrators are cited throughout

the literature. Plugge (1989, p. 17) compiled the following list:

1. Investigates and researches innovations, materials, and other curriculum
   development projects.

2. Communicates information about projects in order to promote change.

3. Evaluates current curriculum content, materials, and methods.

4. Plans, organizes, and directs in-service programs for staff members.

5. Defines the communities' educational goals, focuses the curriculum on a
   limited set of goals, and provides control over development.

6. Selects instructional and assessment materials necessary to meet educational
   goals.

7. Communicates curriculum information to the school board and citizen groups.

21

8. Promotes curriculum experimentation and local research.

9. Provides for the distribution of curriculum materials and provides assistance in the implementation of new curriculum programs.

10. Provides for resolution of conflicts between personnel and contradictions in instructional programs.

11. Develops the design and organization of the instructional program, articulating the program scope and sequence.

12. Establishes and maintains working relationships with area colleges, universities, state and federal agencies.

13. Develops balance in the curriculum.

14. Prepares budgets for instructional materials and supplies

A variety of other duties not associated with instruction and curriculum are often required of the curriculum administrator. Pajak (1989) found that at times, duties often centered on non-curricular tasks such as working with budgets, district publications, and required governmental reports. Since curriculum positions have various titles, it is difficult to distinguish all other duties associated with each title.

Advantages and Disadvantages of Role

The literature provides advantages and disadvantages to those in the curriculum administrator's role. Gross (1998) identified the opportunity to improve the quality of schools as a sound advantage. Melucci (2003) reported areas of satisfaction include making a positive change in curriculum and teaching, being able to try new ideas, having job flexibility, creating your own work schedule, diversity of work, and forming relationships with principals and teachers. Pajak (1989) outlined areas of satisfaction

which include: opportunity to try new ideas and be creative, job flexibility, autonomy in work schedule, diversity of work, opportunity to develop relationships and observe principals and teachers, and an overall sense of excitement and challenge about one's work. Another advantage is that the position is one of support to teachers and other administrators, not one of power. In Hodges' (2001) study, curriculum administrators were not intimidated or discouraged by school-based management and were enthusiastic about greater decision-making power being held at the school level.

Although there are numerous benefits to the position, there are disadvantages as well, and the job of the curriculum leader is difficult. Plugge (1989) categorized the job role problems of the curriculum director in four areas: job role clarity, inadequate training, lack of authority, and job function overload. Flett and Wallace (2005) identify three dilemmas: autonomy, focus, and acceptance. These concerns are supported in the literature. Gross (1998) found that curriculum administration can be stressful due to long hours and continual accountability, in addition to pressures of paperwork and deadlines overshadowing efforts to improve curriculum. Melucci (2003) claims that directors are dissatisfied with having lack of time, difficult relationships with other administrators, teacher stress in dealing with change, bureaucratic and political restraints, wearing too many hats, lack of recognition, and lack of understanding of the job by others in the district and community. Pajak (1989) noted that the position is invisible to the public eye as others do not fully comprehend the curriculum administrator's role compared with the role of the principal and superintendent. Additional data from Melucci's interviews suggest that, "the position is one of controversy and difficulty… the positions are often loosely defined and so large that it is impossible to please everyone and be everywhere

you are needed" (p. 13). The curriculum directors believe the "positions are valuable, yet they are so large that they become unmanageable causing frustration and disappointment for everyone involved" (Melucci, p. 13). Hodges' (2001) study identifies additional barriers to being an effective curriculum director. The data showed that "respondents agreed that the complexity of the job kept them away from the classrooms, and they spend very little time on curriculum development because of the other duties such as personnel and budgeting that had been added" (p. 127). Pajak reinforced the value and importance of visiting schools regularly as it not only contributes to instructional improvement but will help establish and maintain credibility among teachers and principals.

The most important role for the curriculum director is to be the link between the central office and the schools. The best linkages are formed through an exchange between the central office and principals that both challenge and support each other (Wimpelberg, 1987).

Administrative Team Relationship

In an effective team relationship, the curriculum administrator can function as the glue of the administrative team. This is the person who typically holds a holistic view of the district and community and understands the big picture relating to people, processes, and events (Pajak, 1989). This holistic view is "key to understanding the psychological process by which its supervisors make sense of the diversity of their role. The central office supervisor deals with long term, abstract issues while simultaneously working on immediate and concrete problems" (Pajak, p. 12).

24

Sabar & Silberstein (1993) consider curriculum administrators to be change agents, and the primary link between staff, administrators and projects in the change process. Hodges' (2001) study supports the fact that a good relationship must exist with the administration. This study revealed that:

> Long-term curriculum directors saw themselves as facilitators rather than directors who needed to see the big picture for the school system. They had not been threatened by school based management and were very comfortable with more decisions being made at the school level. (p. 127)

Since curriculum administrators see the district in a holistic manner and are considered change agents, it is critical for them to have a positive relationship with both the principals and the superintendent. The literature related to both relationships will be examined.

In a collaborative and effective working environment, the curriculum administrator and principal should work in concert with one another and not compete against each other. Curriculum administrators cannot do their job without the cooperation of principals, and both administrators must recognize that the principal holds more direct influence and autonomy over what happens in their school. Realistically, the curriculum administrator cannot be as effective without the support of the principal as the principal can be without the curriculum administrator. Principals who are effective at gaining resources to their schools "may lack the time and expertise to fully develop these resources once acquired" (Pajak, 1989, p. 172), requiring a curriculum administrator to step in to implement.

Studies have shown that principals play an important role in the success of the curriculum coordinator, but are not always contributors to the process. Data from one study (Burke, 1991) show that in schools with curriculum administrators, the principal did not play a significant role in curriculum monitoring and innovation.

The interaction between the curriculum administrator and principal is key to successful reform movements. Curriculum administrators are second change facilitators who must engage in a complementary leadership role with the principal. The principal must provide full support and authority to the coordinator (Sabar & Silberstein, 1993).

On the other hand, one of the main problems faced by curriculum coordinators, according to Sabar & Silberstein (1993) can be the relationship between the principal and the curriculum coordinator as both may compete in supervisory roles. In addition, inexperienced coordinators may lack credibility. As perceived by principals, "a lack of building level administrative experience may place the central office supervisor at a slight disadvantage initially" (Pajak, 1989, p. 128). Previous successful experience as a building principal can build credibility.

In order to have a positive relationship resulting in effective outcomes, coordinators and principals must play on the same team. As the literature suggests, the curriculum administrator can supplement the principal's efforts and the easily neglected area of instructional leadership, but cannot entirely compensate for its absence (Pajak, 1989).

The relationship that curriculum administrators have with superintendents must be based on openness and trust. Since superintendents are perceived as relatively weak in the area of curriculum, they depend on the expertise of specialists to direct curriculum and

instruction and consider them essential for district-wide improvement to occur (Glatthorn, 1987).

The literature confirms the importance of keeping the superintendent informed about projects, programs and problems. Superintendents who delegate responsibility, yet stay current and involved with progress, are preferred among curriculum administrators. When a close relationship exists, the success or failure of an initiative is seen as a reflection of each other. In order to be successful, the curriculum administrator must maintain close contact with the superintendent "to ensure consistency and functional interdependence between the internal vision and the external image of the district" (Pajak, 1989, p. 164).

Curriculum administrators are also at times invisible; the impact of their role and the successful outcomes often go unnoticed. Pajak (1989) understands that the curriculum administrator's leadership is aimed at school and district improvement and occurs behind-the-scenes. Because it is not visible, others in more visible positions, such as the superintendent, principals, and teachers, tend to receive the credit and recognition for improvements.

Although disparity continues to exist over the curriculum administrators' title, roles and responsibilities, "there is little confusion about the instructional coordinators chief responsibility: to ensure that educational programs comply with school board and federal, state, and local government regulations" (Dillon, 2001, p. 21).

Curriculum Implementation Related to Improvement of Schools

In this age of accountability, extreme pressure for improving education and student performance is placed upon educators and schools by society and government.

27

Schools are accountable for implementing a quality curriculum. Findings suggest that the "major determinants that influence curriculum improvement are national, state and district standards, needs assessments and teacher recommendations" (Harrop, 1999, p. 149), therefore, it is critical for curriculum improvement to be viewed as a shared responsibility among all stakeholders.

Local school boards also perceive curriculum and instruction to be important. According to Burke's (1991) study, every school board ranked curriculum and instruction as the number one priority area of education in terms of perceived importance, as well as the most important functional area of administration. However, all board of education members indicated that they perceived their involvement in curriculum and instruction to be moderate. Given the support of the school board, curriculum leaders are able to establish the curriculum direction and philosophy of schools, moderate government initiatives, and influence the professional development of teachers toward improvement, thereby having an impact on the teaching and learning process (Flett and Wallace, 2005).

This political pressure has led to a stronger focus on improving curriculum, instruction, and assessment. Russell (1998) determined that "perhaps the biggest shift in focus across the curriculum during the 1990s has been a move away from concentrating on what is taught, and toward an emphasis on what is learned" (p. 34). In an effort to improve curriculum, the curriculum leader needs to work with staff to develop an understanding of "curriculum (the learning agenda), instruction (how we work with learners to understand the agenda), and assessment (how we help learners see their progress in reaching the agenda)" and how they work together (Gross, 1998, p. 5).

The following is an overview of the allocations of curriculum functions at the state, district, school and classroom level (Glatthorn, Carr, & Harris, 2001).

State functions:

1. Develop and evaluate state frameworks, including broad goals, standards, and graduation requirements.

2. Develop state tests and other performance measures in required academic subjects.

3. Provide needed resources to local districts.

District functions:

1. Develop and implement curriculum policies.

2. Provide financial support for curriculum.

3. Develop a curriculum vision.

4. Develop educational goals aligned with state goals.

5. Identify the core program of studies.

6. Develop the documents for a mastery curriculum for each subject, including scope and sequence charts and curriculum guides. A mastery curriculum specifies only those essential outcomes that are likely to be tested.

7. Select instructional materials.

8. Develop local curriculum-based tests and other performance measures.

9. Provide fiscal and technical support.

10. Evaluate the curriculum.

11. Seek community and teacher input into the curriculum.

12. Provide staff development for school administrators.

School functions:

1. Develop the school's vision of a high quality curriculum, building on the district's vision.

2. Supplement the district's educational goals.

3. Develop a program of studies within district guidelines.

4. Develop a learning centered schedule.

5. Determine nature and extent of curriculum integration.

6. Provide staff development for all teachers.

7. Align the written, tested, supported, taught, and learned curricula.

8. Monitor the implementation of the curriculum.

9. Evaluate the curriculum.

Classroom functions:

1. Enrich the curriculum.

2. Develop long-term planning calendars to implement the curriculum.

3. Develop units of study.

4. Individualize the curriculum.

5. Evaluate the curriculum.

6. Implement the curriculum, helping all students achieve mastery.

Silva (2000) outlines three conditions necessary for successful curriculum implementation: develop in collaboration with teachers, focus on teaching and learning, and ensure that curriculum is a dynamic, flexible, and interactive process. She reported that in a study related to this literature, it was found that curriculum leaders must acknowledge and explore the implementation process in ways that are consistent with the

teacher beliefs about their role as instructors, as well as existing teacher beliefs about effective instruction, prior to the implementation process.

Standardization is a key aspect of curriculum renewal. The curriculum administrator needs to ensure that each school implements a consistent curriculum to provide equity across the district. Not only does this ensure consistency, but it provides an advantage for students when they transfer from school to school. Quality is ensured when standardization exists across the curriculum, which contributes to improvement in student achievement. (Glatthorn, Carr, & Harris, 2001).

"School improvement efforts begin with the central office curriculum administrator in their effort to control, coordinate, and influence instructional effectiveness and student achievement" (Wimpleberg, 1988, p. 303). Plans for improvement must be grounded in a strong commitment to improve for full implementation to effectively occur. Wimpleberg concluded that involvement in classroom learning is actually infrequent, but it is necessary for school improvement to occur. Hodges' (2001) study concurs that school improvement was evident when the curriculum director became more of a partner in school level decision-making. A critical yet important job of the curriculum administrator is to ask teachers and administrators to objectively consider if "instructional programs and practices that may have been in place for years are still appropriate and worthwhile" (Pajak, 1989, p. 108).

The literature distinguishes the difference in instructional improvement in small districts compared to large districts. Although most schools are guided by improvement plans and regulations regardless of size, Harrop (1999) found that when approaching curricular changes in small districts, the approaches are less formal. Smaller districts tend

31

to hire external consultants to serve as curriculum administrators when school improvement is needed. Research has concluded that internal coordinators are preferable as they are readily available and have great familiarity with the school as compared to external coordinators. In addition, researchers conclude that "the coordinator's professionalism and ability to work with the school staff may be the factor that determines the success or failure of such changes" (Sabar & Silberstein, 1993, p. 307).

The research has shown that the curriculum administrator's role is integral to effective school improvement efforts. Finn's (1988) study concluded that the role of the curriculum administrator was a critical link in a system that is working toward effective change as that position links best practices with the school system. The study also concluded that an effective curriculum administrator was the most important person to implement instructional change (Finn).

<div align="center">Rural Schools</div>

Small, rural school districts are typically staffed with few administrators. Most districts have one superintendent, one elementary principal, and one high school principal; however, this configuration varies greatly from district to district. In rural school districts, it is unlikely that a curriculum administrator is employed. In fact, administration can be so stretched that it is not uncommon to find an administrator serving the dual role of both superintendent and principal. This section will examine the limited resources in rural school districts, including challenges and shared leadership roles, which explains rural school priorities and rationale for the organizational structure.

Rural schools are unique in that they face challenges unlike those experienced by suburban and urban schools. Studies that focus on rural school improvement consider

their uniqueness. MacNeill (2006) studied a district-wide renewal and communication model and gathered supporting data for the inclusion of the model in rural school reform efforts, particularly supporting the facilitation of learning communities. The model is based on the following:

1. School renewal/reform efforts should be implemented with an awareness of the context of the school district. Renewal efforts in a rural setting should address the unique characteristics of rural schools.

2. The role of the district curriculum director is to provide guidelines for school renewal efforts that reflect a shared vision across the district while maintaining each school's flexibility in adapting those guidelines to the needs of its student population.

3. Effective leadership includes building leadership capacity at all levels of the organization.

4. Effective and clear communication processes are essential to the process of school/district renewal.

5. Identifying and maintaining a district-wide focus for all renewal efforts helps to maintain consistency and continuity of programming across the district.

6. An effective structure of leadership and communication contributes to the growth of a school and district learning community.

Included in the model is the need to address the challenges of rural school districts and provide effective leadership (MacNeill, 2006). It is interesting to note this model assumes that curriculum directors exist in rural schools. The literature is rich in defining the importance of the curriculum administrator and suggests the need for greater

administrative staffing in the rural school district, yet it is very limited on the need for a curriculum administrator in the rural school district setting.

Challenges Facing Rural School Districts

For improvement and renewal to occur, rural school districts must understand and face their unique challenges. Numerous challenges are offered and studied in the literature. Most focus on the many hats that administrators wear. Sansouci (2007) viewed challenges through the lens of superintendents who voluntarily exit their position. The study found that the number one reason for exiting centered on frustrations related to limited district financial resources and the decisions associated with limited resources. The contributing factors include: low tax base, economic depression and poverty, reliance on financial aid outside local funds, insufficient staffing, lack of innovative educational programs, and lack of administrative support staff.

Other research has addressed the many challenges facing administrative personnel. They include working long hours, being overworked, low compensation, and being subjected to downsizing (Hazi, 1998). In addition, school administrators are required to have knowledge of various skills in all content areas (Chalker, 1999). "Secretarial help is often inadequate and a single individual may be responsible for the entire instructional program" (Pajak, 1989, p. 182). When resources are scarce, programs and educational improvement efforts suffer. Rural school districts face other challenges, including lack of structured curriculum development and implementation of change, federal funding and reform problems (Jorgensen, 2006), and enormous pressure related to "increased programs, collaboration, and accountability" (Howley & Pendarvis, 2002, p. 2). In smaller districts, required paperwork for administrators is an enormous demand,

and the "small school system... must file the same number and types of reports as larger districts" (Pajak, p. 182).

Partlow (2004) studied the differences in principal turnover rates in urban, suburban, and rural public elementary schools. She examined the following variables: superintendent turnover rate, building enrollment, student attendance, student mobility, pupil-teacher ratio, teacher attendance, student achievement in reading, and student achievement in mathematics. The findings indicated that the lowest turnover frequency of principals was in suburban schools and the higher turnover frequency was found in urban and rural schools.

<center>*Limited Human Resources*</center>

McLaughlin and Talbert's (2005) study points out that a weak central office limits school reform efforts, yet developing a strong central office is one of the most neglected and challenging areas for rural schools. The literature continuously offers insight into the fact that administrators in rural schools are being used to perform multiple roles. Financial constraints and decreasing enrollments have forced many rural school superintendents to serve dual roles as principals. In many rural states, restructuring has resulted in combining two or all of the roles of superintendent, secondary principal, and elementary principal. Researchers found that when superintendent/principal roles are in place, effective leadership becomes a great challenge (Canales, 2004), administrative candidates are unprepared for the rigors of rural systems, high administrator turnover exists (Lochry, 1998), important professional meetings and workshops become neglected, administrators experience excessive responsibility and stress (Klein, 1988), and salaries are not congruent with the demands of the job (McLaughlin and Talbert, 2003). In

addition, internal and external role conflicts exist among constituent groups (Hesbol 2005). All factors lead to the inability of the superintendent/principal to serve as an effective instructional leader.

The research confirms the inadequacy of the superintendent/principal dual role. Klein (1988) concluded that dual role administrators lacked the necessary time to do all tasks adequately. It was found that for superintendent/principals, the principalship role was most likely to be neglected. There are advantages to the role: those in the position cited increased involvement with students and teachers, greater understanding of needs district-wide, and cost savings as benefits to serving in the dual position (Klein).

Recommendations are suggested in the literature. Hesbol (2005) proposed to eliminate all dual role administration positions or force consolidation. Lochry (1998) suggested that if the role of superintendent/principal must exist, then school boards should provide a job description of the role for clarification of duties. Canales (2004) suggested that administrators must learn to cope with the stress of a dual role in order to survive.

Researchers have examined the principal's role in school leadership and believe there is an impact unique to the rural school principal. Muse (1989) found that rural principals differ from urban principals in that they experience more daily involvement in school activities, leading to greater demands. In many rural school districts, principals serve more than one building. When researchers examined the impact of the building principal on the effective schools process, they found that rural school administrators had an enormous, overwhelming workload, with a focus on maintaining good communication with staff and parents (Chance, 1991). In their study, Browne-Ferrigno & Allen (2006)

identified that rural school principals tend to focus on management concerns and lack instructional leadership. A distributed approach where leadership tasks are shared may compensate for a principal's inability to be an instructional leader. As suggested by Walters & Pickands (2000), schools that share principals should delegate and share accountability and responsibility with staff, students, parents, and the community. It is clear that based on this body of rural school literature, being an effective instructional leader in a rural school is difficult, if not impossible, as there is continuous compensation of duties and roles that are critical to the proper functioning of the school.

Rural districts that do not use the superintendent-principal or multi-building principal models must find other ways to share roles and human resources. Hobbs (1989) suggests that when trying to meet the challenge of implementing new technologies, the most cost effective way is to hire a rural education consultant. Education consultants can focus on instruction, educational technology, policy development, curriculum improvement, research and development, personnel training and professional development, grant development, administration assistance, program evaluation, and communication. Conflicting research states that it is preferable to hire internal coordinators instead of external coordinators as previously noted (Sabar & Silberstein, 1993).

Although effective schools require curriculum coordination, the position of curriculum administrator is lacking in many rural schools. Reports indicate a need for increasing curriculum staff based on the increase in the need to work with specialized programs and the demands of a rapidly changing society. According to Dillon (1998, p. 21), "employment of instructional coordinators is expected to grow in response to

increasing school enrollments, student services, and efforts to improve educational

quality." However, another report claims that nationally, "the number of district-wide

instructional supervisors has slowly but steadily declined" (Costa & Guditus, 1984, p.

84). A decline in the area of curriculum will cause school improvement efforts to suffer.

In rural areas where enrollment is decreasing and poverty is increasing, the number of

administrative staff positions remains a challenge in the wake of increased student

services and the societal demand for improved quality.

<div align="center">Organizational Theory</div>

"Social, political and economical changes have caused changes in organizational

structures. These changes and indefiniteness have increased the importance of efforts in

bringing about learning organizations" (Korkmaz, 2006, p. 523). This chapter previously

noted that curriculum administrators are instrumental in the process of change. As found

in the research (Agullard & Goughnour, 2006), central office staff act as agents of change

in an effort to improve student achievement. The process of implementing change is

complex. Senge (1994) describes five disciplines to consider when implementing change.

This section will focus on the importance of learning organizations and the systems

thinking aspect of improving organizations.

<div align="center">*Organizational Learning*</div>

In recent literature, the term learning organization is defined by many. A learning

organization is "a place where people are continually discovering how they create their

reality. And how they can change it" (Senge 1994, p.13). It is an organization where the

participants understand that their actions are inputs into the system and they create the

problems or outputs of the system (Senge). Vera and Crossam (2004) define a learning

<div align="center">38</div>

organization as the "process of change in thought and action-both individual and shared-embedded in and affected by the institution of the organization" (p. 224). Ellstrom (2003) states that organizational learning is "changes in organizational practices (including routines and procedures, structures, technologies, systems, etc.) that are mediated through the kind of human thought, action, and interaction that is commonly called learning. It is also referred to as knowledge creation, inquiry, or problem-solving" (p. 24). Dibella and Nevis (1998) defined organizational learning as the "capacity or processes within an organization to maintain or improve performances based on experience" (p. 28). All organizations learn, but a learning organization is distinguished from others in the "efficiency and effectiveness of that learning" (Dawson, 2007, p. 20).

The research supports the effectiveness of learning organizations. One study in particular (Korkmaz, 2006) found that opportunities are provided for continuous development and an atmosphere of trust is evident in schools that function as learning organizations. Variables such as "shared leadership, leadership satisfaction, source, teacher leadership and the staffs' feeling valued are effective factors on a school's organizational learning" (Korkmaz, 2006, p. 522). The study also found an important positive connection between leaders who exhibit transformational leadership behaviors and organizational learning.

Open communication and trust from the central office are key to ongoing improvement in a learning organization. "Dialogue among school staff, among central staff, and between the two provides opportunities to reflect and examine the process and the result of actions" (Agullard & Goughnour, 2006, p. 11). Trust must be established and sustained between central office and school staff to maintain open dialogue. Without trust

and open dialogue, the learning organization suffers as individuals do not share ideas, feelings, and concerns. (Agullard & Goughnour).

Disciplines

Senge (1994) offers five management tools, otherwise known as disciplines, used in developing an organization's capabilities.

1. Building shared vision. People want to excel and learn when there is a shared vision.

2. Personal mastery. Individuals need to create what matters the most to them.

3. Mental models. Deeply embedded mental images of how we respond to things we care about.

4. Team learning. Dialogue and learning amongst teams (people who depend on one another to take action)

5. Systems thinking. The ultimate and integration of all; seeing the whole picture rather than breaking things down into parts.

Systems Thinking

"Systems thinking is a particular form of analysis that, rather than breaking a problem down into discrete components, helps people examine the big picture, looking for interrelationships among interactions, causes, and effects" (Kaser, 2006, p. 121). Originally developed in 1956 by Jay Forrester at MIT and inherent through the total quality management movement, the ideas of systems thinking did not become popularized until the 1990's when Peter Senge claimed it as the missing link for organizational effectiveness. It is through Senge's (1994) work on learning organizations and the five unique disciplines that led to the conception of a systems thinking

framework. Although mostly applied to the management, technical and physical science fields, it has potential to influence organizational effectiveness in the social sciences and humanities (Thompson, 2007).

In his landmark book, *The Fifth Discipline*, Senge (1994) applied the principles of systems thinking to understanding individual and organizational behavior. He states:

From a very early age we are taught to break apart problems, to fragment the world. This apparently makes complex tasks and subjects more manageable, but we pay a hidden, enormous price. We can no longer see the consequences of our actions; we lose our intrinsic sense of connection to a larger whole (p. 3).

Senge provides 11 laws related to systems thinking, three of which are most closely related to organizational change (Kaser, 2006):

1. Today's problems come from yesterday's solutions (Senge, p. 57). Usually, solving a problem can often create another. Effective organizations need to understand the whole picture so that solving a problem does not become another problem.

2. Cause and effect are not closely related in time and space (p. 63). In organizations, direct cause and effect relationships are usually difficult to recognize.

3. Small changes can produce big results- but the areas of highest leverage are often the least obvious (p. 63). In thinking about the whole system, effective organizations understand that the most obvious solutions are often the wrong solution.

To summarize the three laws, Kaser (2006) says that often small, insignificant, high-leverage changes can result in significant and lasting improvements. However, these changes are not obvious and not closely connected in time and space to the problem at hand. Senge (1994) recommends that "learning to see the underlying structures, patterns, and assumptions that drives thinking and action in organizations- instead of simply reacting to events- points us in the right direction" (Kaser, p. 122). It is this inability to not be able to see the whole that has "left us unable to see the consequences of our own actions, creating an illusion that we are victims of forces outside our control and that the only type of learning that is possible is learning to react more quickly" (Senge, 1999a, p. 38).

Organizational Structure

An organization, as defined by Owens (1981), is an integrated system of interdependent functions and structures; if one part of the organization changes, the rest is influenced. Mintzberg (1993) visualizes this structure as divided into two parts: division of labor (who does the work) and coordination of work (how the work is accomplished).

Organizations require structure for order and producing the desired outcome. "The structure of an organization can be defined simply as the sum total of the ways in which its labor is divided into distinct tasks and then its coordination is achieved among these tasks" (Mintzberg, 1993, p.2).

There is a relationship between structure and performance (Mintzberg, 1993). In analyzing and improving organizational structures, the following must be considered: design of individual positions, design of the structure and individual fit, design of lateral

linkages between different parts of the organization and design of the decision-making process (Melucci, 2003).

