A Study on the Principal's Role in the Development of Professional Learning
Communities in Elementary Schools that "Beat the Odds" in Reading

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ABSTRACT

Current federal legislation, such as No Child Left Behind and The Race to the Top, have elicited high levels of accountability for increasing student reading achievement. Professional organizations and researchers encourage educators to organize schools into professional learning communities (PLCs) to improve student learning. Despite the increasing popularity of the term PLC, actually transforming the culture of a school into a PLC continues to be a complex and challenging task. Leadership has been identified in studies as a critical element of change that leads to improvement. Research is needed to define the principal's practices that are successful in developing and sustaining a school-wide professional learning community.

This qualitative study addresses successful leadership practices of principals in four schools that are "beating the odds" in reading. These schools are at or above the district mean proficiency on the MCAII and have higher ELL and poverty levels than other elementary schools in the district.Through one-on-one interviews with principals, classroom teachers, intervention teachers, special education teachers, and coaches as well as principal observations and artifact collection, data was gathered to learn more about the daily actions and decisions of principals in these schools. Data collection was guided by five attributes of professional learning communities—shared leadership, shared values and vision, deprivatized practice, collective creativity, and supportive conditions.

The major findings of the study identified the following principal actions as conducive to the establishment of professional learning communities: (a) teachers had input in curriculum, instruction, and assessment decisions; (b) school building level

systems (committees, staff meeting norms) were involved in decision making and information dispersion; (c) schools had a reading instructional framework informed by research; (d) grade-level and cross grade-level collaboration on reading instruction included reflecting on practice, reviewing student work, common planning, studying research, and analyzing student data; (e) teaching peers provided instructional support to colleagues by mentoring, observing, and co-teaching; (f) a high commitment to quality instruction and achievement elicited collective creativity via seeking research, professional development and internet resources; and (g) extrinsic recognition of student reading achievement.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

The importance of quality education and the urgent need to improve
schools and raise student achievement are evident in the words of Arne
Duncan, Secretary of Education (2009), "More than any other issue,
education is the civil rights issue of our generation and it can't wait—
because tomorrow won't wait—the world won't wait—and our children
won't wait."

No Child Left Behind

The national education act, No Child Left Behind (NCLB), has caused

accountability and assessment to become the most popular buzzwords in reading

education. The federal legislation contains clear achievement guides in terms of student

reading standards and objectives and expected proficiency levels for students at particular

grade levels. Due to NCLB requirements, most states in the U.S. depend on a single

achievement test to hold schools and districts accountable for their student reading

performance and as the driving force for improving student achievement (Leithwood,

Louis, Anderson, & Wahlstrom, 2004). Stakeholders measure schools by web-based

school report cards focused on the percentage of students meeting proficiency on state

reading tests and AYP (adequate yearly progress) lists published in statewide

newspapers.

The focus on state reading standards and accountability systems is shaping local

decisions and policies in ways that are unparalleled (Leithwood et al., 2004). The high-

stakes, negative consequences resulting from not meeting the targeted percentage

proficiency on state reading tests include public 'black listing', ear marking of funds, and

possible school take over. As more and more schools and districts struggle to meet high standards, an anxiety builds in the education community (Vatthauer, 2008).

Professional Learning Communities

As educators seek answers on how to improve student achievement, an increased emphasis on research-based school reform has emerged. Research findings clearly point to the benefits of schools functioning as professional learning communities (PLCs) that lead to school reform. Louis, Kruse, and Raywid (1996) advise, "When schools attempt significant reform, efforts to form a school-wide professional community are critical" (p. 13). A PLC is defined as a group of educators committed to working collaboratively as they engage in ongoing processes of collective inquiry and action research to achieve better results for the students they serve (DuFour, DuFour, Eaker, & Many, 2006). Schmoker, (2006) summarizes the research, "The use of professional learning communities is the best, least expensive, most professionally rewarding way to improve schools. . . . Such communities hold out immense unprecedented hope for schools and improvement of teaching" (p. 4).

The benefits and impact of PLCs are numerous. Louis and Marks (1998) found that when a school is organized into and operates as a professional community, the following occurs:

1. Teachers set higher expectations for student achievement.

2. Students can count on the help of their teachers and peers in achieving ambitious learning goals.

3. The quality of classroom pedagogy is considerably higher.

4.   Achievement levels are significantly higher.

The Role of the Principal

Research studies identifying the critical role of the principal in creating the

conditions for school improvement have been replicated for decades. Early studies on

school effectiveness cited that effective school factors could not be brought together nor

sustained without strong administrative leadership (Edmonds, 1979). More recent

research on effective schools recognizes strong building leadership as a key element in

student reading achievement (Taylor, Pearson, Rodriguez, & Peterson, 2005). Leithwood

et al., claim (2004), "Leadership is second only to classroom instruction among all

school-related factors that contribute to what students learn at school" (p. 7). Principals

make an important difference in school effectiveness (Hallinger & Heck, 1996); as

leadership improves, so does student achievement (Waters, Marzano, & McNulty, 2004).

Experts in school reform highlight the importance of the principal's role in the

transformation of schools into professional learning communities. Newmann & Wehlage

(1995) state, "How can schools become professional communities? Success depends

largely upon human resources and leadership. The effectiveness of a school staff depends

much on the quality of leadership" (p. 37). Louis, Kruse, & Marks (1996) add, "The

principal plays a critical role in the development of professional learning communities,

forging the conditions that give rise to the growth of learning communities in schools" (p.

19).

Statement of the Problem

One of the most noteworthy changes triggered by No Child Left Behind (NCLB) is that it has redirected education dialogue, placing student learning at the core of the administrator's role (McCarthy, 2002). As the accountability movement has increased momentum, it has given rise to a new schema of principal leadership with a greater level of accountability for school improvement and the reading achievement of students. Specific details about and actions leaders can take to help their school experience student reading achievement gains are lacking in the professional literature. At best, the available evidence allows us to infer some broad actions that successful leadership might take. However, additional research is needed to define the practices that are successful in putting such actions into place.

The research evidence regarding the principal's role in school effectiveness is multifaceted, ill-defined, not easily confined to empirical research and more contradictory than might be understood from casual reading of the professional literature. (Hallinger, Bickman, & Davis, 1996). The major limitation in much of the research is that it does not identify leadership practices that are successful in improving effectiveness in school and classrooms. This concern is supported by Leithwood et al. (2004) stating, "Research is also urgently needed which unpacks how successful leaders create the conditions in their school which promote student learning" (p. 22). The findings of research often inspire principals, but infrequently point to explicit action that can be taken at the school level (Hill, 1998). Leithwood et al. (2004) continue,

> Research needs to focus on a more fine-grained understanding than we
> currently have of successful leadership practices; and much richer

appreciations of how those practices seep into the fabric of the education system, improving its overall quality and substantially adding value to students' learning (p. 14).

Purpose of the Study

Increasing student reading achievement is at the forefront of the accountability movement, and in turn, school reform. Research shows that students attending schools operating as a professional learning community have a decreased dropout rate, lower absenteeism, larger academic gains in reading, math, and science than traditional schools, and smaller achievement gaps between students from different backgrounds (Hord, 1997). The purpose of this study is to identify the everyday decisions and actions of elementary principals that elicit and support the development of professional learning communities in