Agullard & Goughnour (2006) emphasize that "achieving success for all students requires a consistent, systemic approach across the district, with all players working in sync" (p.3). This approach to consistency begins with the central office staff, including the superintendent and curriculum administrator, providing a unified direction and agreement on expectations of central office support in school improvement (Agullard & Goughnour). "A central office lacking a systemic, coherent approach cannot give schools the help they need to improve student learning" (Agullard & Goughnour, p. 3). Central office administrators should continuously seek to determine how curricular, instructional, and management decisions align with the direction and goals of the district (Agullard & Goughnour).

Organizational structure and curriculum positively influence school performance and student learning according to the literature. Herman (1998) found that the structure of an organization positively affects student learning. He examined the influences and relationships among student achievement, instruction, and school organization, and found that the organization of a school, through influence on instructional practices, affects student learning, particularly school management structures that balance stability with flexibility. Curriculum also impacts and influences school performance. Atkins' (2005) research revealed that the school organization factors, such as organizational complexity, shared decision making, and leadership behavior, influenced performance. The results of the study indicated that among several variables, curriculum influence was a significant variable in predicting whether or not schools would meet performance goals. Through the

43

process of implementing change and improving schools, Senge's (1994) organizational

structures provide the framework for curriculum leaders to embrace systems thinking and

organizational learning.

<div align="center">Balanced Leadership</div>

Balanced leadership is a framework developed by Waters, Marzano & McNulty

(2003) through the Mid-continent Research for Education and Learning (McREL), based

on the quantitative analysis of 30 years of research and a review of theoretical leadership

literature. This framework provides a point of reference for leaders as it is grounded in

research which suggests that "effective leadership means more than simply knowing what

to do- it's knowing when, how, and why to do it" (Waters et al., 2003, p. 2). Within the

framework, the authors identify 21 leadership responsibilities which directly correlate

with student achievement, as well as the importance of first and second order change. The

leadership framework provides a description of "the knowledge, skills, strategies, and

tools leaders need to positively impact student achievement" (Waters et al., p. 2). This

leadership study is combined with the literature on leadership, including "institutional

theory, systems theory, organizational learning theory, transition theory, change theory,

and diffusion theory" (Waters et al., p. 3).

The authors collected over 5,000 studies conducted over the past 30 years, and

chose 70 for inclusion in the meta-analysis based on established criteria related to design

and rigor. Specifically, the criteria included, "quantitative student achievement data,

student achievement measured on standardized norm referenced tests or some other

objective measure of achievement, student achievement as the dependent variable, and

teacher perceptions of leadership as the independent variable" (Waters et al., 2003, p. 2).

The studies represent approximately 1.1 million students in 2,894 schools. Of the 70 studies that were examined, several (Heck et al., 1990; Krug, 1986; Meek, 1999; Rigell, 1999) cite the importance of the principal's role related to student achievement and specifically emphasize the need for administrators to be involved with curriculum and instructional practices.

In 1986, Krug studied suburban elementary schools to determine the relationship between the instructional management behavior of principals and the relation to student achievement. The results indicated a positive relationship between student achievement and the following variables: teacher ratings of principals and protecting instructional time. The researcher noted that the district in this study held high expectations for principals to exhibit instructional leadership behaviors.

In another study, Heck et al. (1990) examined the frequency of instructional leadership behaviors used by elementary and secondary principals and how principals can influence student achievement. The study concluded that school governance, instructional organization, and school climate were leadership variables associated with affecting student achievement.

In Meek's (1999) study, certain practices conducted by principals were positively and negatively associated with student achievement. Findings indicated that several responsibilities, such as framing school goals, communicating school goals, coordinating the curriculum, monitoring student progress, protecting instructional time and maintaining high visibility were positively associated with student achievement. Supervising and evaluating instruction, promoting professional development, providing incentives for teachers, and providing incentives for learning were negatively associated

with student achievement. Rigell's (1999) study identified a positive relationship between the instructional organization of the school and the achievement of students. Statistically significant negative relationships existed between student achievement and school climate, as well as between student achievement and the influence of school governance.

Walton's (1990) study contrasted with these studies as well as others used in the meta-analysis. Walton analyzed third-grade classrooms in small, rural school districts located in Georgia. She found a relationship between school learning climate and student achievement, which specifically contradicts Rigell's findings. The author did not find a statistically significant relationship between teachers' perceptions of the competencies of their principal and student achievement. In fact, she emphasized how removed principals are from student instruction, and gives credit for student achievement solely to classroom teachers.

By examining and understanding the 70 studies, including those cited above, Marzano, Waters & McNulty (2005) compiled the following 21 leadership responsibilities which positively correlates to student achievement. They developed a list of responsibilities and their correlations with student academic achievement as shown in Figure 1 (p. 42). Although listed in order, the authors stress the importance of every responsibility.

Table 1

The 21 Responsibilities and Their Correlations (r) with Student Academic Achievement

Responsibility in Order of Highest Correlation	The extent to which the principal (administrator)...	Avg. r
Situational awareness	Is aware of the details and undercurrents in the running of the school and uses this information to address current and potential problems	.33
Flexibility	Adapts his or her leadership behaviors to the needs of the current situation and is comfortable with dissent	.28
Discipline	Protects teachers from issues and influences that would detract from their teaching time or focus	.27
Monitors/ Evaluates	Monitors the effectiveness of school practices and their impact on student learning	.27
Outreach	Is an advocate and spokesperson for the school to all stakeholders	.27
Change Agent	Is willing to challenge and challenges the status quo	.25
Culture	Fosters shared beliefs and a sense of community and cooperation	.25
Input	Involves teachers in the design and implementation of important decisions and policies	.25
Knowledge of Curriculum, Instruction, Assessment	Is knowledgeable about current curriculum, instruction, and assessment practices	.25
Order	Establishes a set of standard operating procedures and routines	.25
Resources	Provides teachers with materials and professional development necessary for the successful execution of their jobs	.25
Contingent Rewards	Recognizes and rewards individual accomplishments	.24
Focus	Establishes clear goals and keeps those goals in the forefront of the school's attention	.24
Intellectual Stimulation	Ensures that faculty and staff are aware of the most current theories and practices and makes the discussion of these a regular aspect of the schools culture	.24
Communication	Establishes strong lines of communication with teachers and among students	.23
Ideals/Beliefs	Communicates and operates from strong ideals and beliefs about schooling	.22
Curriculum, Instruction, Assessment	Is directly involved in the design and implementation of curriculum, instruction, and assessment practices	.20

Optimizer	Inspires and leads new and challenging innovations	.20
Visibility	Has quality contact and interactions with teachers and students	.20
Affirmation	Recognizes and celebrate school accomplishments and acknowledges failures	.19
Relationship	Demonstrates an awareness of the personal aspects of teachers and staff	.18

The research suggests that leaders not only have a positive impact on student achievement, but may also have a negative impact. A negative impact on student achievement can occur when leaders do not identify needed changes, or approach the order of change in an incorrect manner.

The balanced leadership literature suggests that leaders need to understand how to implement a change effort. The manner in which leaders respond to change is a factor that contributes to their effectiveness. Change must be implemented while "protecting aspects of culture, values, and norms worth preserving" (Waters et al., 2003, p. 2). Effective leaders know how to align resources with the goals of the organization, and they "create learning environments that support people, connect them with one another, and provide the knowledge, skills, and resources they need to succeed" (Waters et al., p. 2). Balanced leadership occurs when leaders exhibit these skills while implementing change.

There is a range to the extent that change occurs and its impact on staff members, students, and parents. Waters et al. (2003) uses the terms first-order and second-order change to make this distinction. First-order changes are changes that occur within an existing paradigm, are "consistent with existing values and norms, create advantages for individuals or stakeholder groups with similar interests, can be implemented with existing knowledge and resources, and where agreement exists" on the change and

implementation (Waters et al., p. 7). Examples include implementation of new

instructional materials, instructional practices, or new database systems. Second-order

changes occur outside of an existing paradigm, and take place when stakeholders adapt

and understand the positive impact associated with the change. They must learn new

approaches, but in second-order change, the approach may conflict with the values of the

stakeholders (Marzano et al., 2005).

The manner in which change is managed and how stakeholders react to change

can determine if the change will negatively impact student achievement. At times, a

change may be a first-order change for some and a second-order change for others.

Leadership requires identifying how to respond based on individuals' sense of the change

order (Marzano et al., 2005). For example, a new reading series requiring the

implementation of current, best practices has implications for everyone. It may be easily

accepted as a first-order change for some, but not easily accepted for others; therefore, it

becomes a second-order change. In addition, the new reading series may pose itself as a

first-order change for some students and a second-order change for other students.

Parents may be affected at varying degrees, and to some it may be a first-order change

and to others, a second-order change. Leaders need to be aware that change does not have

the same affect for all, and if practices for first-order changes are used when second-order

change practices are required, the result may be a negative impact of student achievement

(Waters et al., 2003).

The authors of the Balanced Leadership Framework provide a scale to show

where the 21 leadership responsibilities fall in the range of first and second order

changes. Balanced leadership reinforces the notion that leaders need to exhibit all responsibility behaviors to be effective.

The remainder of the Balanced Leadership Framework consists of a knowledge taxonomy which can be applied to the leadership responsibilities. The four types of knowledge include: "experiential knowledge -- knowing why this is important; declarative knowledge -- knowing what to do; procedural knowledge -- knowing how to do it; and contextual knowledge -- knowing when to do it" (Waters et al., 2003, p. 13). All four types of knowledge are necessary for leaders to posses in order to lead change. Leaders know what they need to know, how to proceed, and when they need to use various strategies.

Finally, the literature identifies school, teacher, and student practices associated with increased student achievement. These practices, identified by Marzano et al. (2005, p. 82), include the following in rank order:

School-Level Factors

1. Guaranteed and viable curriculum

2. Challenging goals and effective feedback

3. Parent and community involvement

4. Safe and orderly environment

5. Collegiality and professionalism

Teacher-Level Factors

1. Instructional strategies

2. Classroom management

3. Classroom curriculum design

Student-Level Factors

1. Home environment

2. Learned in intelligence/background knowledge

3. Motivation

According to the findings, having a guaranteed and viable curriculum is the first school practice associated with increased student achievement. Therefore, leaders must ensure that a guaranteed and viable curriculum is in place for students to succeed. As the literature suggests in this chapter, principals must spend time engaged in instructional improvement tasks to ensure a guaranteed and viable curriculum. This is difficult when managerial tasks become a priority.

Several studies have been conducted based on the Balanced Leadership Framework since its public release. Gottenberg (2006) explored principals' perceptions of the leadership responsibilities in relation to perceived importance as moderated by teacher maturity level, school type, and leadership profile. Significance was found with teacher maturity level. Minimal significance was found with school type and leadership profile. In another study, Ballinger (2007) examined elementary principals' knowledge and implementation of the following five responsibilities: situational awareness, flexibility, discipline, evaluation, and outreach. All five areas were significantly related between knowledge of the leadership principles and their implementation; however there was no significant relationship between the five responsibilities and student achievement. In fact, the area of flexibility was negatively associated with student achievement.

Schlueter (2007) examined the hiring criteria of principals to determine if districts were hiring based on characteristics of first-order or second-order change in their

candidates. The findings indicate no significant congruence, though elementary positions were twice as likely to seek second-order change criteria in their hiring process than secondary positions. The second-order change responsibilities found to be most common were knowledge of curriculum, instruction, and assessment and monitoring/evaluating.

In conclusion, the Balanced Leadership Framework suggests 21 research-based leadership responsibilities associated with student achievement. The responsibilities are rank ordered according to best practices for the school, teacher and student. They directly relate to implementing change and the importance of leaders to identify first and second order changes. The Balanced Leadership Framework is based on the notion that effective leaders know why something needs to be done, what to do, when to do it, and how to do it. This comprehensive framework uses theory and research to provide practical and useful information for leaders to positively affect student achievement.

Distributed Leadership

Distributed leadership is a conceptual framework based on leadership practice as the "product of the joint interactions of school leaders, followers, and aspects of their situation such as tools and routines" where the leadership function is stretched over multiple leaders (Spillane, 2006, p. 3). The literature claims that it is often confused with other terms such as shared leadership, situational leadership, and teacher leadership. Although similar in context, it differs in approach as "collective interactions among leaders, followers, and their situations that are paramount" (Spillane, p. 4). It is not something done by one person, rather, it is the practice conducted by many individuals who utilize their expertise. By increasing the intellectual capacity of others, distributed leadership has the capability of building capacity within a school (Timperley, 2005).

Three elements are essential in a distributed perspective on leadership. First, leadership practice is the central concern. Second, leadership practice is generated in the interactions of leaders, followers, and their situations. Last, the situation both defines leadership practice and is defined through leadership practice (Spillane, 2006).

The literature focuses on two aspects of distributed leadership: the leader-plus aspect and the practice aspect. The leader-plus aspect relates to how leadership practice is stretched over multiple leaders. The literature highlights a recent study of elementary schools where responsibility for leadership functions were found to be typically distributed across three to seven formally designated leadership positions per school (Spillane, 2006). Positions included roles such as assistant principal, curriculum specialists, reading teachers, mentors, and other teachers who take on leadership responsibilities. The leadership practice aspect focuses on the "interaction of leaders, followers, and their situation, and that the system of interacting practices is more than the sum of the actions of individual leaders" (Spillane, p. 16). The role of follower can fluctuate depending on the leadership activity. Sometimes leaders can find themselves in the follower role and followers may influence leaders in return (Spillane).

Positive school climate conditions must be present for distributed leadership to grow. Arrowsmith (2007, p. 31) identifies five dimensions of the distributed leadership school climate. The first three are preferred conditions which allow distributed leadership to grow. The last two are conditions in which the practice cannot exist.

1. Consult -- staff views are solicited and staff are informed about plans
2. Delegate -- staff are held responsible for areas of responsibility where they have discretion

3. Facilitate -- staff are actively supported in making an impact on the wider school; ideas from the bottom are considered

4. Instruction -- staff are told what to do

5. Neglect -- responsibilities are blurred and staff takes initiative because no one else is interested

Spillane (2006) has analyzed the interactions among leaders and identified three types of distribution that is distributed over multiple leaders. The first type is collaborated distribution, where two or more leaders work together on the same leadership routine. Collective distribution is where two or more leaders work separately but interdependently on the same leadership routine. The third type is coordinated distribution where leaders perform activities in a sequence.

Research indicates many positive benefits of practicing distributed leadership, including improved teacher efficacy, morale, motivation, internal capacity, and student performance. Many studies related to teacher leadership provide evidence of the positive effect of distributed leadership on teachers' self efficacy and levels of morale (Crowther et al., 2000). "Staff perceptions of morale, work load, speed, creativity, quality and values were all significantly and positively correlated" perceptions of the consult, delegate and facilitate dimensions of distributed leadership in schools (Arrowsmith, 2007, p. 33).

School improvement literature indicates that distributed leadership practices assist schools with building internal capacity (Harris, 2005). "Teacher leaders can help other teachers to embrace goals, to understand the changes that are needed to strengthen teaching and learning and to work towards improvement" (Leithwood & Riehl, 2003, p. 3).

Additional research supports the practice of distributed leadership by suggesting that multiple leaders play important roles in leading instructional innovation (Spillane, Halverson & Diamond, 2004). Spillane (2006) explains that leadership is imperative in seven areas: instruction, culture, management, human resources, strategic planning, external development, and micro-politics. His research showed that private school leaders were more likely than public school leaders to distribute responsibility in several leadership areas.

Improved student performance was also related to the practice of distributed leadership. The most recent literature on change and school improvement suggests that the form of leadership most often identified with improved student achievement is leadership that is distributed (Fullan, 2001). According to Silins and Mulford (2002), student outcomes are more likely to improve when leadership is distributed throughout the school, and when teachers take leadership roles in areas of importance to them. Most literature indicates that distributed leadership practices are beneficial to the school community; however, all imply that there is a lack of empirical data on the correlation between distributed leadership and student performance (Arrowsmith, 2007).

Not all of the research is positive. Studies have uncovered the negative effects of using a distributed leadership practice. The literature recognized that distributed leadership does not always work and there are downsides to implementing such a practice. Schools are traditionally hierarchical in nature, and the distributed leadership approach works best in schools where the principal is not the only recognized leader. Schools with "traditional hierarchies with their demarcations of position and pay scale are not going to be instantly responsive to a more fluid and distributed approach to

leadership" (Harris, 2005, p. 260). The structure and hierarchy of leadership within schools can prevent teachers from taking on leadership roles. Difficulties may arise when teachers attain autonomy and assume leadership roles. Because they do not have formal authority, conflicts may arise between groups of teachers, and teacher leaders may become disrespected and disregarded resulting in estrangement among teachers. Unfortunately, sometimes teacher leaders with high acceptability among their colleagues are not necessarily those with valued expertise (Timperly, 2005).

Additional concerns cited by the research considered the teacher's workload. Teachers who were interviewed indicated a concern for the amount of teaching that was occurring when they also needed to be available for school business. The pressure from the workload was another frustrating factor identified by teacher leaders (Oduro, 2004).

In school climates of instruction and neglect, a distributed leadership practice is not effective. Harris's (2005) study found that in one distributed leadership school, there was a perceived lack of direction and many teachers were disillusioned. As a result, students were not inspired, the quality of teaching and learning experiences was questionable, and conflict about roles and misunderstandings amongst the staff existed.

The literature cautions that distributing leadership over more people is a risky business and may result in a greater distribution of incompetence. Timperley (2005) suggests that "increasing the distribution of leadership is only desirable if the quality of the leadership activities contributes to assisting teachers to provide more effective instruction to their students and it is on these qualities that we should focus" (p. 417). Given the recognized downside to implementing the practice, it is important to ensure

that the school's climate is one of consult, delegate, or facilitate, and that distributed leadership is not used as misguided delegation.

Although there may be difficulties with implementing a distributed leadership practice, Spillane (2006) says it can coexist with hierarchical and top-down leadership approaches. To be successful, it is important to have organizational clarity and clear delegation of responsibility (Arrowsmith, 2007). "Schools are not currently structured in ways that facilitate either the growth of leadership or lateral leadership, and leadership is currently locked into management structures" (Hatcher, 2005, p. 255). The school organization must be structured so that tasks and responsibilities can be divided among multiple leaders rather than those in particular organizational roles. "Decisions about who leads and who follows are dictated by the task or problem situation, not necessarily by where one sits on the hierarchy" (Copland, 2004, p. 378).

Spillane (2006) offers suggestions on how leadership responsibilities can be arranged and what a distributed leadership practice looks like in a school. There are at least three arrangements of responsibility: division of labor, co-performance, and parallel performance. In the division of labor arrangement, multiple leaders take responsibility for a particular leadership function, resulting in overlap among positions. Examples include routines such as teacher evaluations and student discipline, which in many cases, involved both the principal and assistant principal. The co-performance arrangement involves collaboration among two or more leaders performing a leadership function. Examples include teacher development, curriculum development, curricular material selection, and school improvement planning. In a parallel performance arrangement,

leaders work on leadership functions in parallel rather than collaboration, which results in redundancy and duplication. This arrangement would be considered the least effective.

Spillane's (2006) study conceptualizes activities that exemplify distributed leadership practice. For example, in most schools in the study, teacher professional development in language arts instruction usually involved the principal, assistant principal, literacy coordinator, a teacher leader, and a consultant or staff person from the district office. Other interesting findings were that two to five leaders perform leadership routines for language arts, two or three in math, and only one or two in science. Of those teams, principals and assistant principals were most likely to be involved in the performance of leadership routines for language arts, less likely in mathematics, and even less likely in science.

Leadership responsibilities can be distributed by design, default, or through emergence. Spillane (2006) outlines all three methods. Distribution of responsibility for leadership can result by design as decided upon by formal and informal leaders. In designing responsibility, three principles are critical. First, the central focus should be on the practice of leadership in efforts to improve school leadership. Second, focus on the interactions rather than actions among leaders and followers. Third, the routines and tools of the situation can be redesigned to improve leadership practice. In Spillane's study, responsibility was distributed by design as new leadership positions were created and job descriptions for existing positions were rewritten. Teachers, including grade level leaders, literacy or reading teacher leaders, mathematics teachers, afterschool program coordinators, and other subject specific teacher leaders, tended to their leadership responsibilities in multiple ways. Some were provided with release time, others taught

full-time and performed their responsibilities on their own time, some received a stipend and others did not. Appointments were made by volunteers or peer voting. Distribution of responsibility for leadership can also result by default when leaders take on responsibilities that evolve over time. This can occur in a trusting working relationship, or may occur when the principal lacks skills in a particular area. Finally, the distribution of leadership can emerge when leaders must work together through a crisis.

In designing leadership practice for schools, one must take into consideration the type of school and the routines within the school. The challenge lies in defining who is involved in the co-performance of routines. The literature continuously suggests that regardless of school size, leading requires multiple leaders, and the principal as one person cannot do it all. "Furthermore, the number of administrative tasks a principal undertakes typically leaves insufficient hours in the day to complete the necessary heroic activities and cope with the more mundane responsibilities" (Timperley, 2005, p. 395).

In Spillane's (2006) distributed leadership study, he found that in larger schools, the number of formally designated leaders over whom responsibility for leadership was distributed was greater. This was due to the fact that larger schools had larger formal leadership teams. Informal leadership teams were not included in this study. The concept of distributed leadership practice as being effective is not reserved solely for the larger schools. Leadership teams need to also exist in smaller schools.

As a result of his work, Spillane (2006) contends that:

Viewing leadership from a distributed perspective means that education policymakers must acknowledge that the work of leading schools involves more than the leadership of the school principal. Other leaders are critical, whether they

59

be formally designated leaders… or teachers who take on leadership responsibilities. (p. 101)

In conclusion, distributed leadership is based on the practice of stretching work over multiple leaders, premised on creating an environment where everyone, regardless of level, is encouraged with the opportunity to act as a leader and where the principal must have the "ability to relinquish one's role as ultimate decision-maker, trusting others to make the right decisions" (MacBeath, 2005, p. 335). Distributed leadership can be used as a tool for reflecting on leadership practice, and thinking about the improvement of leadership practice.

<div align="center">Transformational Leadership</div>

The concept of transformational leadership began with the work of Burns (1978), who distinguished transactional from transformational leadership as opposite theories. Burns (1978) identifies the relationship of the leader and follower:

The transforming leader looks for potential motives in followers, seeks to satisfy higher needs, and engages the full person of the follower. The result of transforming leadership is a relationship of mutual stimulation and elevation that converts followers into leaders and may convert leaders into moral agents (p. 4).

In the transactional leadership relationship, "leaders approach followers with an eye to exchanging one thing for another: jobs for votes, or subsidies for campaign contributions" (Burns, p. 4). The difference between the two lies in the "process by which leaders motivate followers" (Nguni, Sleegers, & Denessen, 2006, p. 147). Transactional leaders motivate workers to provide greater output, which in return, is rewarded. Rewards are tangible and aimed toward achievement of short-term goals. Relationships are based

on compliance as an exchange for rewards. To maintain the status quo, transactional leadership is sufficient, but to implement a process of change, transformational leadership is necessary (Nguni et al., 2006). Purvanova (2006) explains:

> Transformational leaders raise the motivation level of their workers by establishing relationships and helping them understand the deeper meaning and purpose of their work. Leaders provide a shared vision and influence followers by creating meaningful work. (p. 1)

Bass (1990) contends that a leader can be both transactional and transformational, as both theories relate and build on one another. Most leaders exhibit both transformational and transactional behaviors. When both theories co-exist, the transformational leader seeks to increase performance outcomes and heighten the degree to which followers develop their own leadership skills and ability (Bass & Avolio, 1990).

Most current educational literature identifies transformational as the preferred type of leadership compared with transactional. "Transactional leadership is quite effective for short-term goals and with certain subordinates, but in a long-term perspective, transformational leadership is more efficient" (Hautala, 2005, p. 85).

Bass and Avolio (1994) outline ways that transformational leaders can improve relations through individual consideration of their followers:

> 1. They act as role models (idealized influence). They motivate their followers to want to emulate the leader's actions. 2. They communicate timely information to followers and provide continuous follow-up and feedback (inspirational motivation and contingent reward). 3. They align individual member needs to the team's and the organization's goals (inspirational motivation). (p. 75)

Using the work of Burns and Bass, others (Leithwood & Jantzi, 2006; Miller, 2007; Nguni et al., 2006; Purvanova, Bono & Dzieweczynski, 2006; Ross & Gray, 2006) have continued to research transformational leadership in educational settings. According to Bass (1990), transformational leaders are both charismatic and inspirational. Miller (2007) studied the meaning of charismatic leadership in relation to transformational leadership. She found that transformational leadership is not synonymous with charismatic leadership, although a transformational leader may be charismatic in personality. "The influence processes used by charismatic leaders is different from the influence processes used by transforming leaders, which provides evidence of differences in persona" (Miller, p. 189).

In schools led by transformational leaders, teachers reported greater satisfaction with their principal, put forth a greater effort in their work, and were highly focused on improving the organization compared to teachers in other schools (Leithwood, Jantzi, & Stenbach, 1999). Nguni et al. (2006) tested the effects of transformational leadership and transactional leadership on teacher job satisfaction, organizational commitment and organizational citizenship behavior, and reported significant positive effects of transformational leadership styles in all areas. Ross and Gray (2006) tested the effects of transformational leadership on teacher commitment to organizational values, based on foundational research that teacher efficacy results in increased student achievement. They found that "collective teacher efficacy is a powerful mediator of commitment to school-community partnerships" (Ross and Gray, p. 193). It was determined that transformational leadership had a significant impact on teacher efficacy, with teacher commitment to school mission being the strongest outcome. Leithwood and Jantzi (2006)

conducted a study to identify if teacher motivation, capacity, and work setting mediate the effects of transformational leadership on improved teacher practices and student achievement. The evidence indicates that school leadership influences the chance that teachers will improve their classroom practices. They found promise in using transformational approaches to school leadership, and an increase in student achievement is associated with classroom practices promoted, stimulated, and encouraged by leaders (Leithwood and Jantzi).

The effects of transformational leadership have been researched in areas of employee satisfaction and interaction. Purvanova et al. (2006) studied the link between transformational leadership behaviors and "employee's perceptions of their jobs (e.g., significance, meaningfulness, importance of the work) and job perceptions to employee's citizenship performance as rated by their manager" (p. 17). The findings show that in a transformational leadership setting, a positive correlation exists between the manager's behaviors and employees' citizenship performance, between employees' perceptions of their jobs and their manager's ratings of their citizenship performance, and between managers' and employees' perceptions of their jobs (Purvanova et al.). The results support the belief that transformational leaders inspire followers to see their jobs as important, significant, and rewarding (Bass and Avolio, 1990).

The literature provides additional research related to leader/follower interaction. Hautala (2005) studied the impact of employee personality traits on the ratings of their transformational leader. She found that most of the employees in her sample, as well as the leaders, were extroverted, sensing, thinking and judging types. She determined that employee personality type determined their assessment of their leader's transformational

behavior. "The results indicated that the outgoing, extroverts and harmony-appreciating, feeling subordinates regarded their leaders as being more transformational than did introverted and thinking types" (Hautala, p. 84).

The curriculum administrator serves in a "transforming capacity among teachers" (Pajak, 1989, p. 158). In their role as supervisors of instruction, this administrator assists teachers in their development and implementation of curriculum. "Successful central office supervisors… may be viewed as being transforming leaders in their own right" (Pajak, p. 158). Although the literature is limited in relation to effect on student achievement, most research showed a significant benefit for organizations with transformational leadership.

Summary

The literature provides evidence of a positive connection between transformational leadership behaviors and organizational learning (Korkmaz, 2006), as well as between using distributed and balanced leadership practices and student success (Spillane, 2006; Waters, Marzano & McNulty, 2003). In small, rural school districts, one person is typically responsible for carrying out all of the duties associated with effective leadership. As the literature implies, a single person possesses strengths as well as weaknesses within the 21 areas of leadership responsibilities. A principal's strengths and/or areas that require the most immediate attention are typically managerial tasks (Order; Situational Awareness; Discipline; Contingent Awards; Flexibility; Relationship; Affirmation; Outreach; Communication; Visibility and Culture), while the curriculum coordinator's strengths should be in the areas of curriculum, instruction and assessment (Intellectual Stimulation; Monitors/Evaluates; Ideals/Beliefs; Optimizer; Change Agent;

Input; Knowledge of Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment; Implementation of Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment; Focus and Resources). In a rural school district, a curriculum administrator can work with the superintendent and principals as a team in a collective distributed leadership manner. A curriculum administrator who is able to use systems thinking in a holistic manner can promote successful efforts at building learning organizations within the system. In the "education field, leaders can see where the system is connected and leverage those points of influence to enhance student achievement" (Bryan, 2005, p. 28).

In an effort to achieve student success, a guaranteed, viable curriculum is essential. Providing an environment where systems thinking promotes organizational learning through transformational leadership, a distributed leadership model between a curriculum administrator, school principal, and others who may share responsibility, is a research-based positive approach to address the needs of schools in small, rural school districts.

The literature identifies the need for effective curriculum coordination in a school district, regardless of size and scope. This study will detail organizational structure and how curriculum is developed, implemented and evaluated in sample rural Pennsylvania school districts. The following chapter will describe the methodology and data gathering strategies as the researcher compares curriculum coordination efforts in districts with and without a curriculum administrator.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

Introduction

This study is an inductive analysis of the effectiveness of curriculum

administrators in small, rural school districts. The primary purpose of this descriptive

cross-case study is to gain an understanding of the impact of having and not having a

curriculum administrator in rural Pennsylvania school districts.

This chapter describes the research design and methodology used in the study,

including information on the instruments and the selection of participating subjects.

Individual administrators, teacher leaders and school board members, representing two

different district administrative organizational structures, will be interviewed to

determine their perception on the effectiveness of having or not having a curriculum

administrator in their district. Six districts will participate in the study and will include

the following administrative structures: (a) three with a superintendent, secondary

principal, elementary principal, curriculum administrator, and (b) three with a

superintendent, secondary principal, and elementary principal.

This study is relevant for rural school districts because in many small, rural

schools, curriculum administrators who serve to support administrative and teaching staff

with curriculum development, alignment and implementation typically do not exist.

These responsibilities are either conducted by the principal or not at all. Researchers have

shown that numerous responsibilities are required to effectively lead a school, including

knowledge of curriculum, instruction, and assessment (Marzano, Waters & McNulty,

2005). It is impossible for one person to possess strengths in all identified responsibility

areas, thus the need for distributing leadership practices. However, researchers have not focused on the impact of and the need for curriculum administrators in small, rural school districts where the organization of the administrative personnel is typically limited to the positions of superintendent, secondary principal, and elementary principal.

Statement of the Problem

Principals admittedly have difficulty coordinating curriculum, instruction, and assessment due to the high demands placed on them to manage the building and students. Large school districts usually employ a curriculum administrator who is responsible for coordinating curriculum at the district level, thus allowing principals to manage their buildings. However, in small school districts, particularly rural districts, the task of coordinating curriculum is typically assigned to the building principals, teachers or chairpersons of a department.

Research Questions

The research questions formulated for this study are based on the concepts developed through the researcher's review of the literature. There are few rural districts in Pennsylvania that employ a curriculum administrator, yet the research indicates that student achievement is greater in districts that distribute leadership responsibilities and follow a balanced leadership model.

The compelling, overarching question the researcher is seeking to answer is, "Does having a curriculum administrator in a small, rural Pennsylvania district impact the student learning environment?" To answer the question, the researcher will study the connection between curriculum administration and organizational structures that link directly to student learning, particularly the connection between increased student

achievement with balanced leadership responsibilities and distributed leadership models. The following research questions, developed based on supportive literature, will guide the focus of the study:

1. In what ways does a curriculum administrator contribute to the facilitation of the vision of student learning in small, rural Pennsylvania school districts?

2. In what ways do administrators identify with the balanced leadership model in small, rural Pennsylvania school districts with a curriculum administrator and in districts without a curriculum administrator?

3. In what ways is a distributed leadership model practiced in small, rural Pennsylvania school districts with a curriculum administrator and in districts without a curriculum administrator?

4. How are curriculum-related job functions accomplished in small, rural Pennsylvania school districts with a curriculum administrator and in districts without a curriculum administrator?

5. How does the administrative team function in small, rural Pennsylvania school districts with a curriculum administrator and districts without a curriculum administrator?

6. How is the rationale for having or not having a curriculum administrator evident in the perceptions of the administrators, teacher leaders and school board members?

7. How is data provided by adult professionals regarding beliefs about curricular leadership reflected in student performance data on PSSA scores?

Research Design

The aim of case study is to "examine a case bounded in time or place, and look for contextual material about the setting of the case" (Creswell, 1998, p. 40). The researcher will detail the process through methodological triangulation of data collected from administrators, board members and teacher leaders. All three categorical positions should provide insight from three different angles to the organization and function of curriculum alignment, development and implementation. Administrators' perceptions are derived from the root of where the problem exists. The perceptions of teachers are highly connected since they deliver the curriculum. School board members represent public perceptions of the impact on the learning environment, particularly when the district is facing economic challenges and must downsize.

To answer the research questions, the researcher decided to take a qualitative approach and interview educators in the field. A quantitative approach may have been employed, but quantitative data was limited and the researcher felt that using only quantitative data may weaken the study as it would be difficult to distinguish cause and effect variables that relate the presence of a curriculum administrator to student achievement.

Qualitative research methods bring deeper meaning to the specific intent of this study, which is the overall relationship between administrative organizational structure and student achievement. Creswell (1998) recommends using qualitative methodology when searching for the complex, holistic picture. It is necessary when a researcher needs to explore a topic and "study individuals in their natural setting" (Creswell, p. 17). By

interviewing administrators through questionnaires and interviews, the researcher will listen and record stories to gain an understanding of the setting and participants.

Participants in the sample will be categorized as those who work in a district with a curriculum administrator and those who work without a curriculum administrator. Questions will be asked to administrators, teacher leaders and board members. In addition to open-ended questions, checklists will be used during the interview. The purpose is to provide background information for the researcher in the areas of job functions related to curriculum administration and distribution of leadership responsibilities (Appendix A). Follow-up telephone calls will conclude the interview process.

The interview questions will assist the researcher in determining participants' perceptions on the effectiveness of their administrative organizational structure as it relates to the area of curriculum administration. The information gathered from the interviews will allow the researcher to draw conclusions regarding whether or not there is an impact on student learning environment when districts employ curriculum administrators. After the interview process, the researcher will collect Pennsylvania State System of Assessment (PSSA) data and report the findings in the study.

Research Site and Participants

The researcher developed the database for research site selection through purposeful sampling, which is a selection strategy "in which particular settings, persons, or activities are selected deliberately" (Maxwell, 2005, p. 88). The Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE) website was used as a statistical resource to build a database of information for the population. The process of determining the population began with a database of all 501 Pennsylvania school districts. Student enrollment

information, provided by the *Department of Education Public School Enrollments by LEA, 2006-2007* database, was added. Pennsylvania districts with enrollment of less than 1,500 students were identified, narrowing the population. Using the *NCES Common Core of Data, Local Education Agency Locale Code File: School Year 2005-06,* the researcher identified for each district the urban-centric locale code, which is a measure of a district's location in relation to populous areas. The population for the study was further narrowed to districts with an urban-centric locale code of 41, 42, and 43 (Appendix B). The population for the study consisted of 90 districts.

After building the database to determine the population that met the initial criteria, additional information was researched to determine the appropriate sample. To identify the administrative configuration for each district in the population, the researcher utilized the PDE website which provides links to district websites. By searching each district site, the researcher was able to determine the administrative configuration as well as contact information. The positions that were identified included the following: superintendent, acting superintendent, assistant (or assistant to the) superintendent, secondary principal, assistant secondary principal, middle school principal, assistant middle school principal, elementary principal, assistant elementary principal, and curriculum administrator. Positions with titles associated with curriculum administration include assistant superintendent, director of education, curriculum director, and director of curriculum and instruction. The researcher did not include information regarding administrative personnel related to special education, human resources, or athletics.

The researcher finalized the database by personally contacting all remaining districts to confirm the data related to administrative personnel and identified the number

of years that each administrator served in their present position. Those districts with subjects who had served for less than two school years in the identified position within the district were eliminated.

Additional eliminations occurred as needed due to researcher bias. The researcher carefully reviewed and did not consider districts and/or administrators where a strong collegial relationship existed.

Superintendents in the remaining qualifying districts were contacted in an effort to seek approval for participation in the study. Those that indicated a willingness to participate were cross-checked for similarity based on demographics using the following data found through the PDE statistical online archives: location, population, market value/personal income (MV/PI) aid ratio, personal income per WADM (Weighted Average Daily Membership), percent of student population receiving free/reduced lunch services, and number of school buildings in the district. Final eliminations based on proximity and willingness to participate concluded the process.

In participating districts, superintendents were asked to identify a teacher leader, as well as a school board member who may be willing to participate and is currently involved on a curriculum committee or has a basic understanding of curriculum changes. Site visits were coordinated through superintendents.

This study required IRB approval. In seeking approval, the researcher applied through Indiana University of Pennsylvania in the late spring of 2009. Participating administrators were asked to sign an agreement to participate in the study. The agreement stated that all information is confidential and that personal information, as well as district-identifying information, will not be disclosed or identified in the dissertation.

Instrument

The research instruments included interview questions, checklists and telephone calls. Instruments were developed by the researcher based on the review of literature; the framework for rural schools, transformational leadership, organizational theory, balanced leadership and distributed leadership. The researcher analyzed the research questions and developed corresponding questions to ask participants. A reciprocal approach was used to determine the value of each question by matching interview questions with each research question.

Checklists were designed to gather information about the role of the administration as it relates to curriculum-related job functions and leadership responsibilities (Appendix A). After getting acquainted and establishing rapport during the interview, the researcher sought input based on a list compiled by Plugge (1989, p. 17) of related job functions for curriculum administrators. Participants were asked to discuss each of 14 job functions and indicate the one person in the district who is responsible for each function. Each response was recorded, analyzed, and the percent of agreement amongst administrators in each district was calculated. The second part of the checklist included the list of 21 leadership responsibilities developed by Marzano et al. (2005). A list of each responsibility and corresponding definition was provided. All participants were asked to self-reflect and identify their eight strongest areas of leadership responsibility as it relates to their current position.

The verbal interview questions were designed so each question may be answered by subjects in districts with a curriculum administrator and without a curriculum administrator. The format consisted of semi-structured, open-ended questions and was

completed by every person participating in the study. Subjects were encouraged to elaborate and contribute information beyond the basic intent of the question, which helped lead participants to venture into unplanned, spontaneous discussion. The researcher interviewed participants in person, asking the following focus questions to begin dialogue:

1. Describe your educational background and experiences related to this position. What certifications and/or degrees do you have?

2. (a) Describe the organizational structure of administration in this district.

   (b) How do administrators and faculty coordinate and evaluate the curriculum programs in this district?

3. Describe how administrative responsibilities are shared across the administrative team. (exclude for teacher)

4. Describe your major strengths as an administrator. (administrators only- use checklists)

5. (a) Describe your typical administrative meeting as it relates to curriculum decisions.

   (b) How often do you meet?

   (c) How comfortable are you with sharing information and being open and honest in administrative meetings? (administrators only)

6. Describe who is responsible for initiating a curriculum change within the district.

7. Describe your position regarding curriculum change, implementation, and evaluation.

8. Describe the beliefs that guide the curriculum.

9. Describe what indicators you use to determine the strength of your curriculum programs.

10. (a) Describe how curriculum change, evaluation, etc. are communicated among the central office and faculty?

    (b) With school board?

11. How does the district define the vision of student learning?

12. (a) How would the district's academic program change if the district did not have a curriculum administrator? (Asked in districts with)

    (b) How would the district's academic program change if a curriculum administrator were hired? (Asked in districts without)

13. What are the advantages and disadvantages of:

    (a) full-time versus part-time curriculum administrator?

    (b) an administrator versus teacher in the position?

14. (a) How financially valuable is the curriculum administrator position for the district? (Asked in districts with)

    (b) How financially valuable would a curriculum administrator position be for the district? (Asked in districts without)

The researcher visited each district and interviewed selected administrators, teacher leaders, and school board members. Individual interviews were conducted throughout the day or over a period of several days per district. Within a few weeks, follow-up telephone calls were placed if clarification or additional information was necessary to help the researcher find a theme and make connections.

Research Questions and Instrument Alignment

The interview questions provided the researcher with information to answer the research questions. Few questions required a slightly different version of the base question for participants in districts with curriculum administrators and without curriculum administrators. The matrix in Table 1 outlines the alignment of research questions for the study; interview questions targeted specifically for districts without curriculum administrators, interview questions targeted for districts with curriculum administrators, and research instruments.

Table 2

Research Questions and Instrument Alignment

Research Questions	Interview Questions: Districts with Curriculum Administrators	Districts without Curriculum Administrators	Research Instrument
1. In what ways does a curriculum administrator contribute to the facilitation of the vision of student learning in small, rural Pennsylvania school districts?	Questions 2b, 3, 5a, b, c, 6, 7, 8, 9 10a, b, 11,12a	Questions 2b, 3, 5a, b, c, 6, 7, 8, 9 10a, b,11, 12b	Interview Checklists
2. In what ways do administrators identify with the balanced leadership model in small, rural Pennsylvania school districts with a curriculum administrator and in districts without a curriculum administrator?	4	4	Interview Checklists
3. In what ways is a distributed leadership model practiced in small, rural Pennsylvania school districts with a curriculum administrator and in districts without a curriculum administrator?	2a, 3, 4, 5c, 6, 12a, 14a	2a, 3, 4, 5c, 6, 12b, 14b	Interview Checklists
4. How are curriculum-related job functions accomplished in small, rural Pennsylvania school districts with a curriculum administrator and in districts without a curriculum administrator?	2b, 6, 10a, 10b, 12a, 13a, 13b	2b, 6, 10a, 10b,12b, 13a, 13b	Interview Checklists
5. How does the administrative team function in small, rural Pennsylvania school districts with a curriculum administrator and districts without a curriculum administrator?	1, 2b, 3, 5a, 5b, 5c,12a	1, 2b, 3, 5a, 5b, 5c,12b	Interview Checklists
6. How is the rationale for having or not having a curriculum administrator evident in the perceptions of the administrators, teacher leaders and school board members?	12a, 8, 9	12b, 8, 9	Interview Checklists
7. How is data provided by adult professionals regarding beliefs about curricular leadership reflected in student performance data on PSSA scores?	7	7	Interview Checklists PSSA Data

Validity and Reliability

To validate the instruments, both the checklists and interview questions were submitted to a panel of experts then piloted in two districts. The panel consisted of five individuals representing a cross-section of the study sample that reviewed the instruments and responded in person with suggestions. Revisions to the instruments were made based on the collective input from the panel. The pilot study was conducted in two districts not included in the actual study: (a) one district with administrators representing the roles of superintendent, secondary principal, elementary principal, and curriculum administrator, and (b) another district with only a superintendent, secondary principal, and elementary principal. The pilot study participants were asked to critically evaluate the instruments and provide input to strengthen the study.

Through the process of focusing and revising, the researcher addressed validity threats that were evident (Maxwell, 2005). The influence of reactivity may exist when interviewing if "the researcher is part of the world" he or she studies (Maxwell, p 109). The researcher recognized that because the position of curriculum administrator is a familiar administrative role, bias may be present during sample selection and interviewing. The researcher attempted to rule out validity threats by avoiding reactivity through recognition of existing biases and maintaining objectivity when choosing sample districts and interview questions.

The following are concerns that impact validity: having an adequate number of participating districts, honesty of individuals being interviewed, and whether or not participant perceptions are reality. The researcher will perform member checks by

following up with participants to confirm perceptions and leads. This will confirm that the researcher's interpretation of information is factual and valid (Maxwell, 2005).

To increase reliability, responses from the checklists will be compared within districts to determine the degree of participant agreement. When administrators agree amongst themselves on the curriculum-related job function questions (66-100%), there should be an increased reliability in their answers to their verbal interview questions. A lower percentage of agreement (0-65%) will result in lower reliability of responses to the interview questions. The responses to the leadership responsibility questionnaire will parallel the answers to the verbal interview questions. For example, the reliability of the interview question responses should be greater among districts where curriculum administrators are strong in the areas of: (a) curriculum, instruction, and assessment, and (b) knowledge of curriculum, instruction, and assessment.

Pilot Procedures

In the spring of 2009, the researcher submitted the request for IRB pilot study approval. Upon receiving approval, expert panel participants were determined based upon the information in the database created for the sample selection. The expert panel included a principal, curriculum administrator and teacher from a qualifying district with a curriculum administrator; and a superintendent and teacher from a qualifying district without a curriculum administrator. The panel was divided into curriculum administrator and non-curriculum administrator districts. They met with the researcher in a convenient, informal, work-related environment. Panel participants received an overview of the study, read the questions, and provided verbal direction and input to strengthen the validity and value of the instrument questions.

The pilot study was then conducted with participants in two districts during the spring of 2009. Participants in Pilot #1 included the superintendent, elementary principal, curriculum administrator, and school board member. Participants in Pilot #2 included the secondary principal and teacher leader. Each interview lasted 40-60 minutes and were held on-site. Checklists were completed independently by the subjects and open-ended interview questions were asked by the researcher. Upon completion of interviews, the researcher debriefed with the subject and reflected upon the questions and procedures. Each subject was contacted within a few days for further reflection and examination of the process. Interview questions and procedures were refined and finalized based on the input gathered from all pilot participants.

The first pilot study was conducted at a school district that was selected from the population with a curriculum administrator. It is located in Western Pennsylvania, approximately 70 miles north of Pittsburgh. The district's enrollment is 1,231 students K-12, and serves a population of 48.6 persons per square mile. The personal income per WADM (Weighted Average Daily Membership) is $68,664, market value/personal income aid ratio is .7299. Thirty-five percent of the student population receives free/reduced lunch services. The district has four buildings: one junior-senior high school (grades 7-12) and three elementary schools (grades K-6). The district's administrative team includes a superintendent, secondary principal, elementary principal, and curriculum administrator (director of education).

The second pilot study site was selected from the population and is similar to the comparative district, excluding the presence of a curriculum administrator. The district is located in Western Pennsylvania, approximately 90 miles north of Pittsburgh. Student

enrollment is 1,193 and serves a population of 61.5 persons per square mile. The personal income per WADM is $76,451, market value/personal income aid ratio is .6912. Thirty-eight percent of the student population receives free/reduced lunch services. The district has two buildings: one junior-senior high school and one elementary school. The administrative team includes a superintendent, secondary principal and elementary principal.

<center>Pilot Results and Analysis of Data</center>

Due to the qualitative nature of this study, the majority of the data for the final study will be presented in narrative format. A constant-comparative method will be used in which there is a process of "ongoing comparison of the data with the researcher's emerging theory" (Slavin 2007, p. 145). All interviews were compiled using anecdotal notes related to the observation process, non-verbal communication, and surroundings.

As a result of the pilot study, changes were made to the interview questions based on input from each subject. Interview question #11 elicited various ways subjects approached their response and was edited to provide clarity, focus and understanding. Questions #13 and #14 were added based on dialogue with a superintendent, who felt that by examining the structure of the curriculum position as well as the financial factors, the researcher would gain greater insight. In addition, the input provided by pilot subjects assisted the researcher with refining the term "teacher leader" to include any teacher recognized by the administration as leaders of curriculum; not a leader chosen based on title alone, such as "department chairperson." The use of each checklist was discussed with each participant, and it was unanimously agreed upon that both checklists prepared the mind in anticipation for the interview questions.

<center>81</center>

The purpose of the checklists was for the researcher to develop a deeper understanding of the setting and environment in each district. The job-related function list and rating of leadership responsibilities constitute statistical information that was easily interpreted through percentage calculations and surface-level analysis. For each question, the subject identified an answer. A percentage of agreement on each question was calculated and reported. This provided insight to the perception of who is responsible for curriculum-related job functions and whether or not there was consistency among answers. The results of leadership responsibilities across the administrative team were summarized. The eight areas of strengths for individual administrators were identified and compared within districts. The researcher examined the data to determine the extent to which leadership responsibilities were shared among the administrators in each district.

Analysis of data occurred simultaneously after each set of interviews. During the analysis process, the researcher developed a coding system for pulling apart information and analyzing the codes to develop overall themes or strands in relation to the research questions (Stake, 1995, p. 75). Similarities and differences were identified and synthesized in an attempt to answer the questions using a constant-comparative method. Statements from the subjects supported by the transcripts that provide clear insight related to the research questions were analyzed and directly quoted in the next chapter.

Summary

The insight gained by the researcher can only be accomplished through an in-depth, qualitative study. Using checklists and interview questionnaires as instruments, the researcher was able to gather an array of information to further analyze in order to answer

the questions posed by the researcher. The next chapter will discuss the results of the study and what the data revealed.

CHAPTER IV

ANALYSIS OF DATA

Introduction

This qualitative descriptive cross-case study examined the development,

implementation and evaluation of curriculum in relation to organizational structure and

the impact on the student learning environment in small, rural Pennsylvania school

districts with and without curriculum administrators. Small school districts, particularly

in rural Pennsylvania, typically do not have district-level curriculum administrators. In

these districts, the function of curriculum coordination is designated to either the building

principals, teachers, no one, or outsourced. The researcher visited six small, rural school

districts across Pennsylvania: three districts without and three with a curriculum

administrator. Participants in each district were interviewed, which included

superintendent, secondary principal, elementary principal, teacher leader, school board

member, and curriculum administrator. Teacher leaders and school board members were

chosen by the superintendent. Follow-up questions were asked of each subject, as needed.

Qualitative data from in-depth interviews and checklists were collected from 33 subjects

in order to answer the following research questions.

1. In what ways does a curriculum administrator contribute to the facilitation of

   the vision of student learning in small, rural Pennsylvania school districts?

2. In what ways do administrators identify with the balanced leadership model in

   small, rural Pennsylvania school districts with a curriculum administrator and

   in districts without a curriculum administrator?

3. In what ways is a distributed leadership model practiced in small, rural

Pennsylvania school districts with a curriculum administrator and in districts without a curriculum administrator?

4. How are curriculum-related job functions accomplished in small, rural Pennsylvania school districts with a curriculum administrator and in districts without a curriculum administrator?

5. How does the administrative team function in small, rural Pennsylvania school districts with a curriculum administrator and districts without a curriculum administrator?

6. How is the rationale for having or not having a curriculum administrator evident in the perceptions of the administrators, teacher leaders and school board members?

7. How is data provided by adult professionals regarding beliefs about curricular leadership reflected in student performance data on PSSA scores?

This chapter will provide an analysis of the qualitative data collected through the interviews and quantitative state assessment data for each district.

Review of the Interview Process, Data Collection, and Analysis

Interviews were conducted over a three-month period of time. Subject participation consent was obtained prior to each interview, and interview dates and locations were arranged either through the superintendent or individually (Appendix C). Interview questions focused on organizational structure, curriculum development, alignment, and implementation, as well as the student learning environment. Each interview lasted approximately one hour, and follow up questions were asked at a later date as needed. All participants contributed through discussion focused around the intent

of the research questions. Interviews were recorded, transcribed and coded. Throughout the process of analyzing the transcriptions, apparent themes within the framework of the study were discovered. Transcripts were refined and organized electronically into various matrices so the researcher could view responses across similar job titles as well as within school districts. Responses were color-coded based on word repetitions and key terms. The researcher continuously reverted to the original recordings of the transcripts to verify the context of the written text. Themes and patterns began to emerge and were further analyzed within each question. Qualitative data was refined and quantified, when possible, according to the number of participants who responded. Each set of data were further examined as it was applied to the corresponding framework.

In addition to examining the perceptions of curriculum coordination and organizational structure in each district, the researcher also obtained district data related to student learning, specifically PSSA scores. Data were additionally analyzed through the established theoretical framework: curriculum functions, balanced leadership and distributed leadership models.

<div align="center">Demographics</div>

Pennsylvania has 500 school districts. Of those, 89 are currently classified as small, rural school districts with an enrollment of less than 1,500 students and metro-centric locale code of 6 or 7. The researcher found that only 20 of the 89 school districts had a curriculum administrator-type of position. This study involved three of the 20 qualifying districts with a curriculum administrator, and three of the remaining 69 qualifying districts without a curriculum administrator. All districts in the sample were located in the northern, central, and southwestern section of Pennsylvania. Although

student enrollment, aid ratio, building configurations and education levels vary slightly from district to district, they are distinctly similar.

Demographics of Districts without a Curriculum Administrator

The total student enrollment for each district without a curriculum administrator was 668, 867, and 659. The aid ratio for each district was .76, .70, and .59 respectively. All had one junior-senior high school (grades 7-12), two districts had one elementary school (grades K-6), and one district had two elementary schools (grades K-3 and 4-6). All districts had a superintendent, secondary principal, and elementary principal. There was an assistant principal in one district.

In all three districts, superintendents' highest level of certification was a superintendent's letter of eligibility; all had master degrees and none had doctorate degrees. One superintendent had previous experience as a curriculum director prior to becoming a superintendent. All but one secondary principal had a master degree. One had a curriculum and instruction degree, and no one had a superintendent's letter of eligibility or a doctorate degree. All elementary principals had a master degree, one had a superintendent's letter of eligibility, and no one had a doctorate degree. Of the teacher leaders interviewed in districts without a curriculum administrator, the highest level of education was master degree for two and bachelor degree for one. All three school board members have some higher education: one had a bachelor degree in education, another had bachelor and master degrees, and the third had an associate degree.

Demographics of Districts with a Curriculum Administrator

Student enrollment in the three districts with a curriculum administrator was 1,190, 1,258, and 966, with an aid ratio of .71, .62, and .70 respectively. In every district,

there was one junior-senior high school (grades 7-12). Two districts had one elementary school (grades K-6), and one district had three elementary schools (grades K-6, K-5 and K-5). All districts had a superintendent, secondary principal, and elementary principal. One district had an assistant secondary principal and an assistant elementary principal. The other two districts did not have assistant principals. All districts had a curriculum administrator. Position titles included: Director of Curriculum, Supervisor of Curriculum and Instruction & Federal Programs/Elementary Principal, and Principal of Curriculum, Federal and Special Programs. In one district, the curriculum administrator served as elementary principal in one small building (<60 students), and in addition to the curriculum administrator, district-wide instructional math and reading coaches were employed.

Superintendents in districts with a curriculum administrator all had master degrees, and two had doctorate degrees. All secondary principals did not have a master degree, doctorate degree or superintendent's letter of eligibility. One had a curriculum and instruction degree. All elementary principals had a master degree and superintendent's letter of eligibility, but no doctorate degree. One elementary principal had a curriculum and instruction degree. All curriculum administrators had a principal's certification, two had a master degree, with one in the area of curriculum and instruction, and none had their doctorate degree. The highest level of education for all teacher leaders was master degree. School board members were all educators: three had a bachelor degree and one had a principal's certification and superintendent's letter of eligibility.

Reliability and Validity

The reliability and validity of the study remain strong. In all districts, team members were willing participants, and appeared to be honest in their responses, thereby increasing validity. Confidentiality issues were discussed, and subjects had the option of reading their transcripts and understanding what will be published. Reliability was ensured as participants generally agreed amongst the team on the curriculum-related job function checklist. The researcher found three areas of possible reliability and validity threats.

Reliability may be affected. While respondents were completing the curriculum function checklist, the interviewer observed that in all three districts with a curriculum administrator, at least one respondent in each district had difficulty identifying only one person responsible for each job. Several participants revealed that they were going to identify multiple positions for each job function, even though the purpose was to identify one. During the pilot phase, neither the panel of experts nor pilot participants indicated that they struggled with choosing only one responsibility, so this came as a surprise to the researcher. When the data was compiled, the researcher had to strike out multiple answers that were not consistent with the other respondents. This may have contributed to possible analysis error because the researcher did not know which answer was most valuable to the responder.

A validity threat may exist with the completion of the balanced leadership checklist. This checklist was not difficult for interviewees to complete, and most responders indicated verbally that they had difficulty limiting their responses to only eight areas of strength. The directive to only choose eight areas may have been a flaw in

the design. When there is a possibility of 21 leadership responsibilities and only three people completing it, the most that can be covered without any overlap at all is 24. In districts with four administrators on the team, the answers may distribute more easily as there is a possibility of 32 possible responses with 21 choices.

Validity became an issue when the researcher was analyzing the balanced leadership checklist. The researcher's purpose was to analyze whether or not balanced leadership responsibilities are shared across the administrative team. When the curriculum administrator is included, the comparison number was four administrators in districts with, and three administrators in districts without. This seemed uneven, so the researcher decided to provide one column of data showing responses by superintendents and principals only, and another column of data which included the curriculum administrators' responses for analysis. Validity should increase with the presentation of all three scenarios.

<center>Summary of Responses to Checklists and In-Depth Interviews</center>

The researcher framed the interview questions around organizational and curriculum related frameworks, including curriculum functions, balanced leadership and distributed leadership. Responses to checklists and in-depth interviews provided information about leadership and curriculum practices for the researcher to understand the existence of these frameworks in school districts with and without curriculum administrators.

<center>*Curriculum Job Functions*</center>

In order for the researcher to develop an understanding of how curriculum job-related functions were accomplished, Plugge's (1989) job function framework (Appendix

<center>90</center>

A) was used as an instrument during the interview stage. The questions in the framework provided insight to the procedural aspects of curriculum development within each district.

Each participant was asked to identify only one person within the school district who is primarily responsible for each area of curriculum administration as identified through the job function framework. The interviewer observed that in some curriculum administrator districts, respondents had difficulty identifying only one person responsible for each job. Several participants expressed the need to identify multiple positions for each job function, even though the purpose was to identify one.

Individual responses were charted and agreement within a district was calculated. For example, of a possible six subjects, if all six agreed that principals were responsible for job function number one, it was recorded as 100% agreement; if one subject thought the superintendent rather than principals were responsible for the function, then it was recorded as 83% agreement (5 out of 6 agreed). This calculation was used for each function in every district. In cases where a subject identified multiple people for one function, the researcher deleted the selection that least resembled the answers of other subjects. The following is an outline of how respondents viewed the distribution of curriculum functions.

Table 3

Results of Job Functions: Percent Agreement within District among Participants

in Districts without Curriculum Administrators

Job Function	District A	District B	District C
1	100%	40%	60%
2	40%	80%	80%
3	80%	80%	60%
4	100%	80%	100%
5	80%	60%	60%
6	80%	60%	60%
7	80%	100%	60%
8	80%	40%	40%
9	80%	60%	80%
10	60%	100%	80%
11	80%	80%	60%
12	80%	100%	80%
13	100%	60%	60%
14	80%	80%	80%
Avg.	80%	73%	69%

Table 4

Results of Job Functions: Percent Agreement within District among Participants

in Districts with Curriculum Administrators

Job Function	District D	District E	District F
1	100%	66%	66%
2	83%	66%	50%
3	83%	66%	50%
4	100%	66%	83%
5	50%	83%	50%
6	66%	66%	66%
7	100%	83%	50%
8	100%	83%	50%
9	100%	83%	100%
10	66%	83%	83%
11	66%	100%	83%
12	83%	66%	50%
13	100%	66%	50%
14	66%	83%	83%
Avg.	83%	76%	65%

The last row indicates the average agreement for all functions within a district. The highest level of inter-district agreement, from greatest to least, was District D with 83%, followed by District A, 80%; District E, 76%; District B, 73%; District C, 69%; and District F, 65%.

In districts without curriculum coordinators (ABC Districts), two out of three districts has a greater percentage (>65%) of agreement amongst district participants regarding who is responsible for curriculum-related job functions.

In districts with curriculum coordinators (DEF Districts), all three districts have an equal or greater percentage (>65%) of agreement amongst district participants regarding who is responsible for curriculum-related job functions.

Interview Question 3a:

In reference to the curriculum job function checklist, describe how administrative responsibilities are shared across the administrative team.

In districts without a curriculum administrator, the following statements were

made in addition to the completion of the checklist.

Secondary Principal:

> In any position that you're in, there's certain jobs you give to certain people, because they're a lot better at it. And when you're a small district like we are, that becomes an issue because it's pretty much a secondary issue, or pretty much an elementary issue, and if that person's not good at that, well now you have a hole that really can't be filled. I guess the Superintendent has to be the best at everything because he or she covers that area. But I think for the most part… we're not lacking in any of those. If you're definitely weak in one of those areas, that's going to be a problem, and there's no one there to bring it all together.

Elementary Principal:

> There is what I believe, an imbalance of responsibilities as far as the areas of administration. As far as the other administrative responsibilities, the secondary and the elementary principals both do our professional development plans. Mine is based on best practice and the deficits that we have shown that we need remediation with our teachers as far as math and reading. And the high school principal does his own… I'm not sure what guidelines he uses to develop that plan.

School Board Members:

> I see a lot of responsibilities in curriculum shared between the principal and the superintendent and the discussions they have… it's a lot of discussion and cooperation between those people and then it's presented to the board.

> I think they're picking up other duties such as transportation, athletics, maybe the economically disadvantaged or something like that. I think being so small, they have to pick up some of the other duties.

In districts with a curriculum administrator, the following statements were

made in addition to the completion of the checklist.

Superintendents:

> Because we're a small district, we give other duties to other administrators… elementary also does transportation. We all wear multiple hats. The nice thing is though, that we can communicate with each other.

Balanced Leadership

Research shows that student achievement is correlated to Marzano's leadership responsibilities (2005). This balanced leadership framework, which is described in detail in chapter two of this study, was utilized by the researcher to analyze the strengths of each administrative team within the study. Of the 21 leadership responsibilities, the job of superintendent, principal, and curriculum administrator require an emphasis in areas that are unlike each other as well as areas that overlap. Ideally, in order to have a balanced leadership team, each member of an administrative team should exhibit strengths across all 21 areas rather than excessive overlapping.

Administrators were asked to identify eight areas of strength related to leadership responsibility. While most administrators felt that they had more than eight to offer, few had difficulty identifying that many. Some areas were not chosen by anyone within the district as an area of strength, while other areas were popular among subjects. For example, all administrators in district A, C, E, and F identified situational awareness as an area of strength, whereas contingent rewards was not an area of strength for any administrator. The following are their responses, coded according to job title.

Table 5

Results of Areas of Strengths by Job Title

Responsibility	Districts without Curriculum Administrator			Districts with Curriculum Administrator		
	A	B	C	D	E	F
Situational Awareness	SHE	H	SHE	SHC	SHEC	SHEC
Flexibility	SE	SE	SE	SH	HEC	SE
Discipline	H	HE	HE	-	H	-
Monitors/ Evaluates	SE	H	HE	SHEC	SC	SC
Outreach	E	SE	-	E	S	SH
Change Agent	SE	S	-	-	SE	SC
Culture	SE	-	-	E	H	H
Input	H	SHE	SHE	EC	SHEC	C
Knowledge of C, I & A	E	H	-	SHC	C	E
Order	H	HE	-	E	SH	HE
Resources	SH	S	SHE	SHC	HC	SEC
Contingent Rewards	-	-	-	-	-	-
Focus	-	-	-	S	S	C
Intellectual Stimulation	-	-	S	-	C	-
Communication	H	SHE	S	HEC	-	SH
Ideals/Beliefs	S	SE	-	S	SHE	-
C, I, & A	E	-	HE	HEC	EC	C
Optimizer	S	S	-	E	-	-
Visibility	H	HE	SHE	C	E	SHE
Affirmation	-	-	H	-	-	HE
Relationship	H	-	S	H	E	HEC

S= Superintendent
H= Secondary Principal
E= Elementary Principal
C= Curriculum Administrator

In order to realize whether or not responsibilities are balanced across the administrative team, the researcher developed the following table to depict the areas that received no response by any team member, known as vacant areas. Column I and Column II display superintendent and principal responses only. Responses for the curriculum administrator were extracted for analysis as shown in Column II. Column III includes the

curriculum administrators' responses and displays the results of all team members in

districts with a curriculum administrator.

Table 6

Vacant Leadership Responsibilities

	Superintendents & Principals Only								All Administrators			
	Districts without Curriculum Administrator				Districts with Curriculum Administrator				Districts with Curriculum Administrator			
Column	I				II				III			
Responsibility	A	B	C	Vacant	D	E	F	Vacant	D	E	F	Vacant
Situational Awareness	-	-	-	N	-	-	-	N	-	-	-	N
Flexibility	-	-	-	N	-	-	-	N	-	-	-	N
Discipline	-	-	-	N	V	-	V	Y	V	-	V	Y
Monitors/ Evaluates	-	-	-	N	-	-	-	N	-	-	-	N
Outreach	-	-	V	Y	-	-	-	N	-	-	-	N
Change Agent	-	-	V	Y	V	-	-	Y	V	-	-	Y
Culture	-	V	V	Y	-	-	-	N	-	-	-	N
Input	-	-	-	N	-	-	V	Y	-	-	-	N
Knowledge of C, I & A	-	-	V	Y	-	V	-	Y	-	-	-	N
Order	-	-	V	Y	-	-	-	N	-	-	-	N
Resources	-	-	-	N	-	-	-	N	-	-	-	N
Contingent Rewards	V	V	V	Y	V	V	V	Y	V	V	V	Y
Focus	V	V	V	Y	-	-	V	Y	-	-	-	N
Intellectual Stimulation	V	V	-	Y	V	V	V	Y	V	-	V	Y
Communication	-	-	-	N	-	V	-	Y	-	V	-	Y
Ideals/Beliefs	-	-	V	Y	-	-	V	Y	-	-	V	Y
C, I, & A	-	V	-	Y	-	-	V	Y	-	-	-	N
Optimizer	-	-	V	Y	-	V	V	Y	-	V	V	Y
Visibility	-	-	-	N	V	-	-	Y	-	-	-	N
Affirmation	V	-	-	Y	V	V	-	Y	V	V	-	Y
Relationship	-	V	-	Y	-	-	-	N	-	-	-	N
Total Vacancies	4	6	9	13	6	6	8	13	5	4	5	8

V= vacant responsibility; no one on administrative team feels they are strong in this area

All districts were void of covering the 21 leadership responsibilities according to administrators' rating of themselves. There was an indication of much overlap among administrators when asked to identify their eight areas of strength. District C overlapped answers the most, leading the way for having the most gaps, followed by District B, and a tie between District D and District F, and finally District A and District E were tied with the least amount of overlap. Of all districts, A and E possess the most balanced leadership responsibilities across the administrative team.

District C and District F had 9 and 8 *vacant* areas, respectively, meaning that they were not checked as an area of strength by anyone on the team. With the curriculum administrator, vacant areas were much lower. The area of "Contingent Rewards" was the only area that had no responses. The area of "Focus" was vacant in all ABC districts and present in all DEF, Column III districts. The total number of areas out of 21 that were vacant was 13 in Column I and 13 in Column II, which included superintendents and principals only in all six districts. In the three districts with a curriculum administrator, when the responses of the curriculum administrator were included, only eight areas were vacant.

Further analysis appears in the following tables, which provides information indicating the areas of strength, sorted by superintendent, secondary principal, elementary principal, and curriculum administrator.

Table 7

Eight Areas of Strengths within the Balanced Leadership Framework:

Superintendents

| | Superintendent Responses: | | | | | | |
| | Districts without Curriculum Administrator | | | Districts with Curriculum Administrator | | | |
Responsibility	A	B	C	D	E	F	TOTAL
Situational Awareness	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	5
Flexibility	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	5
Discipline	N	N	N	N	N	N	0
Monitors/ Evaluates	Y	N	N	Y	Y	Y	4
Outreach	N	N	Y	N	Y	Y	3
Change Agent	Y	N	Y	N	Y	Y	4
Culture	Y	N	N	N	N	N	1
Input	N	Y	Y	N	Y	N	3
Knowledge of C, I & A	N	N	N	Y	N	N	1
Order	N	N	N	Y	Y	N	2
Resources	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	5
Contingent Rewards	N	N	N	N	N	N	0
Focus	N	N	N	Y	Y	N	2
Intellectual Stimulation	N	Y	N	N	N	N	1
Communication	N	Y	Y	N	N	Y	3
Ideals/Beliefs	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	N	4
C, I, & A	N	N	N	N	N	N	0
Optimizer	Y	N	Y	N	N	N	2
Visibility	N	Y	N	N	N	Y	2
Affirmation	N	N	N	N	N	N	0
Relationship	N	Y	N	N	N	N	1

Table 8

Eight Areas of Strengths within the Balanced Leadership Framework:

Secondary Principals

| | Secondary Principal Responses: | | | | | | |
| | Districts without Curriculum Administrator | | | Districts with Curriculum Administrator | | | |
Responsibility	A	B	C	D	E	F	TOTAL
Situational Awareness	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	6
Flexibility	N	N	N	Y	Y	N	2
Discipline	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	N	4
Monitors/ Evaluates	N	Y	Y	Y	N	N	3
Outreach	N	N	N	N	N	Y	1
Change Agent	N	N	N	N	N	N	0
Culture	N	N	N	N	Y	Y	2
Input	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	N	4
Knowledge of C, I & A	N	N	Y	Y	N	N	2
Order	Y	N	Y	N	Y	Y	4
Resources	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	N	4
Contingent Rewards	N	N	N	N	N	N	0
Focus	N	N	N	N	N	N	0
Intellectual Stimulation	N	N	N	N	N	N	0
Communication	Y	N	Y	Y	N	Y	4
Ideals/Beliefs	N	N	N	N	Y	N	1
C, I, & A	N	Y	N	Y	N	N	2
Optimizer	N	N	N	N	N	N	0
Visibility	Y	Y	Y	N	N	Y	4
Affirmation	N	Y	N	N	N	Y	2
Relationship	Y	N	N	Y	N	Y	3

Table 9

Eight Areas of Strengths within the Balanced Leadership Framework:

Elementary Principals

| | Elementary Principal Responses: | | | | | | |
| | Districts without Curriculum Administrator | | | Districts with Curriculum Administrator | | | |
Responsibility	A	B	C	D	E	F	TOTAL
Situational Awareness	Y	Y	N	N	Y	Y	4
Flexibility	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	5
Discipline	N	Y	Y	N	N	N	2
Monitors/ Evaluates	Y	Y	N	Y	N	N	3
Outreach	Y	N	Y	Y	N	N	3
Change Agent	Y	N	N	N	Y	N	2
Culture	Y	N	N	Y	N	N	2
Input	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	4
Knowledge of C, I & A	Y	N	N	N	N	Y	2
Order	N	N	Y	Y	N	Y	3
Resources	N	Y	N	N	N	Y	2
Contingent Rewards	N	N	N	N	N	N	0
Focus	N	N	N	N	N	N	0
Intellectual Stimulation	N	N	N	N	N	N	0
Communication	N	N	Y	Y	N	N	2
Ideals/Beliefs	N	N	Y	N	Y	N	2
C, I, & A	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	N	4
Optimizer	N	N	N	Y	N	N	1
Visibility	N	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	4
Affirmation	N	N	N	N	N	Y	1
Relationship	N	N	N	N	Y	Y	2

Table 10

Eight Areas of Strengths within the Balanced Leadership Framework:

Curriculum Administrators

| | Curriculum Administrators Responses: | | | | | | |
| | Districts without Curriculum Administrator | | | Districts with Curriculum Administrator | | | |
Responsibility	A	B	C	D	E	F	TOTAL
Situational Awareness	-	-	-	Y	Y	Y	3
Flexibility	-	-	-	N	Y	Y	1
Discipline	-	-	-	N	N	N	0
Monitors/ Evaluates	-	-	-	Y	Y	Y	3
Outreach	-	-	-	N	N	N	0
Change Agent	-	-	-	N	N	Y	1
Culture	-	-	-	N	N	N	0
Input	-	-	-	Y	Y	Y	3
Knowledge of C, I & A	-	-	-	Y	Y	N	2
Order	-	-	-	N	N	N	0
Resources	-	-	-	Y	Y	Y	3
Contingent Rewards	-	-	-	N	N	N	0
Focus	-	-	-	N	N	Y	1
Intellectual Stimulation	-	-	-	N	Y	N	1
Communication	-	-	-	Y	N	N	1
Ideals/Beliefs	-	-	-	N	N	N	0
C, I, & A	-	-	-	Y	Y	Y	3
Optimizer	-	-	-	N	N	N	0
Visibility	-	-	-	Y	N	N	1
Affirmation	-	-	-	N	N	N	0
Relationship	-	-	-	N	N	Y	1

Most superintendents rate themselves as strong in the areas of (a) situational awareness, (b) flexibility, (c) monitors/evaluates, (d) change agent, (e) resources, and (f) ideals/beliefs.

Secondary principals rate themselves high in the areas of (a) situational awareness, (b) discipline, (c) input. (d) order, (e) resources, (f) communication, and (g) visibility.

Elementary principals rate themselves as strong in the areas of (a) situational awareness, (b) flexibility, (c) input, (d) C, I & A, and (e) visibility.

Curriculum administrators all agree that they are strong in the areas of (a) situational awareness, (b) monitors/evaluates, (c) input, (d) resources, and (e) C, I & A.

The checklist was discussed with superintendents, principals at each level, and curriculum administrators. The following are the responses to the interview question.

Interview Question 3b:

In reference to the balanced leadership responsibilities checklist, describe how administrative responsibilities are shared across the administrative team.

In districts without a curriculum administrator, all respondents agreed that responsibilities were either shared or somewhat shared across the administrative team. There is one administrator who did not concur.

Superintendents:

[You should] see checks in all these areas because every one of those areas; we need to do something with them. And I would be disappointed if they weren't scattered.

We work well as a team, but you know, diversity in one's camp is very good. When you get together and make decisions, whether it be curriculum or whatever, the team approach really fosters a good outcome because you get different points of view, different backgrounds that people came from.

This district, being so small, you have to wear a lot of different hats. For example, the assistant is in charge of discipline and transportation, and does some grant writing, but at the same time, I'm there to help when needed and the same thing goes for [that person]. If I get bogged in an area, [that person's] there to help as well. When you look through those duties, I think the one that really jumps out would be assessing the needs of your district and determining what that is. And when they're doing well, making sure that the teachers are praised and when they're not doing well, putting it in a positive way and making sure they're addressing the needs and trying to move ahead

Elementary Principals:

> We try to communicate as much as possible on what's going on between the buildings, sometimes that doesn't work. Once the school year's up and running, sometimes we don't get things right; sometimes I'll hear something second-hand… but we try to get together on a lot of the issues.

In districts with a curriculum administrator, there was a general feeling that responsibilities are shared, with a similar number of respondents who felt a definite difference in responsibilities. Most administrators felt that the team contributes with diverse strengths.

Superintendents:

> Not necessarily. I have definite weaknesses in both buildings. They are being addressed by way of… action plans for improvement, and I'm happy to say that there has been progress and improvement… with the help of the curriculum coordinator, there has been a tremendous change and a new approach.

Secondary Principal:

> Someone on this team would touch on each one of these things, sure, absolutely.

School Board Member:

> I think they're well-rounded, though, I think they understand what their deficiencies are, and I think they're able to rely on one another. For example, our superintendent is an excellent researcher and she has a wealth of information. [The curriculum administrator] is an excellent manager; able to facilitate change. And our elementary principal has a background in math… I think [diversity on the team] is something that this board really focuses on.

Distributed Leadership

Spillane (2006) connects student achievement to the use of a distributed leadership model in schools. Effective distribution involves focusing on the practice of

leadership, relationship between the leader and follower rather than only the leader's actions, and improving practice by changing routines.

In relation to leadership responsibilities, distribution of responsibilities can occur by design, default, or emergence.

1. Design- responsibility distributed as different leaders take leadership positions designed to meet identified needs.

2. Default- leaders take on responsibilities that evolve over time, which may occur by necessity, in a trusting working relationship, or when the principal lacks skills in a particular area.

3. Emergence- distribution of leadership emerges when leaders must work together through a crisis.

Interview questions led the researcher to examine how leadership responsibilities are distributed at each district. Interview questions 2, 3, 4, 5c, 6, and 12, found on page 74, contributed to the understanding of the leadership aspects of the distributed leadership framework.

Table 11

Distributed Leadership Evidence of Practices from Districts

District	Question	Evidence
A	3	Responsibilities somewhat shared
	3	No one agrees on level of sharing
	5c	Different levels of comfort in administrative meetings
	6	Team approach to change
	12a	Curriculum needs to be aligned and streamlined
B	2	Curriculum is not done
	3	Responsibilities somewhat shared
	5c	Most are very comfortable in administrative meetings
	12a	Curriculum needs to be aligned and streamlined
C	3	Responsibilities somewhat shared
	5c	Most are very comfortable in administrative meetings
	12a	Curriculum needs to be aligned and streamlined
D	2	Curriculum is aligned K-12
	3&4	Responsibilities shared
	5c	Most are very comfortable in administrative meetings
	12b	Without CA, lack of consistency, distribute responsibilities
E	2	Curriculum is aligned K-12
	3&4	Responsibilities shared
	5c	Most are very comfortable in administrative meetings
	6	Team approach to change
	12b	Without CA, lack of consistency, distribute responsibilities
F	2	Curriculum is aligned K-12
	3&4	Responsibilities shared
	5c	Most are very comfortable in administrative meetings
	12b	Without CA, lack of consistency, distribute responsibilities

Statements in transcripts helped the researcher further understand whether or not distributed leadership existed in districts and if so, if the responsibilities occurred by design, default, or emergence. Sample statements include:

Superintendents:

> I find that I do have to educate or communicate that message that hey, this person is the curriculum coordinator, but it's your building and you are responsible for what's going on in your building curriculum-wise, behavior-wise, building and grounds-wise and so on.

> Those pretty specific and very, very essential duties would have to be distributed among other administrators, and/or teaching staff.

Curriculum Administrators:

> If the teachers want curriculum change, and they come to me, we move forward with that. Sometimes [the superintendent] will say, "This is what we need to do, this is the way we're going."

The existence of distributed leadership practices is questionable, though somewhat evident in the three districts without a curriculum administrator (A, B, C). There is evidence to support that in District A, distribution occurs by emergence. The elementary principal contributed information related to district initiatives that this person takes responsibility for because no one else will do it and it must be completed. In District B, distribution occurs by emergence as supported by statements from all participants that curriculum has been ignored up until now and the district is in a state of crisis in terms of state expectations. In District C, evidence supports that distribution occurs by default. Leadership responsibilities seem to evolve naturally rather than as a reaction to a crisis. In Districts D, E and F, distribution occurs by design with the implementation of the curriculum administrator's position.

Narrative Analysis of Interview Questions

Interviews with 33 administrators, teacher leaders, and school board members yielded themes within each response to provide insight to each district's approach to development and coordination of curriculum. Once a theme emerged, the researcher

categorized responses according to each theme. Following are responses categorized by theme and supporting statements.

Interview Question 2:

How do administrators and faculty coordinate and evaluate the curriculum programs in this district?

In districts without a curriculum administrator, the responses indicated that all participating districts use data from PSSA assessments and work with a team to coordinate and evaluate the curriculum in the district. There was no mention of following a curriculum cycle or K-12 curriculum coordination occurring. According to a teacher leader, it simply is not done in one district. The following are additional responses to Question #2 from various subjects.

Superintendents:

> If I have to put a recommendation out or support financially [a curriculum initiative]… I step in at that point, but I leave a lot of that up to the building principals because that's ground level where they have to work with the staff.

> To my knowledge, up until this time, there really hasn't been a plan. The only thing I really know that was done, curriculum-wise, in the year or two before we got here, is that they sent someone to the [regional IU] curriculum council meetings. But now, the teachers came to us. They said that we need to look at our curriculum. We put a Curriculum Cabinet in place last spring, and now we are taking a very hard look at our curriculum, we chose a software program, we are working with [the] university and that's what our in-services and other trainings this year will be devoted to is mapping our curriculum and making sure we're hitting all of the standards and anchors.

Secondary Principal:

> This year, we still didn't do as well as we thought we might. We're going to look at that again to improve, but with the hope that we get more out of it. So now, maybe we'll look at the books we're using; more of the assessments, what worked and what didn't.

Teachers:

> In the [textbook] selection process, I personally contacted the different textbook representatives, they sent samples and then I went through the samples and so forth… I then turned it over to… the principal, with my recommendation of a book that we would like to purchase. And along with that there's a form that gets filled out to get the approval of the school board. [The curriculum administrator] takes it to the school board for approval and then we go from there.

> Pretty haphazardly... we kinda take it as it comes at us, it's more a reactive situation than a proactive situation, and it can be extremely stressful and frustrating. I was interviewed for the job 12 years ago… I said, "Well, could I look at your curriculum, could I see what you have?" and they looked at me as if I had spoken a foreign language!

School Board Member:

> Most of the evaluation is completed through the principals and it is done in a way that it evaluates how the students progress, and how much they're learning and ways that they learn and retain the most.

In districts with a curriculum administrator, most mentioned using PSSA assessments to assess student achievement, but all districts stated that they coordinate and evaluate using a curriculum cycle, work with a team, have K-12 coordination and have curriculum administrators to facilitate. Additional comments include:

Superintendents:

> As is typical in most districts, we have a curriculum cycle and the curriculum is reviewed and evaluated on a limited basis each year.

> [Prior to having the curriculum director, we] found that we've had a real hodge-podge… as far as curriculum and instruction… the board and I decided to bring in a curriculum person because that was a major area that needed focus and attention. And we're so happy we did that, it was at the right time, and of course with a little motivation from AYP, and this year we have met AYP in all areas.

Elementary Principal:

> The [curriculum administrator] coordinated that. We reviewed various samples, again seeing how we felt they fit into our goals and our beliefs of

how it should be taught, and then also with the standards. We narrowed that down, had companies come in and do presentations, then we made a decision. And everything is done as a team, which is very, very nice.

School Board Member:

I would say, it's pretty much a collaborative effort. I think that our current curriculum person is sort of like the facilitator, and will get the groups together. But the actual meat and potatoes of the work is conducted, I think by the teachers, [the curriculum administrator] convenes the committee and provides current research, and says, "Here's what the research is showing," … part of the advantage of… having this position, is we now have K-12 coordination.

Curriculum Administrator:

We look at the data of DIBELS, Terra Nova, 4 Sight, certainly PSSA… students' grades, teacher observations, both formative and summative assessments… when we look at all of those [we find the] root cause… sometimes that is a curriculum problem, sometimes it's not.

Interview Question 5a:

Describe your typical administrative meeting as it relates to curriculum decisions.

Curriculum is not often a topic in administrative meetings in districts without a curriculum administrator, and typically brought up only when needed. The interviewees all indicated that when curriculum is an issue, they problem-solve, then go to the teachers with the superintendent's support on the project.

Superintendent:

As far as meetings to talk about best practices… curriculum… the latest fad… the latest journal issue… to me, that's busy work at this point in time; because in our district, we couldn't follow through with all of that anyway. So we try to keep it practical, let's work on our current needs. As we move through those, we could put on new projects to keep moving in a progressive manner, but I don't get involved with, or bring them in just to chit chat about the latest fads of education.

110

Secondary Principals:

> I'd say we started to talk about curriculum towards the end of the year, as we were looking into purchasing the curriculum [mapping software]. But as far as sitting down and talking about curriculum on a regular basis at the meetings, no.

> We [talk about curriculum] more in the summertime when there's a little more breathing room, a little more time on your plate. Being in a small district and wearing a lot of hats, a lot of time you're plugging the little holes, you're trying to keep the ship afloat, but at the same time, in the summer time, [we focus on]… whether it's PSSA data… local assessments, looking how you're students did, trying to determine where the needs are and what you can improve upon. We both go to the principal meetings at the IU, that's very helpful.

Elementary Principal:

> A lot of the thought-processing and problem solving is done before we meet and then at [the administrative meetings], it's a discussion. Coming from a different district, which was a little more aggressive in their curriculum… I know what worked and what didn't work and take into account our logistics and our culture at the secondary level, there are some things that I know could happen. But… I meet a lot of resistance… and then I step back and I feel like, "Stay in your arena, stay in your area, and I'll stay in mine."

Curriculum is typically a topic in administrative meetings in districts with a curriculum administrator, and also brought up on an as-needed basis. Supportive statements include the following.

Superintendent:

> I think curriculum is the topic of conversation regularly.

> We meet at least once a month as an administrative team. Most often, there is at least one or two items dealing with curriculum on the agenda. [The curriculum administrator bring things] that would be typical in terms of, "Well here's this program that I want us to consider, what are your thoughts," from a broad, big-picture point of view.

Secondary Principal:

I would say curriculum is always one of the topics we talk about or discuss.

Curriculum Administrator:

It's on the agenda, and obviously depending on the month or the time of the year, sometimes it takes up a significant amount of time, and other months it's not as critical.

There's always something between curriculum and grants that's involved with whatever's going on.

Interview Question 5b:

How often do you meet?

Administrative meetings occur more frequently in districts without a curriculum

administrator. The majority met every other week, and one district met once a week.

Secondary Principals:

We meet once a week as an administrative team… Usually those meetings take between an hour and two hours, they're not too bad.

Administrative meetings occur less frequently in districts with curriculum a

administrator; once a month and as needed thereafter.

Superintendent:

We regularly meet the Thursday before the Board Work Session… So different people will take leadership and I'll let them call the meeting and control it. I want them to learn to be leaders; I don't want to have just upper management do everything.

We meet monthly, and we're so small and so close that the curriculum person stops almost daily to review with me, [and is] directly responsible to me.

Interview Question 5c:

How comfortable are you with sharing information and being open and honest in administrative meetings?

In districts without a curriculum administrator, the majority of respondents were either very comfortable or mostly comfortable with being open and honest in administrative meetings. There was one individual who felt resistance behind closed doors, but the interviews revealed that the feeling was not mutual.

Superintendent:

> I think for the most part, they're comfortable. Although, a couple of them don't like conflict.... one will gladly debate on anything, which I like.

In districts with a curriculum administrator, almost all respondents were very comfortable with being open and honest in administrative meetings. One individual did not feel comfortable in meetings.

Superintendent:

> We have one person who will leak things to a Board Member, so when that person is there, I notice it's a little more guarded. And that person misses a lot, because [they're] lower level of administration. When that person isn't there, we are very, extremely open.

Secondary Principals:

> Oh absolutely, we have a real good working relationship I think between all of us. Nobody's afraid to speak their mind, and knowing that you can and it's alright.

> No, there's very little, very little communication… [our buildings are] two islands!

Curriculum Administrator:

> I'm much more comfortable to be able to say, 'this is what I think' and we've all built a pretty positive relationship, the two principals and myself, and [superintendent] as well. So, I would say, yeah, I'm pretty comfortable now.

Interview Question 6:

Describe who is responsible for initiating a curriculum change within the district.

Answers to this question resulted in various responses across the districts with some agreement on who is responsible for initiating change. In districts without a curriculum administrator, the majority believe the superintendent or the principals are responsible. Teachers, acting alone, are rarely responsible, but there was some agreement that teams of teachers and administrators are somewhat responsible.

Secondary Principal:

That comes from one of two areas: elementary, the elementary principal and superintendent; and secondary, the secondary principal and superintendent.

Elementary Principal:

The building principals do the majority again because it falls on you because you don't have a curriculum director, you don't have an assistant principal, so you're doing it all.

Teacher:

My belief is that the teachers do. The teachers decide it's time for a new series.

School Board Member:

The superintendent would have the big idea and the principals would do their job; it would be their mission to carry that out.

In districts with a curriculum administrator, the majority believe the curriculum administrator is responsible for initiating curriculum changes, while others believe that superintendents and principals are responsible. Teachers, acting alone, are rarely responsible, but there was some agreement that teams of teachers and administrators are somewhat responsible.

Superintendent:

> The board initiated some when I came… they gave me a goal to initiate honors classes… new reading curriculum, they were upset with the math program. This board would much rather talk about education, curriculum and instruction, than sports and athletics.
>
> [The curriculum administrator] has terrific interpersonal skills. [This person] has been able to bring reluctant groups of teachers together… been able to focus them on curriculum mapping and rti, we just got into a new reading series, and has taken the leadership there. [This person] is such a key person in bringing everyone together, both principals, elementary and high school; department heads, and worked very well with them… [that person's] just a tremendous asset in that way. [They are] the glue all right, not only that, but a motivator, and again, leads by example, and even the reluctant ones, has been successful in bringing along. Even when the principals could not do that, [that person has] done that, accomplished that.

Secondary Principal:

> Any administrator is free to talk about or bring up something that needs changed, and certainly the curriculum director would be involved in that process. As a curriculum director, they would be the person most likely to take the lead, and coordinate and communicate those expectations for that change.

Teacher:

> I think it initially starts with the teachers, they come up with an issue or a problem, and now we would go to [the curriculum director]. In the past, we have gone maybe to our chair and then to the principal.

School Board Member:

> From what I know about [the curriculum director, that person] really knows what the goals are and organizes everything so that you get to your end result. And then watches the benchmarks that we have set to make sure that's happening. [That person] just has good follow-through and I think has been dynamic here.

Interview Question 7:

Describe your position regarding curriculum change, implementation, and evaluation.

Responses were compiled and separated for staff and school board members. Districts without a curriculum administrator identified that they work with departments and teachers to share ideas. However, there were comments in two districts that there is no plan for curriculum and no one takes control of change initiatives. Of the administrators interviewed, all answered that they take charge and monitor curriculum changes in their own arenas. School board members indicated that they support changes, although one board member indicated that curriculum changes are not communicated with the school board but they provide the money for what is needed.

Secondary Principal:

> In the past, [the previous superintendent] basically got texts whenever the teachers needed them, and took the teachers' word for it that they needed a text.

Teacher:

> My theory of thinking is that there needs to be continuity Our problem that I see is you have kindergarten doing one thing, 3rd grade doing another thing, 2nd grade doing their own thing.

School Board Member:

> There's a committee on the board that looks at curriculum, reviews it and there's input from the teachers; but the majority of the input comes from the principal and the superintendent, and the board will usually weigh heavier what the principals say versus what the teachers say.

In districts with a curriculum administrator, most often, the person interviewed stated that they take a leadership role in monitoring and supporting curriculum changes, but the curriculum administrator is the person who leads everyone through curriculum changes. In one district, some expressed that the instructional coaches were thought to be the leader of curriculum initiatives. School board members unanimously indicated that

they support the administrative recommendations and provide money to accomplish the

goals.

Superintendent:

> As far as change, [the curriculum administrator] really leads the change.
> I'll talk with [that person] about where to go, but I try not to micro-
> manage.

Elementary Principal:

> The curriculum director will organize the meetings; make sure who's
> going to be on the teams. It's always a department head, the principal…
> I see myself as the grounds crew, [the curriculum director] oversees, and
> I see myself as the person who goes in and keeps more of a daily watch,
> providing teachers time that they need.

School Board Member:

> A board member's primary responsibility is policy. I have always felt that
> when you have good administrators, you need to let them do their job. So,
> as a board member, my role, I felt was to listen to their plan, listen to the
> reasoning behind their plan, and if it seemed like it was a good change and
> something that needed to be done, support it any way I could whether it
> was through the budget, or just saying you have our support.

Curriculum Administrator:

> [My position is based] on feedback I'm getting from other administrators,
> or teachers. For example, with the math realignment at the junior-senior
> high school, one of the teachers came to me and said, "You know, I really
> broke it down, looking at the PSSA test, looking at anchors, and looking at
> our textbook and we're just not hitting it," so I was able, through Title II
> money, to get some professional development time for them to work on
> realigning that curriculum.

Interview Question 8:

Describe the beliefs that guide the curriculum.

Many beliefs guide the curriculum as stated by the respondents. However, it was

apparent that this question was the hardest to answer and the answers were not always

aligned with the question. The question had to be restated and asked again to several subjects.

Beliefs that guide the curriculum, as cited by individuals in districts without a curriculum administrator, include (from most popular to least popular):

- PSSA/Standards

- All children can learn and succeed

- Differentiation to meet students' various needs

- Students should be prepared so they are success as adults

- Try new techniques

Other comments include:

Superintendent:

Everything is based on student achievement, engaging the students and increasing achievement and preparing them to be independent thinkers and lifelong learners.

Elementary Principal:

Beliefs that guide it are, if the teachers aren't comfortable with it, then they're not going to be comfortable teaching it, so I put a lot of faith in what they have to say about things. Everybody just puts in their two cents, pros and cons. It's not always a great thing.

Teacher:

That's a really tough question when you don't have a curriculum. We really, truly don't! Our curriculum seems to be: close the door, here's your class. And to me, that's extremely frustrating. The curriculum.... I really want one... I REALLY want one!!! I think things are going to hopefully... please... start to fall into line and start to get aligned and I just feel like we're doing the same things again over and over as opposed to progressing because we don't have anything from which to work. [When we get a new course to teach], it's all you... you start from scratch, you have nothing... my first year teaching at this school, I didn't have a classroom, desks, books, materials, everything I did, I created myself. We need to get [curriculum mapping software] implemented, we need to get it started, and

we need to get it reviewed... I'm just so excited about it, when they said we were going to do it, I'm like, "Alleluia," I was so excited!

Beliefs that guide the curriculum cited by individuals in districts with a curriculum administrator include (from most popular to least popular):

- PSSA/Standards

- Differentiation to meet students' various needs

- Curriculum is aligned

- Data indicators

- All children can learn and succeed

Other comments include:

Superintendent:

> I've had to instill and impose my beliefs on the district because frankly, the board was asleep at the wheel as far as curriculum was concerned when I got here [prior to establishment of curriculum administrator's position]. But we have turned the corner, the board has been very supportive and I think that's why I'm still here, they've seen the improvements… if it wasn't for AYP, we'd still be dragging our feet.

Secondary Principal:

> With having somebody to coordinate the curriculum, and I think it's especially important in a small school that you do… you get the best bang for your buck when it comes to curriculum and materials. I don't know what we'd do without [the curriculum administrator] to be honest with you.

Elementary Principal:

> Scientifically based, proven, of course, standards.

Teacher:

> So that everyone knows what their part of that is, what their expectations are… it should be well articulated… we're all committed to that curriculum and moving towards excellence.

Curriculum Administrator:

>The beliefs are that every child can learn with the appropriate instructional methodology and pacing. So that we do everything we can to provide an environment where every student will be successful, and that includes differentiation of the instruction.

Interview Question 9:

Describe what indicators you use to determine the strength of your curriculum programs.

A variety of indicators were included as responses in this open-ended question. In descending order of preference, districts without a curriculum administrator stated the following indicators were used to determine the strength of the curriculum programs:

- Local assessments

- PSSA/PVAAS/AYP

- Drop out/retention rate

- Achievement and performance

- Post-secondary success

- Curriculum alignment

In order of preference starting with the most popular response, districts with a curriculum administrator stated the following indicators were used to determine the strength of the curriculum programs:

- Local assessments

- PSSA/PVAAS/AYP

- Feedback from parents, students, teachers, public

- Student interest/enjoyment

- Achievement and performance

In all districts, curriculum alignment has already occurred and is a continuing process.

Interview Question 10a:

> **Describe how curriculum change, evaluation, etc. are communicated among the central office and faculty?**

In districts without a curriculum administrator, respondents clearly indicated that changes were communicated through faculty meetings, in-service meetings, and department meetings.

> Superintendents:

>> That's usually done at the principal's level because they have much more of a communication line than I do because I'm more into the running of the day-to-day, finances, and what not of the district. They know how to approach their staff, with the idea of that "I'm there."

>> We start the discussion in our [curriculum council] meetings. The teachers take notes during those meetings and then communicate them to all the staff members.

> Secondary Principal:

>> We have 11 faculty members, so that's done actually fairly easily. We sit down as a team, in common time, after school, we have about a half hour where we can break away, and we meet and we discuss.

> Elementary Principal:

>> The one thing nice about here is we have a pretty-well seasoned group of teachers. We're top heavy with teachers who have been here 25-30 years, so you can rely pretty well on what they recommend, and so the younger teachers look up to the more seasoned teachers and then discuss what they feel is necessary, what isn't necessary and I'm in on those conversations so we can do what's best for the school.

In districts with a curriculum administrator, respondents clearly indicated that changes were communicated mostly by the curriculum administrator and principal through faculty and department meetings.

School Board Member:

> Whenever curriculum changes are made, the board usually asks for a mid-review. With the Reading, we wanted to see if our numbers were dropping in the special ed. So I think that they know that we're going to invest the money, but they're going to be held accountable... We had some growing pains, because I thought at first they might have thought we were micro-managing. And I think now we have an understanding, that we're part of the solution or part of the resolution to some of our problems.

Curriculum Administrator:

> I work always with the core team of the department; so when we begin an implementation process, right away they're involved. The department chairs go back and [through] monthly curriculum meetings, they inform the other teachers… what's happening during that process. So I believe the teachers are very well informed through that process.

Interview Question 10b:

> **Describe how curriculum change, evaluation, etc. are communicated with the school board?**

The school board receives information related to curriculum changes mostly

through monthly principal reports in districts without curriculum administrator. At times,

either the superintendent or group of teachers will provide curriculum information. Other

responses included:

Superintendent:

> It's kind of a team effort. At the board meeting all three administrators provide a report to the school board and they tell them what they've been doing for the last month. I don't want the credit for anything, I want them to have all the credit. So if they're doing something, they have opportunity to provide that information to the board… and if they don't, I will.

Secondary Principal:

> That's a good question, since we've never really worked with it, since I've been here… the only stuff that we do is in November if there's any kind of changes to classes or curriculum… the teacher writes up the curriculum, we present it to the school board for their ok. We definitely share with

122

them the PSSA scores and our 4Sight scores and inform them from that perspective.

School Board Member:

There's not a lot of communication, we don't receive much information on [curriculum].

In districts with a curriculum administrator, the school board receives information related to curriculum changes mostly through monthly reports of the curriculum administrator. At times, either the principals or group of teachers will support the curriculum administrator and provide curriculum information. The superintendent rarely communicates curriculum information.

Secondary Principal:

[The curriculum director] gives overviews of curriculum and possible changes, the education committee of the school board will meet with us, we make suggestions, or if they have any kind of comments, positive or negative, from what they hear from their constituency, we dialog.

Interview Question 11:

What is this district's vision of student learning?

This question usually required rewording or explanation. Most answers were similar to Question #8. Districts without a curriculum administrator provided the following responses, in order of most popular to least popular answer:

- PSSA/testing/AYP success

- Post-secondary success

- Challenge/engage students

- Develop appropriate social skills

- Students reach potential

123

The vision of student learning is mostly based on PSSA/testing/AYP and post-secondary success. Other responses include the following.

Superintendent:

> My vision is to have my staff work as hard as they can to bring the best out of my kids… let's get the best behavior, the best knowledge out of our kids, into our kids, as best we can… And if we make AYP, that's terrific; if we don't, and I can show growth, that's terrific.

High School Principal:

> I expect them to be challenged; which is one of the reasons we find ourselves in the situation that we do, is they haven't been challenged. I've always felt that the opportunity here is existent; the opportunity to meet any academic goal you would want, existed in our little district. But, I don't always believe that everybody was always coerced/guided forcefully into those areas. Students come in [and say]… "I don't want to take Spanish." [So I ask], "Are you going to college?" [and if they say yes, then I say], "You're going to Spanish." Where in the past, they might let them drop Spanish.

Districts with a curriculum administrator provided the following responses:

- Post-secondary success

- Students reach potential

- PSSA/testing/AYP success

- Challenge/engage students

- Develop appropriate social skills

The vision of student learning is mostly based on post-secondary success, followed by PSSA/testing/AYP success.

School Board Member:

> I would hope that this district provides students with the tools that they'll need to function no matter what life's journey, where it leads them, that be a college, a 2-year program, the work force. And I truly hope that students are inspired and empowered to become life long learners.

Curriculum Administrators:

> I would say that we believe that every child is capable of learning and we are responsible to see that every student, from that student with an IEP, to the average, to the student with the GIEP, shows growth.

Interview Question 12a:

How would the district's academic program change if the district did not have a curriculum administrator?

This question was asked only in districts with a curriculum administrator. Most

agreed that if the district did not have the position, the academic program would change

in the following ways, in order from most to least popular response:

- Lack of consistency and collaboration

- Responsibilities would be distributed

- It would be a travesty

- Curriculum alignment issues would arise

- Time would become a problem

Additional comments include:

Superintendent:

> There's no way we could have implemented all the curriculum changes we've made in the last 3 to 4 years without a curriculum director; the work load would have been unattainable. Principals [are] also extremely busy. They're talented and they have interest in curriculum, so… yes, they could have done a good job, but we're swamped; we're small district… two building administrators and their assistants share other duties.

Secondary Principals:

> It would be very difficult to keep up with current research, best practices, and truly, I don't see how any school district, no matter how large or small, can operate without somebody who has a primary responsibility of curriculum. It's just too complex now and there's too much information to digest. You know, the days of just ordering a series of textbooks… is just gone.

It would be the same way it used to be! It would just change back to everything on me! And, things would be faltering… you don't get as much attention… with the 4Sight data and the data analysis meetings and all that, throw in special education that I'm doing and what not; you divide the time! Depending on the state budget, of course, [the curriculum director] manages all of the grants, so, those would either have to be dispersed among the other administrators or dropped. There's some significant funding there, they probably bring in close to a million dollars to the district. So, it would be problematic.

Teacher:

If you didn't have it, maybe you wouldn't know any better. But once you have that person doing that curriculum and all the other things that go with that, I don't see how you could function well without it… we would get back to having fragmented [curriculum]. People doing what they wanted.... you close the door to your classroom and you do whatever you want to do.

School Board Member:

Initially you wouldn't see much of a change; my fear is though, as our curriculum cycle matures and it's time to do revisions… we would revert back to our old ways, which was we had a fragmented curriculum. And principals…are confronted with discipline, transportation issues. I think that this position allows K-12 collaboration, and it puts somebody in charge of spearheading curriculum changes, and I think you need that.

Curriculum Administrators:

I've worked in this district before there was a director of ed, and I've worked in other systems where there was none, and what I've discovered is that when you give that responsibility, generally that would fall on the principal, it just becomes too overwhelming. What I see happening is student discipline, teacher issues, parent issues, school bus issues must be addressed, and the most important thing that we say we're about is curriculum, and it can be left go and nobody really notices?

Interview Question 12b:

How would the district's academic program change if a curriculum administrator were hired?

In districts without a curriculum administrator, most understood the need, and agreed that if the district created the position, the academic program would change in the following ways, in order from most popular to least popular response:

- Consistent, connected, streamlined curriculum

- K-12 would be aligned and coordinated

- It would help with time issues

- It would be much better

- More opportunities for teachers

Superintendents:

> [We] just don't have the resources to provide that particular position. In a smaller district, you wear many hats, and that's one of the many hats you wear... you play fireman a lot as a building principal and you must take care of those things that are causing problems… so what happens to curriculum? It gets pushed back. We all think that it's important, but it's not a focused effort as if you had a particular person in that area who could concentrate on the implementation, evaluation, and things that are happening in curriculum. So, yeah, is it important, sure, no doubt about it.

Elementary Principals:

> I see it as a benefit to the scores increasing, teachers more comfortable talking with a curriculum director than they are with the superintendent, principals, anyone else… I think they can keep their finger on the pulse of what's happening in the school better than someone else who wears a lot of different hats.

Teachers:

> I think our academic program would change in that it would be much more connected, much more fluid, a much more living thing. If we had a curriculum coordinator… we could go and say, "Here's our hole, here's our gap, here's what we're not doing, how do we fill that in, where can we go, what program would be out there?"… a curriculum coordinator is going to be focused on what the whole district needs… not just what I like doing. The whole picture, that's what we need, somebody who knows. It's like what we're trying to do right now is trying to put a crossword puzzle together, when we each have 12 different boxes of 12 different

pieces of the puzzle, and there's no way to put the whole puzzle together when you're not together And that's what we're doing right now… it's never going to work.

School Board Members:

I feel that our principals would be given more time to do their job, and they would in turn be able to evaluate and direct and encourage our teachers in doing their job better.

Interview Question 13a:

What are the advantages and disadvantages of full-time versus part-time curriculum administrator in the position?

When this question was asked, the researcher elaborated with scenarios to support the intent of the question. One scenario included a situation where a part-time principal of a very small elementary building is also the curriculum coordinator 75% of the time.

Respondents in districts without a curriculum administrator indicated that anything would be better than nothing, but most respondents could not see any advantage to the configuration. A few indicated that it could work. The majority said that it would be better if it was full-time and the workload of two job types would be a disadvantage.

Superintendents:

I don't know how you could do a curriculum director job part-time and do it the way it needs to be done… you need to be there during the school year to meet with departments or grade levels, and take care of other aspects of the business and meet with the administrative team. There's so much work that goes on in the summer in relationship to the grants and the reports and the trainings. As far as a principal doing that job, a principal's torn in so many different directions, it's one of those tasks that's too easy to set it aside because there's a more pressing matter with student discipline or an angry parent, or some other kind of situation, and [curriculum is] the topic or issue that can be easily set aside and not be done justice.

Secondary Principals:

> The advantages of a full-time curriculum administrator… they would have a full understanding of everything that's going on, and they would be the agent of change. If we had a part-time curriculum administrator, they wouldn't be doing the job justice.

Elementary Principals:

> Being a small school, I don't need someone else supervising teachers… I have a small enough faculty that I'm able to handle that.

Teachers:

> If one person is focusing on that job… so much more could be improved. Where we are, everybody's got their hand in it, and I don't think it gets coordinated well enough. Things don't get done.

School Board Members:

> [Depends on] whatever your district is expecting of the person; and if you're expecting the person to write grants, to supervise and do all [those] things… a part-time person could not do that.

Respondents in districts with a curriculum administrator could not see any advantage to the configuration. A few indicated that if the principal were the curriculum administrator, they would have an advantage of knowing the building and students. Most agree that the disadvantage would be the workload of two job types. They believe the person would have difficulty improving communications, and would have difficulty getting to know the students.

Teachers:

> A full time person to devote their time solely to [curriculum coordination] could be meeting with teachers, getting input, feedback, it would be the person you would go to when… the curriculum wasn't doing the job… I just think they would be more involved; their presence would be known.

School Board Members:

> I think it's a full-time position because… you have to look at your curriculum from K through 12 to make sure that it flows. Administrators have so many other jobs to do, I would be afraid that curriculum would be one that would be easily left along the way because it just didn't scream, "take care of me" like day to day… building and discipline [issues].

Curriculum Administrators:

> I just don't see personally how someone could do both jobs well when you've got all the teacher observations, which we all say is critical to do. I would always prefer and recommend that it be an administrator.

> The advantages [of my own part-time principal position] are that I work directly with a small group of teachers and can use them as sounding boards before I attempt a district-wide initiative… and I keep my finger in the pie with students... I am not that removed because I still see students, I work with discipline issues. Now the disadvantage, of course, is that you're pulled a lot of different directions... I'm at the building maybe a couple times a week, not for extended periods of time, usually to do whatever task needs my attention.

Question 13b:

What are the advantages and disadvantages of having an administrator versus a teacher in the position?

During elaboration, the researcher described a scenario of districts that use teachers on a part-time basis as curriculum coordinators and the advantages and disadvantages to that configuration were discussed.

In districts without a curriculum administrator, the majority could not identify an advantage of having a teacher in the position. Of the advantages identified, responses included the following in order of greatest frequency:

- Embedded, connected to classrooms

- Needs to be the "right" person

- Would rather have something than nothing

130

- Credibility with staff

Disadvantages were clearly identified. Responses included the following in order of greatest frequency:

- Teacher is not a supervisor but one of "them"

- Not a good situation; a bad idea

- Teacher does not have a broad view of district

- Teaching would be priority; curriculum secondary

Superintendent:

> Something is better than nothing… [If] that part-time person is a teacher and still has teaching duties, when they're going home tonight to work on lesson plans, or correcting tests or essays or whatever, they're not working on district curriculum. Their first hire is a teacher, so I would hope my classroom duties of that teacher, is a priority, which means we're back to where we are with the principals, curriculum is not the priority.

Secondary Principals:

> If I had a choice between either going with somebody who was strictly K-12, sort of my role principal/administrator away from the classroom, or person who is more in the classroom, I'd choose one more in the classroom. Because as they're evolving and learning new techniques, they're trying them, they're seeing what's working, and obviously with my position, I'm not teaching any courses; and I think that's a detriment.

> The only problem with possibly having a teacher [doing]… curriculum, they might not be aware of all of the district's needs, they're not involved in all of the district's meetings, whether it's discussing other personnel, or budget areas. The benefit would be that the teacher… is doing it everyday, they're in the trenches, they know what is doable, and what isn't, they know what's realistic, so I guess that's the plus.

Elementary Principals:

> The advantage of it being an administrator is that it's someone who is qualified to supervise staff…[it] actually gives you the ability to go in and do some observations to send a message that this is important to us. Sometimes, when it's a teacher, they're uncomfortable doing that because it's their peers.

If it's a teacher in that position, you're going to have other teachers questioning, "You can't tell me to do this."

Teachers:

I can understand it financially; I can't understand putting it into operation.

It's hard for me to say, because coming from a district that never had such a position, in my thinking, yeah, part time would be better than nothing. I think we would take anything; I would.

In districts with a curriculum administrator, the majority could not identify an advantage of having a teacher in the position. In fact, there were few answers in other categories. Of the advantages identified, responses included the following in order of frequency:

- See changes in classroom

- Embedded, connected to classrooms

- Credibility with staff

Several disadvantages were stated with regard to having a teacher as a curriculum administrator. Responses included the following in order of greatest frequency:

- Not a good situation; a bad idea

- Teacher is not a supervisor but one of "them"

- Teaching would be priority; curriculum secondary

- Teacher does not have a broad view of district

Superintendents:

When they're a fellow teacher, now you've got the teachers union saying, "Hey, one teacher can't make another person do it." I think that is a horrendously bad idea.

Elementary Principals:

>That would be the worst scenario... you're taking a person who has a specialty, who has a concentration in an area; a half load of teaching, correcting papers, making sure they're doing what they need to do for the welfare of the children, and then somehow making them a master of all curriculum issues. I can't even imagine how that would work.

Teachers:

>I, personally, would find that bazaar!

Curriculum Administrators:

>They're going to have some first hand experience with what they're seeing, weaknesses and strengths in kids in front of them, actually teaching them, where once again as the curriculum director, I'm not working with students… I can look at data, but I'm not seeing the real person. I would think that it's going to be tough to dedicate as much time and focus on the curriculum as it is to the students that you're teaching. I would think that could be kind of a hindrance.

Interview Question 14a:

How financially valuable would a curriculum administrator position be for the district?

The majority of answers provided by participants in districts without curriculum administrators indicated that the position is viewed to be valuable. The following feelings emerged in order of highest frequency:

- Priceless

- Valuable

- Financial problem- no funds for position

- No need

Superintendents:

>I think it would be invaluable. But on the other hand, in these serious economic times, trying to convince a board to add another administrative

133

type position when you're terminating some teacher positions is a tough thing to do. In coming from the background that I do, it's just made me realize more and more how valuable it would be to have… a curriculum director, take care of the federal programs.

Secondary Principals:

I think [grants] would be the selling point. If we could get "x" amount of dollars through grants by having this person, and they're going to be able to do much more than grants, then that's where you make a move to try to get someone like that. Finding someone that is good in that position is another story.

Elementary Principals:

I think it would be extremely valuable. The way things are changing, with technology and with everything else, somebody in there that could put their finger on the pulse of what's happening and change things as they need changed. Some of the curriculum here is older than dirt and has been around awhile and they've adapted to the PA standards, it would be helpful if we had a curriculum director here to support the feeling that we really need to make some changes, we really need to update things.

I think it would, being a principal… that has [everything] else dumped on me, just freeing me up to do more of my job would be worth it… [someone to say], "Who's teaching what? Are we re-teaching it four times?" I think with a curriculum person, that would just save time alone, and you know like they say, "Time is money."

I think if you had someone that knows what best practice is and can employ that, have those supplemental programs and the core programs, and they're taught with fidelity, I think that's invaluable. You're either going to put your money up front or you're going to be putting it up afterwards.

Teachers:

I think it would be very valuable… it would be a very worthwhile position to have. I didn't even know there were people out there doing that [curriculum administrator's job].

Priceless. To have somebody who is streamlining what you do, how you do it, the materials that you need. For example, there are cases of books at our school that have never been opened because they were ordered by people who didn't use them, and then… [the new person] says, "I don't want to use that." [which is s a waste]. If I had a curriculum coordinator who said, here's the books we're going to be using, here are the materials,

let's implement that, financially, I think that would be a boon to the whole organization.

A curriculum coordinator is one of those things where if you ever got one, you would wonder how you ever survived without that person or position. But because you don't have it you really don't know exactly how blessed schools that have it are and what a position like that could do for you.

School Board Member:

That would depend on to whom. I would think for the teachers, it would be very valuable, and to principals. To our community, I don't think it would be valuable at all. I don't think they would see the need for it, especially in these times of tight money… the entire board [would not find it valuable].

Interview Question 14b:

How financially valuable is the curriculum administrator position for the district?

The majority of answers provided by participants in districts with curriculum administrators also indicated that the position is viewed to be valuable. Most responders stated that they have seen evidence of success with their curriculum administrator. The following feelings emerged in order of highest frequency:

- Priceless

- Valuable

Superintendents:

Yes, [it is worth having this position in the budget] because of the quality of curriculum that we have... I think that is extremely important. The downside is though, as our enrollment continues to decline… it's going to be harder and harder to justify a full-time person.

I know other districts who don't have coordinators, I hear piecemeal contracts that they have to do with outside folks and it's… chunked, which can then be fragmented. If we didn't have a curriculum coordinator, we would not have been anywhere near as well advanced as I think we are.

Secondary Principals:

> I know for a fact over the past 5 or 6 years… [the curriculum director] has not only saved the district money, and gotten some very good deals… but has also been able to get some extra grant awards.

> Personally, I think they should pay [the curriculum administrator] twice as much as they're making now! In the past, all I have seen is things being dumped and dumped and dumped and dumped, and when something's dumped onto somebody, you don't put your heart and soul into it. When the curriculum was dumped, the special ed was dumped, and who suffers in the end? It's the curriculum overall that suffers; it's those special ed kids who suffer because I'm not putting my heart and soul into it. With [the curriculum administrator] coming into that position, they put their heart and soul into it and has done a fantastic job… we've seen big results. And honestly, would those results have happened without [that person] in that position? No. [Before their arrival], I often felt many times like the ship was a' sinkin. Just to keep everything afloat… at the end of the day, and it's like, what did I accomplish?

> To take time from the kids, time from the teachers, time from a parent, time from everybody else that wants a piece of you, and this is probably one of the most important things right now for us, to get this [curriculum] straightened out. You know, [that person] was able to set that in motion.

Elementary Principals:

> Priceless. Why are we here? We're teaching children, I believe everybody wants them to be taught what is needed, the best curriculum, the best instructors, and you need someone who is going to guide that… seamless K to 12.

Teachers:

> Before we had that position, the problem a lot of kids were having… there was no coordination, people weren't told what they had to do, and it was so disjointed that it was causing problems for the learning. And to me, having that position, and having the right person in it, is crucial to learning.

School Board Members:

> I think it's priceless. I think as evidenced by our success, it's a crucial position; and if having to make cuts, I would try to make cuts in other areas, such as an assistant principal... to avoid losing that position.

I think it's invaluable. Over the last so many years, I fought to keep it. I actually felt [that person] should have been given assistant superintendent status and pay because of the work they did.

I think it's been great. I don't know that anyone else would have looked into that [problem]. The head of the math department knew that there were some issues there, but I don't know that it would have really thoroughly been looked through to see that yes, we are missing these anchors and this is what the kids are not getting. You don't want to eliminate that [position] unless you have to, so that's my feeling, but I don't think all of the board members necessarily feel that it is such a key position.

Curriculum Administrators:

In this day and age of accountability, I would think that it would be one of the most valuable positions to have.

Looking at those PSSA results… they needed someone to give that direction and I don't think, without having one person assigned to that, could it have been done? Yes. Do I think it would have been done as effectively in a year? Probably not, just because [principals] have so many other things [to do]. I definitely feel it's effective and if we're worrying about producing responsible kids that are able to be successful, the curriculum's a huge piece of that, and if you don't have that for them, shame on us for not doing that… it's a priority that has to be met.

Pennsylvania System of School Assessment (PSSA)

The researcher also gathered achievement data for each district to use as a basis for answering research question number 7. School districts in Pennsylvania are required to administer the PSSA in reading and mathematics in grades 3-8 and 11 on an annual basis. The PSSA is used to measure success with No Child Left Behind federal mandates, and school and district performance information is accessible to the public.

PSSA proficiency levels for each district in the study are outlined for a three-year period. The average proficiency score was calculated for districts without and with a curriculum coordinator, as well as the difference in proficiency scores in districts without and districts with a curriculum coordinator.

Table 12

PSSA Proficiency Levels for Districts with and without a Curriculum Administrator

| | Proficiency Levels | | | | | | | | |
| | Districts without curriculum administrators | | | | Districts with curriculum administrators | | | | AVG |
District ID	A	B	C	*AVG*	D	E	F	*AVG*	ABC-DEF
2007 PSSA									
All Students Math	59	64	75	**66**	73	76	70	**73**	*-7*
All Students Rdg	63	62	77	**67**	72	71	63	**69**	*-1*
Econ Disadv. Math	52	49	68	**56**	63	67	56	**62**	*-6*
Econ Disadv. Rdg	54	48	69	**57**	62	57	47	**55**	*2*
Elementary Math	66	72	83	**74**	82	82	75	**80**	*-6*
Secondary Math	48	56	67	**57**	64	71	63	**66**	*-9*
Elementary Rdg	62	65	74	**67**	74	72	60	**69**	*-2*
Secondary Rdg	64	59	79	**67**	71	73	66	**70**	*-3*
2008 PSSA									
All Students Math	66	66	80	**71**	78	78	66	**74**	*-3*
All Students Rdg	64	65	79	**69**	74	73	62	**70**	*0*
Econ Disadv. Math	53	63	70	**62**	70	68	55	**64**	*-2*
Econ Disadv. Rdg	58	59	70	**62**	62	61	49	**57**	*5*
Elementary Math	81	75	89	**82**	85	85	78	**83**	*-1*
Secondary Math	50	52	69	**57**	69	74	50	**64**	*-7*
Elementary Rdg	64	65	85	**71**	76	77	66	**73**	*-2*
Secondary Rdg	62	65	74	**67**	72	76	57	**68**	*-1*
2009 PSSA									
All Students Math	72	65	80	**72**	77	78	77	**77**	*-5*
All Students Rdg	65	64	78	**69**	74	75	67	**72**	*-3*
Econ Disadv. Math	65	51	73	**63**	69	66	81	**72**	*-9*
Econ Disadv. Rdg	57	54	68	**60**	63	59	62	**61**	*-2*
Elementary Math	83	68	91	**81**	85	86	84	**85**	*-4*
Secondary Math	63	62	69	**65**	68	71	69	**69**	*-5*
Elementary Rdg	75	65	76	**72**	75	80	69	**75**	*-3*
Secondary Rdg	64	63	81	**69**	73	76	64	**71**	*-2*

Standard Error of Measurement= ±3 (average) for individual scaled scores.

The table indicates that the average proficiency levels for ABC (without curriculum administrator) and DEF (with) districts is higher in DEF districts in all areas except on two occasions during the three-year time span. The greatest difference in scores occurs in the area of mathematics rather than reading. In all three years, the greatest difference in average scores appeared in areas of mathematics. In analyzing performance of all students during the 2007, 2008, and 2009 school years, students in DEF districts have performed better than students in ABC districts.

Summary

This chapter presented a review of the data collection and analysis process. Data were collected from interviews with participants in three small, rural school districts without a curriculum administrator and three districts with a curriculum administrator. Data were analyzed, coded and classified according to the established theoretical frameworks. Themes emerged relative to the organizational structure and impact on the student learning environment in districts with and without curriculum administrators.

The next chapter will relate the data analysis to the research questions of this study. The research findings will be summarized. Recommendations and suggestions for further study will be provided.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduction

Students in Pennsylvania are required to demonstrate proficiency of the state

standards for districts to meet incremental Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) goals. In

order for students to be successful, an aligned, focused K-12 curriculum must be

provided. Research continues to show that effective curriculum leadership across the

district is essential for improvement. Heck and Hallinger (2009) define instructional

leadership as "an influence process through which leaders identify a direction for the

school, motivate staff, and coordinate an evolving set of strategies towards improvements

in teaching and learning" (p. 664). Influence must begin with central office staff,

including both superintendent and curriculum administrator. "Achieving success for all

students requires a consistent, systemic approach across the district, with all players

working in sync" (Agullard & Goughnour, 2006, p. 3).

In rural school districts in Pennsylvania, the position of curriculum administrator

is rare, and when one is not present, curriculum-related job functions become the

responsibility of superintendents and principals, which tends to be completed in isolation

or not performed at all. Effective leadership practices, such as Marzano, Waters, and

McNulty's (2005) balanced leadership and Spillane's (2006) distributed leadership

framework, are difficult to accomplish with limited resources.

Curriculum administrators perform duties and hold titles that vary from district to

district. They serve as the primary link between staff, administrators and projects in the

change process (Sabar & Silberstein, 1993). As an administrative team member, they

understand the big picture across the district and serve as the "glue" that holds the team together.

Leadership practices in relation to student learning in districts with and without a curriculum administrator will be examined in this chapter. A summary of the analysis from Chapter 4 will be provided with regard to findings from interviews with superintendents, principals, curriculum administrators, teacher leaders and school board members and how their perceptions relate to the research questions. Finally, conclusions and recommendations for future research are presented.

Summary of Findings

The purpose of the study was to examine organizational structure in relation to curriculum, how curriculum is developed, implemented and evaluated, and the impact these practices have on the vision of student learning in rural school districts with and without a curriculum administrator. The majority of the research questions relate to the impact of a curriculum administrator on the district's vision of student learning. Participants in this study identified their vision of student learning in their own district.

Perspective in Districts without Curriculum Administrators

The most common areas that define the vision of student learning in districts without a curriculum administrator is making Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) and post-high school success for students. There was some agreement on other visions such as keeping students challenged, engaged, and equipped with appropriate social skills.

Perspective in Districts with Curriculum Administrators

In districts with a curriculum administrator, the most common areas that define the vision of student learning are post-high school success and students reaching their

potential. Many agreed on other areas such as making AYP/achieving proficiency on the

PSSA or other assessments, and keeping students challenged and engaged.

All districts held post-high school success as a factor within the vision. It is

interesting that in districts without a curriculum administrator, making AYP is the basis

for the vision of student learning, whereas in districts with a curriculum administrator, it

is not a common vision, though it was mentioned as an underlying concern by many.

The common vision for each type of district is prerequisite for understanding how

interview data translates into answers for the research questions. The following are the

research questions and the conclusions based on the analysis of data.

Research Question 1

**In what ways does a curriculum administrator contribute to the facilitation of the
vision of student learning in small, rural Pennsylvania school districts?**

As defined above, the vision of student learning in districts with a curriculum

administrator is focused on the future success of students. The expectation is for the

schooling experience to be challenging, rigorous, and meaningful in order for students to

experience post-high school success. Students are expected to meet the standards and

achieve them in order to effectively master this expectation in elementary and high

school.

The analysis of data for this study concludes that curriculum administrators

contribute to the facilitation of the vision of student learning in several ways. The

following are perspectives in each type of district of ways they contribute.

Perspective in Districts without Curriculum Administrators

In districts without, efforts with curriculum change are led by the superintendent

and principals in each school; the principal is identified as the one person responsible for

142

leading curriculum change, implementation and evaluation. Related information is communicated by the principal to the faculty through faculty meetings and department meetings. In these districts, if a curriculum administrator were hired, the belief is that principals would be relieved of issues related to lack of time, and curriculum would be more consistent, connected, streamlined, aligned and coordinated K-12.

Perspective in Districts with Curriculum Administrators

Data analysis concludes that in districts with a curriculum administrator, a curriculum cycle is followed and implemented by the curriculum administrator. This is the person who facilitates the coordination and evaluation of the curricular programs across the district, works with principals, teachers, department chairs and data teams, keeps committees on task, aligns materials and ensures consistency in their use. They use assessments and gather relevant data to drive instructional decision-making. Information related to curriculum change, implementation and evaluation are communicated by the curriculum administrator through faculty meetings and department meetings. Other contributions include the support that curriculum administrators provide to the administrative team in facilitating the vision.

The curriculum administrator clearly leads the effort with curriculum change, implementation and evaluation in the district. These collective efforts contribute to the vision of student learning.

The data collected and presented in Chapter 4 did not include information on post-secondary pursuits for students. Since post-secondary success was found to be a vision for student learning expressed by those in districts with a curriculum administrator, the following information is provided on post-secondary activities.

For this study, post-secondary success is limited to the examination of enrollment in post-secondary institutions. In districts without a curriculum administrator, the average rate of total post-secondary bound students is 61%. In districts with a curriculum administrator, the rate is 69%. This includes all types of post-secondary education. The difference is greater for those who enter a 4-year college program. According to the Pennsylvania Department of Education (2009), in districts without a curriculum administrator, the average rate of college bound students is 57%, while the rate in districts with the position is 66%. The data suggests that in districts with a curriculum administrator, post-secondary success, which is the primary vision of student learning, is more prevalent among recent graduates. The rate of post-graduate activity enrollment is higher in districts whose primary vision of student learning is to succeed in post-graduate activities.

<div align="center">Research Question 2</div>

In what ways do administrators identify with the balanced leadership model in small, rural Pennsylvania school districts with a curriculum administrator and in districts without a curriculum administrator?

Marzano, Waters & McNulty's (2005) balanced leadership model outlines the leadership responsibilities that correlate with student achievement. Balanced leadership occurs when leaders exhibit these skills while implementing change, however, it is difficult for one administrator to possess strengths in all 21 areas. It is desirable that the strengths of district administrator teams will cover the 21 responsibilities. The following are definitions of each of the 21 leadership responsibilities:

1. Situational awareness- aware of the details and undercurrents in the running of the school; uses this information to address current and potential problems

2. Flexibility- adapts own leadership behaviors to the needs of the current situation and is comfortable with dissent

3. Discipline- protects teachers from issues and influences that would detract from their teaching time or focus

4. Monitors/Evaluates- monitors the effectiveness of school practices and their impact on student learning

5. Outreach- advocate and spokesperson for the school to all stakeholders

6. Change Agent- willing to challenge and challenges the status quo

7. Culture- fosters shared beliefs and a sense of community and cooperation

8. Input- involves teachers in design and implementation of important decisions

9. Knowledge of Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment (C, I & A) – knowledgeable about current curriculum, instruction, and assessment practices

10. Order- establishes a set of standard operating procedures and routines

11. Resources- provides teachers with materials and professional development necessary for the successful execution of their jobs

12. Contingent Rewards- recognizes and rewards individual accomplishments

13. Focus- establishes clear goals; keeps them in the forefront

14. Intellectual Stimulation- ensures staff are aware of the most current theories and practices; discussion of these are a regular aspect of the schools culture

15. Communication- establishes strong lines of communication with teachers and among students

16. Ideals/Beliefs- Communicates and operates from strong ideals and beliefs about schooling

17. Curriculum, Instruction, Assessment- directly involved in the design and implementation of curriculum, instruction, and assessment practices

18. Optimizer- inspires and leads new and challenging innovations

19. Visibility- has quality contact and interactions with teachers and students

20. Affirmation- recognizes, celebrates accomplishments; acknowledges failures

21. Relationship- an awareness of the personal aspects of teachers and staff

Superintendents, principals and curriculum administrators in both types of districts rated themselves by indicating their top eight areas of strength. The perception was that all team members have strengths in different areas, and therefore, it is likely that all 21 leadership responsibilities were covered. A finding in this study revealed that administrators in districts without curriculum administrators share more leadership responsibilities across the team, leading to a greater gap and less balance in responsibilities than districts with curriculum administrators. The data showed that when strengths of superintendents and principals in both types of districts were evenly compared, 13 responsibilities in each type of district were not chosen at all. The curriculum administrator typically has unique strengths compared to other administrators combined. Therefore, when the strengths of the curriculum administrator were factored in, the complexion of the district team changed, and only eight areas were vacant compared to the 13 vacant areas for the team without a curriculum administrator. Therefore, when curriculum administrators are on the administrative team, five additional areas of the 21 leadership responsibilities are covered.

Table 1 displays the leadership responsibilities that were chosen and agreed-upon by all subjects within each position category as an area of strength.

146

Table 13

Leadership Responsibilities Exhibited by Administrators

Position	Districts without Curriculum Administrator	Districts with Curriculum Administrator
Superintendents	Flexibility Resources	Situational Awareness Monitors/Evaluates
Secondary Principals	Situational Awareness Monitors/Evaluates	Situational Awareness Order Relationship
Elementary Principals	Input	Situational Awareness Flexibility
Curriculum Administrator	n/a	Situational Awareness Monitors/Evaluates Input Resources C, I & A

Several additional conclusions can be drawn based on the information presented in Table 1 and Chapter 4. Curriculum administrators are the only administrators in districts with and without curriculum administrators that identified curriculum, instruction and assessment (C, I & A) as a strength. Although it is not surprising for a curriculum administrator to indicate C, I & A as a strength, it is surprising that it is not a common strength for other administrators, and it is not exhibited as a strength by anyone in districts without a curriculum administrator.

Some areas overlapped across positions while others were not chosen at all. The most notable overlap is by superintendents in districts with a curriculum administrator and secondary principals in districts without a curriculum administrator who share the same responsibilities as strengths. "Contingent Rewards" is an area that was not a strength for anyone in either type of district. "Focus" is establishing clear goals and

keeping those goals in the forefront of the school's attention. However, it was not chosen by anyone in districts without a curriculum administrator. "Focus" was chosen by superintendents and curriculum administrators in districts with a curriculum administrator.

The data revealed definite strengths and weaknesses that were common among different job positions across both types of districts. The self-perceived strong areas as identified by superintendents included situational awareness, flexibility, and resources. The areas of weakness; areas that were not chosen as strengths by superintendents, include contingent rewards, discipline, C, I, & A, and affirmation. There was only one common area of strength perceived by secondary principals: situational awareness. Areas of weakness that were common among secondary principals include change agent, contingent rewards, focus, intellectual stimulation, and optimizer. Elementary principals commonly perceive themselves as strong in the area of flexibility and weak in the areas of contingent rewards and focus. There was a higher level of agreement among curriculum administrators, who perceived themselves as strong in the areas of situational awareness, monitors/evaluates, input, resources, and C, I, & A. Weak areas were also unanimous: discipline, outreach, culture, order, contingent rewards, ideals/beliefs, optimizer, and affirmation.

<div align="center">Research Question 3</div>

In what ways is a distributed leadership model practiced in small, rural Pennsylvania school districts with a curriculum administrator and in districts without a curriculum administrator?

Distributed leadership, as defined by Spillane (2006), is based on leadership practice where leadership functions are stretched over multiple leaders and is the

<div align="center">148</div>

"product of the joint interactions of school leaders, followers, and aspects of their situation such as tools and routines" (Spillane, p. 3). This study did not investigate whether or not the practice was effective in each school, but looked at curriculum-related practices across districts. Through interviews and discussion, the level of distributed leadership practices emerged so the researcher could understand the manner in which distribution of leadership responsibilities occur. Districts in the study were examined to determine if distribution occurs by design, default or emergence.

Chapter 4 provided insight into each district and their level of distribution. In some districts, distribution of responsibilities occurs by design and is clearly understood by all who are involved. In districts with curriculum administrators, roles are defined and the curriculum administrator is responsible for various duties that a principal would otherwise be assigned. There is consistency in perception that curriculum is aligned K-12, responsibilities are shared across the team, most team members are very comfortable in administrative meetings, and that without a curriculum administrator, there would be a lack of consistency and responsibilities would be distributed back to other administrators.

In districts without a curriculum administrator, distribution of responsibilities is viewed as an occurrence of "dumping" by some, causing resentment, and responsibilities that would normally be conducted by a curriculum administrator become low priority and are not accomplished in a timely and effective manner. Team members view responsibilities as shared to some degree, levels of comfort in administrative meetings vary from very comfortable to not comfortable at all, and there is a recognition that curriculum needs to be aligned and streamlined. In these districts, distribution occurs through default and/or emergence as crisis situations occur or the need arises.

The main conclusion is the majority of districts without a curriculum administrator implement practices that exhibit a model of distribution by default or emergence, while in districts with a curriculum administrator, distribution occurs by design.

Research Question 4

How are curriculum-related job functions accomplished in small, rural Pennsylvania school districts with a curriculum administrator and in districts without a curriculum administrator?

There is strong evidence that administration in both types of districts work with teachers as a team in the coordination and evaluation of curriculum. When subjects identified the person in their district who is primarily responsible for each job function of curriculum administration, it was evident that most curriculum-related job functions are conducted by principals in districts without a curriculum administrator and by curriculum administrators in districts with the position.

There are a few exceptions. In districts without curriculum administrators, superintendents function as the person to define the goals of the community, communicate information to the school board, and act as a liaison to higher education and agencies. In districts with, the curriculum administrator works with the superintendent to define the goals of the community and act as liaison to higher education and agencies. Curriculum administrators communicate curriculum information to the school board and community. In both types of districts, the principal resolves conflicts between personnel and prepares budgets for instructional materials and supplies.

Through further analysis of the checklist data presented in Chapter 4, it was discovered that job functions are accomplished in the following ways:

Table 14

Roles in Relation to Curriculum Job Function

Job Function	Districts without Curriculum Administrators	Districts with Curriculum Administrators
1. Investigates and researches innovations, materials, and other curriculum development projects.	Principals	Curriculum Administrator
2. Communicates information about projects in order to promote change.	Principals	Curriculum Administrator
3. Evaluates current curriculum content, materials, and methods.	Principals	Curriculum Administrator
4. Plans, organizes, and directs in-service programs for staff members.	Principals	Curriculum Administrator
5. Defines the communities' educational goals, focuses the curriculum on a limited set of goals, and provides control over development.	Superintendents	Curriculum Administrator/ Superintendent
6. Selects instructional and assessment materials necessary to meet educational goals.	Principals	Curriculum Administrator
7. Communicates curriculum information to the school board and citizen groups.	Superintendents	Curriculum Administrator
8. Promotes curriculum experimentation and local research.	Principals	Curriculum Administrator
9. Provides for distribution of curriculum materials and provides assistance in the implementation of new curriculum programs.	Principals	Curriculum Administrator
10. Provides for resolution of conflicts between personnel and contradictions in instructional programs.	Principals	Principals
11. Develops the design and organization of instructional program, articulating the program scope and sequence.	Principals	Curriculum Administrator
12. Establishes and maintains working relationships with area colleges, universities, state and federal agencies.	Superintendents	Curriculum Administrator/ Superintendent
13. Develops balance in the curriculum	Principals	Curriculum Administrator
14. Prepares budgets for instructional materials and supplies	Principals	Principals

In addition to the job function checklist, when asked who is responsible for

initiating a curriculum change within the district, subjects in districts without a

curriculum administrator indicated that it was the responsibility of the superintendent and principals. Subjects indicated that curriculum administrators are responsible for initiating a curriculum change within their district when one is present. This verbal response concurs with the information obtained from the job function checklist.

Effective communication processes within an organization is essential for successful curriculum implementation and district renewal (MacNeill, 2006). In districts without a curriculum coordinator, curriculum change, implementation, and evaluation are communicated to faculty by principals through department and faculty meetings. In districts with curriculum administrators, curriculum change, implementation, and evaluation are also communicated among administrators and faculty in department and faculty meetings. However, the curriculum administrator is the primary person who communicates this information. The difference in who communicates curriculum change is confirmed by the data presented in Table 2.

Although Table 2 and supporting data identify who is responsible for completing curriculum-related job functions, the functions are not accomplished at the same level in both types of districts. Subjects in districts without a curriculum administrator indicated that collaboration is lacking. They viewed their curriculum as inconsistent and not aligned or coordinated across the district, grades K-12. There was no mention of a curriculum cycle in place to drive their process. In districts with a curriculum administrator, the level of job function performance is greater as the curriculum administrator is viewed as the one who facilitates the coordination and evaluation of curriculum programs, curriculum is aligned and coordinated K-12, and the plan for decision-making is driven by the curriculum cycle. There is an indication that time issues

prevent job functions from being accomplished. In districts without a curriculum

administrator, with the various duties and responsibilities related to curriculum, it is very

difficult to dedicate the necessary time to accomplish curriculum-related tasks, whereas

in districts with, the curriculum administrator relieves time issues from the other

administrators who are able to focus on job-specific tasks in addition to being involved

with curriculum decisions.

<div align="center">Research Question 5</div>

How does the administrative team function in small, rural Pennsylvania school districts with a curriculum administrator and districts without a curriculum administrator?

Studies have found that rural districts are either challenged by or neglect the need

to develop a strong central office, yet a weak central office limits reform efforts

(McLaughlin and Talbert, 2005).

The basic administrative team, for this study, includes a superintendent,

elementary and secondary principals, and in districts with a curriculum administrator, the

curriculum position is included as an administrative team member. In participating

districts, most non-curriculum administrator districts had a secondary assistant principal.

Most districts with a curriculum administrator did not have assistant principals.

The analysis of data for this study concludes that administrative teams function

differently in districts with and without curriculum administrators. The following is an

overview of how teams function in each type of district.

<div align="center">*Perspective in Districts without Curriculum Administrators*</div>

In districts without a curriculum administrator, administrative teams meet on a

weekly basis or twice a month. Curriculum is not often a topic and only brought up when

<div align="center">153</div>

needed. According to one superintendent, "I don't have a schedule. They're busy and they

don't have time to just sit and listen to me, and I try very hard to not throw my initiatives

or my ideal situations on them." When curriculum is an issue, they problem-solve and go

to the teachers with the superintendent's support on the project. One secondary principal

expressed appreciation for this system. "When you're as small as we are... our

superintendent gives us a lot of latitude of what we can do and what we can't do."

In this type of district, responsibilities are "somewhat" shared across the team,

and varied as to whether or not responsibilities are shared. An understanding exists that

everyone exhibits different strengths, but the concept of distributing responsibilities

based on strengths was limited by the size of the team. A common view was that having a

curriculum administrator would help with "time" issues; it would relieve the

superintendent and principals of certain curriculum-related tasks and allow them to focus

on management-type tasks.

Perspective in Districts with Curriculum Administrators

In districts with a curriculum administrator, the administrative team meets on a

scheduled monthly basis, particularly in preparation for the upcoming school board

meeting, and as needed thereafter. Curriculum is a regular topic on the agenda, and also

discussed on an individual basis or when needed.

Districts with this position seem to continuously share responsibilities across the

team. The administration uses the strengths of each team member to work more

effectively as a team. The concept of distributing responsibilities was natural to those

who were on this type of team. They recognized that in their district, having a curriculum

administrator helps with everyone's "time" issues, and responsibilities were fairly

distributed and overlapped in an effective manner. Pajak (1989) stressed the importance of relationships and interdependence among the administrative team, especially between the curriculum administrator and superintendent.

The data provided by administrators in both types of districts indicates that each type of administrative team functions differently. Meetings are more formal, occur less frequently, and curriculum is a regular topic in districts with curriculum administrators than districts without. Teams function interdependently rather than independently, and responsibilities tend to be shared in districts with a curriculum administrator.

<div align="center">Research Question 6</div>

How is the rationale for having or not having a curriculum administrator evident in the perceptions of the administrators, teacher leaders and school board members?

All participants viewed the position as important and rationalized why they have and do not have a curriculum administrator. Studies show that even board members rank curriculum and instruction as the number one priority area of education (Burke 1991). As stated by a school board member in a district with a curriculum administrator:

> We believe that [curriculum is] the most important thing in our school. It's what keeps everything together. I think our spending shows the value in that and our desire to get the best curriculum possible. And we have some knock out, drag out fights about curriculum, but in the end, I think we end up with the best program we can possibly have, so that dialogue is very important in a discussion.

Other views don't negate the importance of curriculum as a priority area, but indicate the level of involvement is minimal. For instance, in a district without a curriculum administrator, a school board member recalls, "We don't really participate in curriculum

development. The most I've seen is we're handed a list of the books that are going to be used in different classes for approval."

The reality is clear in districts without; it would be great to have one, but with budget constraints in small, rural districts, it is not justifiable. In districts with, the reality is that the position is so well understood that it is unimaginable how the district would function without a curriculum administrator, yet there is an existing fear of possible elimination of the position due to increasing budget constraints in small, rural districts. The following identifies common perspectives of all participants.

Perspective in Districts without Curriculum Administrators

Participants were asked to identify how the district's academic program would change if the district had a curriculum administrator. The responsibilities of a curriculum administrator were defined, which included curriculum alignment, implementation, evaluation, professional development, possibly federal programs, grant writing, strategic planning, induction, and other related areas. Superintendents believe that if a curriculum administrator were hired, things would be done quicker, information would be communicated more effectively to staff, the person would train staff, and would focus on curriculum implementation. They also expressed a concern about the lack of resources to provide such a position. Secondary principals acknowledged that with a curriculum administrator, curriculum would be less fragmented and more streamlined K-12. Elementary principals felt that a curriculum administrator would be the go-to person who would keep their finger on the pulse and work with professional development and data, which would ultimately lead to an increase in scores. Teacher leaders shared a similar opinion as secondary principals: curriculum would be more connected and streamlined,

and repetition of curriculum content would be eliminated. School board members, all of whom were chosen for the study as board members who understand curriculum, felt that with a curriculum administrator, there would be more alignment and someone would see the big picture of the district.

Perspective in Districts with Curriculum Administrators

In districts with curriculum administrators, participants were asked to identify how the district's academic program would change if the district did not have a curriculum administrator. Superintendents claim that it would have been unattainable to make the curriculum changes that have been made to date. There was a concern by superintendents that if the position were to dissolve, duties would have to be distributed to other administrators, and currently, there is no time for principals and the superintendent to absorb the curriculum administrator's responsibilities. Secondary principals expressed a similar concern: it would be difficult for principals to keep up with curriculum changes as everything would fall back on them. Elementary principals also recognized that jobs would be dispersed to principals, grants would be dropped, and curriculum would be neglected. One elementary principal shared a concern that would be faced if a curriculum administrator were not on the team:

> The jobs that person holds would then have to be divided amongst the people who are in other positions. Some of those responsibilities would fall on myself; and I just feel that things would suffer. We have a smooth continuum of learning K-12, and that's because we have someone who oversees that. Right now, we have that beautiful, seamless [curriculum] because we have someone who does that.

Curriculum administrators were concerned that if other administrators had to take over their responsibilities, they would have too many "hats" to wear. School board members shared the same perspective: principals would have to take on too many responsibilities, and eventually, curriculum would suffer and the district would revert back to their old ways with a fragmented curriculum. Teacher leaders held a unique perspective. Most were not sure how the academic program would change as far as curriculum development was concerned, however, they knew that without a curriculum administrator to monitor and support, they would be able to close the door and do whatever they wanted.

A finding in this study concludes that administrators' rationale for having or not having a curriculum administrator is mixed in districts without curriculum administrators and strongly aligned in districts with curriculum administrators. In districts without, the benefits of having one are evident, yet it is not a priority area to put in the budget. In districts with, there is agreement across the district that this position has had a positive impact on the district's curriculum and academic program.

Research Question 7

How is data provided by adult professionals regarding beliefs about curricular leadership reflected in student performance data on PSSA scores?

Beliefs about Curricular Leadership in Districts without Curriculum Administrators

In these districts, when participants were asked to describe their position regarding curriculum change, implementation and evaluation, a variety of answers were provided. Consistency in responses across the district is not evident. Superintendents recognize their role as one who monitors and supports curricular changes, while principals identify themselves as the person who takes a leadership role. As indicated by

158

one superintendent, "I tell them my job is to provide the opportunities for you. They come up with their ideas and their initiatives. I provide that time for them, and then I will provide the resources for them." Teacher leaders see curriculum leadership coming from within the teaching ranks through departments or individually, while other teachers see no plan or structure for changes to be implemented. School board members are uninvolved in curricular changes, implementation and evaluation except for the financial support they provide. Data provided through interviews clearly indicates that in districts without curriculum administrators, principals are in charge of curriculum changes, implementation and evaluation in their own buildings, there is a need to streamline curriculum and develop consistency, and teaming, professional development, and curriculum are concepts developed locally at the building level but not K-12.

Beliefs about Curricular Leadership in Districts with Curriculum Administrators

Participants across these districts responded with consistent answers when asked to describe their position regarding curriculum change, implementation and evaluation. Superintendents, principals, teacher leaders and school board members identify the curriculum administrator as the leader of curriculum change, implementation and evaluation. Administrators see themselves as leaders alongside the curriculum administrator. One district was an exception as instructional coaches were also employed. In this district, the curriculum administrator supervises and directs the coaches, who promote curricular changes inside the classroom. Otherwise, patterns in responses across the districts were consistent and reveal that curriculum administrators approach changes with a K-12 mindset; monitor district curriculum alignment by reducing gaps and redundancies, conduct professional development on a district-wide level, and promote

159

teaming not only at the building level, but across the district. One superintendent identified the expectation of curricular leadership in the district, "I depend upon the curriculum coordinator to facilitate that change, the implementations, so under my direction and leadership, that person really executes and has done it very, very well."

PSSA Scores Relative to Curricular Leadership

An analysis of a three-year span of PSSA scores indicates that the average proficiency levels are higher in districts with compared to districts without curriculum administrators in the following areas: all students math and reading, economically disadvantaged math, elementary math and reading, and secondary math and reading. The average proficiency level of the economically disadvantaged reading group was greater during two of the three years in districts without than with curriculum administrators.

During the three-year time period, the greatest difference in average scores between the two types of districts appeared in areas of mathematics. Secondary mathematics exhibited the greatest difference, followed by economically disadvantaged mathematics, all students mathematics, and elementary mathematics.

A finding of this study is that based on the analysis of data during the three-year time span, students in districts with a curriculum administrator performed better than students in districts without a curriculum administrator, particularly in the area of mathematics. The districts with curriculum administrators who lead curricular changes with a K-12 approach exhibit a higher level of student achievement on the PSSA.

Conclusions

Researchers have studied instructional leadership and its impact on the learning environment (Heck & Hallinger 2009; Marzano et. al, 2005; Spillane; 2006). They found

that student learning is correlated with effective leadership practices, such as distributing leadership and balancing responsibilities. Leithwood, Louis, Anderson & Wahlstrom (2004) share that leaders must set direction, develop people, and redesign the organization for collaboration. When organizational direction is provided and collaboration is evident, effective curriculum development, implementation and evaluation can occur.

This research study found that the vision of student learning is impacted by the level of curriculum administration in a district. In districts where the personnel structure focused on curriculum, the vision of student learning was achieved at a higher level than districts where this structure is non-existent.

It appeared in this study that a common vision of student learning is that students will experience post-graduate as well as AYP success. It was found that the rate of post-graduate activity enrollment is higher in districts with curriculum administrators. In addition, student performance on the state-mandated PSSA test is higher in districts with compared to districts without curriculum administrators in both mathematics and reading.

The stories of administrators, teachers, and school board members describe how curriculum administrators contribute to the facilitation of the vision of student learning. In districts with, the curriculum administrator leads the way and involves administration in the effort of curriculum change, implementation and evaluation in the district. Curriculum is aligned and coordinated, K-12, according to a curriculum cycle. In districts without, curriculum change efforts are primarily led by principals with support from superintendents. Stories revealed that in these districts, if a curriculum administrator were

hired, curriculum would be more consistent, streamlined, aligned and coordinated K-12, and principals would have more time for other duties.

Another finding in this study concludes that leadership responsibilities are balanced more evenly among administrators in districts with than without curriculum administrators. In fact, "curriculum, instruction and assessment" (C, I & A) is not a self-identified strength of typical superintendents or principals. This should be a concern in districts without curriculum administrators when the superintendent and principal most likely, by default, undertake the role of curriculum administrator. In this case, school board members should seek candidates for superintendent and principal positions who are strong leaders in C, I & A. This should also be a concern that higher education and regional IU's should address in their preparation programs.

Research identifies the importance of leaders establishing clear goals and keeping them in the forefront (Marzano et. al, 2005, Heck & Hallinger 2009). There was considerable evidence that administrators in districts without a curriculum administrator lack in the area of "focus," unlike superintendents and curriculum administrators in districts with a curriculum administrator.

The results in these particular districts showed that distributed leadership occurs in multiple ways depending on how responsibilities are distributed (Spillane 2006). Distribution occurs by default or emergence in districts without a curriculum administrator and by design in districts with a curriculum administrator.

Flett and Wallace (2005) found that when supported by the school board, curriculum leaders have an impact on the teaching and learning process when they provide curriculum direction and philosophy, moderate initiatives, and influence the

professional development program. A critical finding in districts with a curriculum administrator is that the position has a positive impact on the district's curriculum and academic program. In districts without, there is a desire to have such a position, but it is not pursued due to lack of funding. Those in districts with curriculum administrators identified that the position paid for itself with grant money acquired by that person on a continuous basis.

These findings suggest that a significant contribution can be made to the study of organizational structure, district-wide curriculum alignment, and aspects of curriculum development, implementation, and evaluation. Findings may be useful to promote further study in these and related areas.

Recommendation for Further Study

The population for this study was limited and focused on a defined administrative structure. In the future, this study may be replicated with similar districts, or variations of the study may be conducted to expand the research in the area of curriculum administration in small, rural school districts. One possible study may include determining the characteristics that define an effective curriculum administrator. For this study, the sample districts were chosen randomly based on demographics. The risk was that in any chosen district, the curriculum administrator may have been an ineffective curriculum leader. Additional screening prior to selection may enhance the study.

Another area for additional study includes the examination of relationships among administrative team members. Student achievement may be impacted by an ineffective team. Through this study, the researcher gained insight on the interactions of team members, which could have led to another research study.

Organizational structure could be further explored, including the benefits of hiring a curriculum administrator instead of an assistant principal, or comparing other structures of curricular support, particularly instructional coaches or contracted curriculum coordination services with a district curriculum administrator. These various positions are present in some schools, and knowing the impact of these positions on curricular improvement would contribute to the field.

Finally, a study addressing the impact of distributed leadership occurrences in schools would also be a valuable addition to the literature. This study touched the surface of distributed leadership practices, whereas a study focused on such practices would yield insight to its effectiveness.

Summary

With increased accountability for student learning in schools today, curriculum must be continuously developed, implemented, and evaluated for effectiveness. This qualitative study attempted to examine organizational structure as it relates to curriculum development, implementation and evaluation, as well as the impact on the learning environment in small, rural school districts through interviews, checklists, and PSSA scores within two types of school districts.

Theories of organizational structure, instructional leadership, and rural schools were related to curriculum development practices in districts with a curriculum administrator and districts without a curriculum administrator. It was the aim of this study to understand the curriculum leadership practices and relate them to student learning.

An effective curriculum that is aligned and coordinated district-wide must be in place for districts to experience student learning success (Marzano et al., 2005). This

study confirms the positive impact of the curriculum administrator on curriculum

development, implementation and evaluation in relation to student learning.

References

Agullard, K. & Goughnour, D. S. (2006). *Central office inquiry: Assessing organization, roles, and actions to support school improvement*. San Francisco, CA: WestEd.

Ancona, D. (2005). *Leadership in the age of uncertainty*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Leadership Center.

Arnold, M. L., Gaddy, B. B., & Dean, C. B. (2004). *A look at the condition of rural education research: Setting a direction for future research*. Aurora, CO: Mid-continent Research for Education and Learning.

Arrowsmith, T. (2007). Distributed leadership: Three questions, two answers. A review of the Hay Group education research, July 2004. *Management in Education, 19*, 30-33.

Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development. (2007). All Adopted Positions: What We Believe. In *ASCD News & Issues*. Retrieved November 24, 2006, from http://www.ascd.org/

Atkins, Lois Major (2005) Organizational features and school performance. Ed.D. dissertation, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, United States-Virginia. Retrieved August 27, 2007, from ProQuest Digital Dissertations database. (*Publication No. AAT 3177339*).

Ballinger, Douglas (2007) A study of elementary principal's knowledge and implementation of the five balanced leadership framework responsibilities and their impact on student achievement. Ph.D. dissertation, Indiana State University, United States- Indiana. Retrieved October 14, 2007, from ProQuest Digital Dissertations database. (*Publication No. AAT 3259520*).

Bass, B. M. (1990). From transactional to transformational leadership: Learning to share
the vision. *Organizational Dynamics, 18,* 19-37.

Bass, B. M., & Atwater, D. C. (1994). Improving organizational effectiveness through
transformational leadership. In B. Bass, & B. Avolio (Eds.), *Transformational
leadership in teams* (pp. 75-76). Thousands Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Bass, B. M., & Avolio, B. J. (1990). The implications of transactional and
transformational leadership for individual, team, and organizational development.
Research in Organizational Change and Development, 4, 231-272.

Bass, B. M. & Steidlmeier, P. (1998). *Ethics, character, and authentic transformational
leadership.* Retrieved November 30, 2006, from Binghamton University, Center
for Leadership Studies, School of Management Web site: http://cls.binghamton.
edu/BassSteid.html

Bennett, N., Wise, C., Woods, P., & Harvey, J. A. (2003). *Distributed leadership.*
Retrieved December 11, 2006, from National College for School Leadership Web
site: http://www.ncsl.org.uk/media/3C4/A2/distributed-leadership-literature-
review.pdf

Bennett, W. J. (1992). *The de-valuing of America: The fight for our culture and our
children.* New York: Simon & Shuster.

Blumberg, A. (1984). *Report of the A.S.C.D. committee on central office supervisors*.
Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.

Browne-Ferrigno T. & Allen, L.W. (2006). Preparing principals for high need rural
schools. *Journal of Research in Rural Education, 21*, 1-16.

Bryan, Tomi White (2005) Systems thinking applied to crisis management: The eleven

allegories as an analysis tool. Ph.D. dissertation, Walden University, United States- Minnesota. Retrieved November 2, 2007, from ProQuest Digital Dissertations database. (*Publication No. AAT 3161210*).

Bryant, Violet Lantz (1984) An examination of the defined, performed and perceived roles of curriculum administrators. Ed.D. dissertation, University of La Verne, United States- California. Retrieved October 7, 2007, from ProQuest Digital Dissertations database. (*Publication No. AAT 8503173*).

Bureau of Labor Statistics. (2009). *Occupational Outlook Handbook: Education Administrators*. Retrieved February 28, 2009, from U.S. Department of Labor Web site: http://www.bls.gov/oco/pdf/ocos269.pdf

Burke, John Kendall (1991) The perceptions of and involvement in curriculum and the improvement of instruction of boards of education members in the public schools of Jefferson County, Kansas. Ph.D. dissertation, Kansas State University, United States- Kansas. Retrieved October 7, 2007, from ProQuest Digital Dissertations database. (*Publication No. AAT 9128486*).

Burns, J. M. (1978). *Leadership*. New York: Harper & Row.

Camburn, E., Rowan, B. & Taylor, J.E. (2003). Distributed leadership in schools: the case of elementary schools adopting comprehensive school reform models. *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis, 25*(4), 347-373.

Canales, Maria T. (2004) The superintendent/principal in small rural school districts in Texas: Leading with dual responsibilities. Ed.D. dissertation, Texas A&M University, United States- Texas. Retrieved November 3, 2007, from ProQuest Digital Dissertations database. (*Publication No. AAT 3150584*).

Chalker, D. M. (1999). *Leadership for rural schools: Lessons for all educators*. Lancaster, PA: Technomic Publishing Co. Inc.

Chance, E. (1991). *Creating an effective rural school district: A case study* (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED340532).

Chawla, S. & Renesch, J. (1997). *Learning organizations: Developing cultures for tomorrow's workplace*. Portland, OR: Productivity Press.

Copland, M. A. (2004). Leadership of inquiry: building and sustaining capacity for school improvement. *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis, 25,* 375-396.

Costa, A., & Guditis, C. (1984). Do district-wide supervisors make a difference? *Educational Leadership, 41*, 84-85.

Creswell, J. W. (1998). *Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five traditions.* Thousands Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Crowther, F. Hann, L. McMaster, J. & Fergurson, M. (2000). *Leadership for successful school revitalization: Lessons from recent Australian research.* Paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association, New Orleans.

Daft, R. L. & Becker, S. W. (1980). Managerial, Institutional, and Technical Influences on Administration: A longitudinal analysis. *Social Forces, 59*, 392-413.

Dawson, Karl (2007) Organizational learning in a community college. Ph.D. dissertation, University of Florida, United States- Florida. Retrieved November 2, 2007, from ProQuest Digital Dissertations database. (*Publication No. AAT 3271122*).

Dillon, H. (2001). Instructional coordinators. *Occupational Outlook Quarterly*, 20-22.

Educational Research Service. (2003). *National survey of school district budgets*.

Arlington, Va.

Eilers, A. M., Camacho, A. (2007). School culture change in the making: Leadership

    factors that matter. *Urban Education, 42*, 616-637.

Ellstrom, P. (2003). Developmental learning: A condition for organizational learning. In

    B. Nyhan, M. Kelleher, P. Cressey, & R. Poell (Eds.), *Facing up to the learning*

    organization challenge (pp. 24-32). Luxembourg: Office for Official Publications

    of the European Communities.

Finn, Margaret Mary (1988) Relationships between central office administrators and

    building principals in effective school districts. Ed.D. dissertation, Columbia

    University Teachers College United States- New York. Retrieved October 7,

    2007, from ProQuest Digital Dissertations database. (*Publication No. AAT*

    8824370).

Flett, J. D. & Wallace, J. (2005). Change dilemmas first curriculum leaders: Dealing

    with mandated change in schools. *Journal of Curriculum and Supervision, 20,*

    188-213.

Fullan, M. (2001). *Leading in a culture of change.* San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Gardener, C. & Edington, E. (1982). *The preparation and certification of teachers for*

    rural and small schools. Las Cruces, NM: ERIC Clearinghouse on Rural and

    Small Schools.

Glatthorn, A. A. (1987). *Curriculum Renewal*. Alexandria, VA: Association for

    Supervision and Curriculum Development.

Glatthorn, A. A., Carr, J. F. & Harris, D. E. (2001). *Planning and organizing for*

curriculum renewal. Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and
Curriculum

Gottenberg, Dolores, C. (2006) Perceptions of Pennsylvania principals on school
leadership: How teacher maturity and social context relate to leadership practice.
Ed.D. dissertation, Lehigh University, United States- Pennsylvania. Retrieved
October 14, 2007, from ProQuest Digital Dissertations database. (*Publication No.
AAT 3215839*).

Gronn, P. (2002). Distributed leadership. In K. Leithwood, P. Hallinger, K. Seashore-
Louis, G. Furman-Brown, P. Gronn, W. Mulford and K. Riley (Eds.), S*econd
international handbook of educational leadership and administration* (pp. 653-
696). Dordrecht: Kluwer.

Gross, S. J. (1998). *Staying centered: curriculum leadership in a turbulent era*.
Alexandria VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum

Grove, K. F. (2002). Beyond instructional leadership: The invisible role of the central
office. *Educational Leadership, 59*, 45-47.

Harris, A. (2005). Leading or misleading? Distributed leadership and school
improvement. *Journal of Curriculum Studies, 37*, 255-265.

Harrop, Marcia Feole (1999) Improving curriculum: Practices and problems that exist in
local school settings. Ed.D. dissertation, University of Massachusetts, United
States- Massachusetts. Retrieved October 7, 2007, from ProQuest Digital
Dissertations database. (*Publication No. AAT 9920607*).

Hatcher, R. (2005). The distribution of leadership and power in schools. *British Journal
of Sociology of Education, 26*, 253-267.

Hautala, T. (2005). The effects of subordinates' personality on appraisals of

    transformational leadership. *Journal of Leadership and Organizational Studies,*

    11, 84-92.

Hazi, H. (1998). *The role of supervisors in school reform*. San Diego, CA: Paper

    Presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research

    Association. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED422135).

Heck, R. H., & Hallinger, P. (2009). Assessing the contribution of distributed leadership

    to school improvement and growth in math achievement. *American Educational*

    Research Journal, 46, 659-689.

Heck, R. H., Larsen, T. J. & Marcoulides, G. A. (1990). Instructional leadership and

    school achievement: Validation of a causal model. *Educational Administration*

    Quarterly, 26, 94-125.

Herman, Rebecca S. (1998) School structure and student success: The effects of school

    organization on instruction and learning. Ph.D. dissertation, The Johns Hopkins

    University, United States- Maryland. Retrieved November 2, 2007, from

    ProQuest Digital Dissertations database. (*Publication No. AAT 9821134*).

Hesbol, D. G. (2005). The role understanding and perceptions of the superintendent/

    principal. Ed.D. dissertation, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, United

    States- Illinois. Retrieved November 3, 2007, from ProQuest Digital Dissertations

    database. (*Publication No. AAT 3182277*).

Hobbs, V. M. & Hitt, R. J. (1989). *Initiating the role of the educational consultant in the*

    rural school. Denver, CO: Mid-Continent Regional Educational Lab. (ERIC

    Document Reproduction Service No. ED326375).

Hodges, Donovan Evans (2001) Role perceptions of long-term Georgia curriculum

    directors. Ed.D. dissertation, Georgia Southern University, United States-

    Georgia. Retrieved October 7, 2007, from ProQuest Digital Dissertations

    database. (*Publication No. AAT 3029767*).

Homrig, M.A. (n.d.). *Transformational leadership.* Retrieved November 30, 2006, from

    http://leadership.au.af.mil/documents/homrig.htm, from the Air University Center

    for Strategic Leadership Studies document database.

Howley, A. & Pendarvis, E. (2002). *Recruiting and retaining rural school*

    administrators. Charleston, WV: ERIC Clearinghouse on Rural Education and

    Small Schools. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED470950).

Jamar, Donna Lee (1975) A comparative role analysis of curriculum coordinators in

    selected Kansas school districts. Ph.D. dissertation, Kansas State University,

    United States- Kansas. Retrieved October 7, 2007, from ProQuest Digital

    Dissertations database. (*Publication No. AAT 7525038*).

Jorgensen, Lon L. (2006) Rural high school principals' perceptions of organizational

    changes needed to retain rural teachers in North Dakota. Ed.D. dissertation,

    Edgewood College, United States- Wisconsin. Retrieved November 3, 2007,

    from ProQuest Digital Dissertations database. (*Publication No. AAT 3229537*).

Kaser, J., Mundry, S., Stiles, K. E., & Loucks-Horsley, S. (2006). *Leading every day: 124*

    actions for effective leadership (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.

Klein, R. E. (1988). *Combination administrative positions in North Dakota schools*.

    Bismarck, ND: Paper Presented at the Annual Conference of the National Rural

    Education Association. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED309010).

Korkmaz, M. (2006). The effect of leadership practices on organizational learning and

    student outcomes in Turkish High Schools. *Liderlik uygulamalan, 12*, 503-529.

    Retrieved November 2, 2007, from ttp://www.pegema.com.tr/turkce/makale_

    detay.aspx?id=2521

Krug, Frances. S. (1986) The relationship between the instructional management

    behavior of elementary school principals and student achievement. Ed.D.

    dissertation, University of San Francisco, United States- California. Retrieved

    October 21, 2007, from ProQuest Digital Dissertations database. (*Publication No.*

    AAT 8628337).

Lauer, P. A., Snow, D., Martin-Glenn, M., Van Buhler, R. J., Stoutemyer, K., & Snow-

    Renner, R. (2005). *The influence of standards on K-12 teaching and student*

    learning: A research synthesis. Aurora, CO: Mid-continent Research for

    Education and Learning.

Leithwood, K. A. (1992). The move toward transformational leadership. *Educational*

    Leadership, 49, 8-12.

Leithwood, K.A., Jantzi, D. (2006). Transformational school leadership for large-scale

    reform: Effects on students, teachers, and their classroom practices. *School*

    Effectiveness and School Improvement, 17, 201-227.

Leithwood, K.A., Jantzi, D., & Stenbach, R. (1999). *Changing leadership for changing*

    times. Buckingham, UK: Open University Press.

Leithwood, K., Louis, K. S., Anderson, S., & Wahlstrom, K. (2004). *How*

    leadership influences student learning. New York: The Wallace

    Foundation.

Leithwood, K. A. & Riehl, C. (2003). *What we know about successful school leadership.* Philadelphia, PA: Temple University, Laboratory for Student Success. Retrieved October 15, 2007, from http://www.ncsl.org.uk/mediastore/image2/randd-leithwood-successful-leadership.pdf

Lochry, Roger Ream (1998). The superintendent/principal in small, rural elementary school districts in California: Managing dual responsibilities. Ed.D. dissertation, University of La Verne, United States- California. Retrieved November 3, 2007, from ProQuest Digital Dissertations database. (*Publication No. AAT 9829204*).

MacBeath, J. (2005). Leadership as distributed: a matter of practice. *School Leadership and Management, 25*, 349-366.

MacNeill, Patricia F. (2006) A conceptual leadership framework for systemic reform in a rural educational setting. Ed.D. dissertation, East Carolina University, United States- North Carolina. Retrieved November 3, 2007, from ProQuest Digital Dissertations database. (*Publication No. AAT 3198866*).

Marzano, R. J., Waters, T. & McNulty, B. A. (2005). *School leadership that works: From research to results.* Alexandria VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.

Maxwell, J. A. (2005). *Qualitative research design: An interactive approach* (2nd ed.). Newbury Park, CA: SAGE Publications, Inc.

McLaughlin, Mike (2005) Superintendent/principal recruitment strategies in small, rural school districts in Northern California. Ed.D. dissertation, University of Southern California, United States- California. Retrieved November 3, 2007, from ProQuest Digital Dissertations database. (*Publication No. AAT 3196857*).

McLaughlin, M. & Talbert, J. (2003). *Reforming Districts: How districts support school reform* (Document R-03-6). University of Washington, Center for the Study of Teaching and Policy.

Meek, Janis Paynter (1999) Relationship between principal instructional leadership and student achievement outcomes in North Carolina public elementary schools. Ed.D. dissertation, North Carolina State University, United States- North Carolina. Retrieved October 21, 2007, from ProQuest Digital Dissertations database. (*Publication No. AAT 9964372*).

Melucci, Roseanne Campo (2003). District-wide curriculum directors: One district's experience implementing this position. Ed.D. dissertation, Hofstra University, United States- New York. Retrieved October 7, 2007, from ProQuest Digital Dissertations database. (*Publication No. AAT 3098119*).

Miller, M. (2007). Transformational leadership and mutuality. *Transformation, 24*, 180-192.

Mintzberg, H. (1993). *Structure in fives: Designing effective organizations*. Upper Saddle River, New Jersey: Prentice Hall.

Muse, I. (1989). *Becoming a rural school principal: a seven state study.* Reno, NV: Paper Presented at the Annual Conference of the National Rural Education Association. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED316378).

Neff, Albert Ray (1983). Decision-related activities of central office curriculum leaders: A lasswellian analysis. Ph.D. dissertation, Ohio State University, United States- Ohio. Retrieved October 7, 2007, from ProQuest Digital Dissertations database. (*Publication No. AAT 8410451*).

Nguni, S., Sleegers, P., & Denessen, E. (2006). Transformational and transactional leadership effects on teacher's job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and organizational citizenship behavior in primary schools: The Tanzanian case. *School Effectiveness and School Improvement, 17*, 145-177.

Odden, A., Monk, D., Nakib, Y., & Picus, L. (1995). The story of the education dollar: no academy awards and no fiscal smoking guns. *Kappan, 77*, 161-168.

Oduro, G. (2004). Distributed leadership in schools. *Education Journal, 80*, 23-25.

Owens, R. G. (1981). *Organizational behavior in education*. Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice Hall.

Pajak, E. (1989). *The central office supervisor of curriculum and instruction: Setting the stage for success*. Boston: Allyn and Bacon.

Partlow, Michelle Chaplin (2004) Turnover in the elementary school principalship and factors that influence it. Ph.D. dissertation, The University of Dayton, United States- Ohio. Retrieved November 3, 2007, from ProQuest Digital Dissertations database. (*Publication No. AAT 3151690*).

Pennsylvania Department of Education. (2009). *Public Schools: High School Graduates: 2007-08* [Data file]. Available from Pennsylvania Department of Education Web site, http://www.pde.state.pa.us

Pennsylvania Department of Education. (2006). *2005-06 Selected Data, Rank Department of Education Public School* [Data file]. Available from Pennsylvania Department of Education Web site, http://www.able.state.pa.us

Pennsylvania Department of Education. (2006). *Common Core of Data, Local Education*

Agency Locale Code File: School Year 2005-06 [Data file]. Available from

Pennsylvania Department of Education Web site, http://www.pde.state.pa.us

Pennsylvania Department of Education. (2007). *Department of Education Public School*

Enrollments by LEA: 2006-2007 [Data file]. Available from Pennsylvania

Department of Education Web site, http://www.pde.state.pa.us

Pennsylvania Department of Education. (2009). *PSSA Results Math and Reading District*

and School Totals: 2007, 2008, 2009 [Data file]. Available from Pennsylvania

Department of Education Web site, http://www.pde.state.pa.us

Plugge, Lane (1989). The emerging role of the school curriculum director in light of

school reform. Ph.D. dissertation. Retrieved November 10, 2006, from ProQuest

Digital Dissertations database. (*Publication No. AAT 9004700*).

Protheroe, N. (1998). The blob revisited. *School Administrator, 55*, 26-29.

Purvanova, R. K., Bono, J. E., & Dzieweczynski, J. (2006). The transformational

leadership, job characteristics, and organizational citizen performance. *Human*

performance, 19, 1–22.

Rigell, Craig DeWitt (1999) Leadership behaviors of principals and student achievement.

Ed.D. dissertation, The University of Tennessee, United States- Tennessee.

Retrieved October 21, 2007, from ProQuest Digital Dissertations database.

(*Publication No. AAT 9944284*).

Ross, J. A. and Gray, P. (2006). Transformational leadership and teacher commitment to

organizational values: The mediating effects of collective teacher efficacy.

School Effectiveness and School Improvement, 17, 179-199.

Rowan, B. (1982). Instructional management in historical perspective: Evidence on

differentiation in school districts. *Educational Administration Quarterly, 18*, 43-
59.

Russell, Lynette K. (1998) Role conflict and role ambiguity related to the responsibilities
of curriculum and instruction directors in Wisconsin public schools. Ph.D.
dissertation, The University of Wisconsin, United States- Wisconsin. Retrieved
October 7, 2007, from ProQuest Digital Dissertations database. (*Publication No.
AAT 9837047*).

Sabar, N. & Silberstein, M. (1993). The contribution of a curriculum coordinator to
school curriculum development: Two case studies. *Journal of Curriculum &
Supervision, 8*, 306-329.

Sagor, R. D. (1992). Three principals who make a difference. *Educational Leadership,
49*, 13-18.

Sansouci, Jill Stephenson (2007) An examination of selected job factors that influenced
New York State rural school superintendents to voluntarily exit their
superintendency. Ed.D. dissertation, University of Rochester, United States- New
York. Retrieved November 3, 2007, from ProQuest Digital Dissertations
database. (*Publication No. AAT 3252070*).

Schlueter, Kerri Jo (2007) A content analysis of the congruence between hiring criteria of
principals for the 2006-2007 school year and the characteristics of second-order
change. Ed.D. dissertation, Drake University, United States- Iowa. Retrieved
October 14, 2007, from ProQuest Digital Dissertations database. (*Publication No.
AAT 3257120*).

Senge, P. M. (1994). *The Fifth Discipline*. New York: Currency Doubleday.

Senge, P. M. (1999a). It's the learning: The real lesson of the quality movement. *Journal for Quality and Participation, 22*, 34.

Senge, P. M. (1999b). *The dance of change: The challenges of sustaining momentum in learning organizations.* New York: Currency/Doubleday.

Sergiovanni, T. J. (1990). Adding value to leadership gets extraordinary results. *Educational Leadership, 47*, 23-27.

Servais, K. A. (2006). Transformational leadership: Development and performance assessment. *AASA Journal of Scholarship and Practice, 3*, 5-9.

Silins, H. C. and Mulford, W. (2002). Leadership and school results. In K. Leithwood & P. Hallinger (Eds.), *Second international handbook of educational leadership and administration, part 2* (pp. 561-613). Dordrecht, The Netherlands: Kluwer.

Silva, D. Y. (2000). Collaborative curriculum encounters, *Journal of Curriculum & Supervision, 15,* 279-299.

Slavin R. S. (2007). *Educational research in an age of accountability.* Boston, MA: Pearson Education, Inc.

Smith, J. M. & Lotven, B. A. (1993). Teacher empowerment in a rural setting: Fact versus fantasy. *Education, 113*, 457-465.

Spillane, J. P., Halverson, R. & Diamond, J. B. (2004). Towards a theory of leadership practice: A distributed perspective. *Journal of Curriculum Studies, 36*, 3-34. Standard and Poor's (2006). *School Matters.* Retrieved December 1, 2006, from http://www.schoolmatters.com

Stake, R. E. (1995). *The art of case study research*, Newbury Park, CA: SAGE Publications, Inc.

Thompson, Jessica Leigh (2007) A systems approach to characterizing and understanding communication in interdisciplinary research teams. Ph.D. dissertation, University of Utah, United States- Utah. Retrieved November 2, 2007, from ProQuest Digital Dissertations database. (*Publication No. AAT 3256963*).

Timperley, H. S. (2005). Distributed leadership: Developing theory from practice. *Journal of Curriculum Studies, 37*, 395-420.

Tobin, P. D. (2006). A rural superintendent's challenges and rewards. *School administrator, 63.* 30-31.

Vera, D., & Crossan, M. (2004). Strategic leadership and organizational learning. *Academy of Management Review, 29*, 222-240.

Walters, D. L. & Pickands, D. M (2000). *Problems of rural school administrators: Are they complicated by the multi-school principalship?* Charleston, SC: Paper Presented at the Annual Meeting of the National Rural Education Association. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED447994).

Walton, LeAnna Evans (1990) The relationship of teachers' perceptions of school climate and principal competencies with the third-grade Georgia Criterion Referenced Test scores in rural Georgia elementary schools. Ph.D. dissertation, Georgia State University, United States- Georgia. Retrieved October 21, 2007, from ProQuest Digital Dissertations database. (*Publication No. AAT 9029860*).

Waters, T. Marzano, R. & McNulty, B. (2003). *Balanced leadership: What 30 years of research tells us about the effect of leadership on student achievement.* Aurora, CO: Mid-continent Research for Education and Learning.

Wimpelberg, R. K. (1987). The dilemma of instructional leadership and a central role for

central office. In W. Greenfield (Ed.), *Instructional leadership: Concepts, issues and controversies* (pp. 100-117). Boston: Allyn and Bacon.

APPENDICES

Appendix A

Interview Questions: Checklist

Section I: Curriculum Job-Related Functions

Please identify the position of the one person who is primarily responsible for each area
of curriculum administration listed below.

Superintendent	Principals	Curriculum Admin.	Teacher Leader	Not Applicable	Job Function
					1. Investigates and researches innovations, materials, and other curriculum development projects.
					2. Communicates information about projects in order to promote change.
					3. Evaluates current curriculum content, materials, and methods.
					4. Plans, organizes, and directs in-service programs for staff members.
					5. Defines communities' educational goals, focuses the curriculum on a limited set of goals, and provides control over development.
					6. Selects instructional and assessment materials necessary to meet educational goals.
					7. Communicates curriculum information to the school board and citizen groups.
					8. Promotes curriculum experimentation and local research.
					9. Provides for the distribution of curriculum materials and provides assistance in the implementation of new curriculum programs.
					10. Provides for resolution of conflicts between personnel and contradictions in instructional programs.
					11. Develops the design and organization of the instructional program, articulating the program scope and sequence.
					12. Establishes and maintains working relationships with area colleges, universities, state and federal agencies.
					13. Develops balance in the curriculum.
					14. Prepares budgets for instructional materials and supplies.

Plugge (1989, p. 17)

Section II: Leadership Responsibilities: Administrator Interview Checklist

Identify 8 leadership responsibility areas that are your strengths.

√	Responsibility	The extent to which the administrator...
	Situational Awareness	Is aware of the details and undercurrents in the running of the school and uses this information to address current and potential problems
	Flexibility	Adapts his or her leadership behaviors to the needs of the current situation and is comfortable with dissent
	Discipline	Protects teachers from issues and influences that would detract from their teaching time or focus
	Monitors/ Evaluates	Monitors the effectiveness of school practices and their impact on student learning
	Outreach	Is advocate and spokesperson for the school to all stakeholders
	Change Agent	Is willing to challenge and challenges the status quo
	Culture	Fosters shared beliefs and a sense of community and cooperation
	Input	Involves teachers in the design and implementation of important decisions and policies
	Knowledge of C, I & A	Is knowledgeable about current curriculum, instruction, and assessment practices (C, I & A)
	Order	Establishes a set of standard operating procedures and routines
	Resources	Provides teachers with materials and professional development necessary for successful execution of their jobs
	Contingent Rewards	Recognizes and rewards individual accomplishments
	Focus	Establishes clear goals and keeps them in the forefront of the school's attention
	Intellectual Stimulation	Ensures that faculty and staff are aware of the most current theories and practices and makes the discussion of these a regular aspect of the schools culture
	Communication	Establishes strong lines of communication with teachers and among students
	Ideals/Beliefs	Communicates and operates from strong ideals and beliefs about schooling
	C, I, & A	Is directly involved in the design and implementation of curriculum, instruction, and assessment practices
	Optimizer	Inspires and leads new and challenging innovations
	Visibility	Has quality contact and interactions with teachers and students
	Affirmation	Recognizes and celebrates school accomplishments and acknowledges failures
	Relationship	Demonstrates an awareness of the personal aspects of teachers and staff

Marzano et al. (2005)

Appendix B

Definition and Description of Locale Codes

NCES Common Core of Data, Local Education Agency Locale Code File: School Year
2005-06
http://nces.ed.gov/ccd/ccdLocaleCodeDistrict.asp

Locale codes identify the geographic status of a Local Education Agency (LEA) on an
urban continuum ranging from "large city" to "rural." They are based on the locale codes
assigned to the schools within the LEA, which in turn are based on a school's physical
address. The urban-centric locale codes in this file are assigned through a methodology
developed by the U.S. Census Bureau's Population Division in 2005. The urban-centric
locale codes apply current geographic concepts to the NCES locale codes used from 1986
through the present.

The 12 urban-centric locale code categories are defined below.

11 =   City, Large: Territory inside an urbanized area and inside a principal city with
        population of 250,000 or more.
12 =   City, Midsize: Territory inside an urbanized area and inside a principal city with
        Population less than 250,000 and greater than or equal to 100,000.
13 =   City, Small: Territory inside an urbanized area and inside a principal city with
        Population less than 100,000.
21 =   Suburb, Large: Territory outside a principal city and inside an urbanized area with
        population of 250,000 or more.
22 =   Suburb, Midsize: Territory outside a principal city and inside an urbanized area
        with population less than 250,000 and greater than or equal to 100,000.
23 =   Suburb, Small: Territory outside a principal city and inside an urbanized area with
        population less than 100,000.
31 =   Town, Fringe: Territory inside an urban cluster that is less than or equal to 10
        miles from an urbanized area.
32 =   Town, Distant: Territory inside an urban cluster that is more than 10 miles and
        less than or equal to 35 miles from an urbanized area.
33 =   Town, Remote: Territory inside an urban cluster that is more than 35 miles of an
        urbanized area.
41 =   Rural, Fringe: Census-defined rural territory that is less than or equal to 5 miles
        from an urbanized area, as well as rural territory that is less than or equal to 2.5
        miles from an urban cluster.
42 =   Rural, Distant: Census-defined rural territory that is more than 5 miles but less
        than or equal to 25 miles from an urbanized area, as well as rural territory that is
        more than 2.5 miles but less than or equal to 10 miles from an urban cluster.
43 =   Rural, Remote: Census-defined rural territory that is more than 25 miles from an
        urbanized area and is also more than 10 miles from an urban cluster.

Appendix C

Informed Consent Form

IUP LETTERHEAD

June 2009

To Whom It May Concern:

I am conducting a study in six Pennsylvania school districts: three with a curriculum administrative position and three without. The purpose is to examine the perceptions of rural school administrators, teachers and school board members in relation to the effectiveness of curriculum development and implementation in school districts with and without a curriculum administrator.

You are invited to participate in this research study because you are an administrator, teacher, or school board member in a small, rural Pennsylvania school district. The information contained in this letter should help you to make an informed decision whether or not to participate. Your participation in this study is <u>voluntary</u>. You are free to decide not to participate or to withdraw at any time without adversely affecting your relationship with the investigator. If you choose to participate, you may withdraw at any time by notifying the researcher. Upon your request to withdraw, all information pertaining to you will be destroyed. If you choose to participate, all information will be held in strict confidence and will have no bearing on your job.

Participation in this study will require you to be interviewed for approximately 1 hour using open-ended questions and checklists. Your response will be considered as it relates to organizational theory and curriculum development, not individual ability. The information obtained in the study may be published or presented at meetings but your identity will be kept strictly confidential.

If you are willing to participate in this study, please sign the statement below and you will be provided with an extra unsigned copy. If you choose not to participate, please disregard this letter. I appreciate your time and cooperation and look forward to your response.

Sincerely,

Mary A. Wolf   Dr. Cathy Kaufman, Dissertation Advisor
Doctoral Candidate   Professional Studies in Education
Clarion, PA 16214   Indiana University of Pennsylvania
                                                 Indiana, PA 15705

This project has been approved by the Indiana University of Pennsylvania Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects (Phone: 724-357-7730).

VOLUNTARY CONSENT FORM:

I have read and understand the information on the form and I consent to volunteer to be a subject in this study. I understand that my responses are completely confidential and that I have the right to withdraw at any time. I have received an unsigned copy of this informed Consent Form to keep in my possession.

_____
Name (PLEASE PRINT)

_____
Signature

_____
Date

_____   _____
Phone number and   email where you can be reached

_____
Best days and times to reach you

I certify that I have explained to the above individual the nature and purpose, the potential benefits, and possible risks associated with participating in this research study, have answered any questions that have been raised, and have witnessed the above signature.

_____   _____
Date   Investigator's Signature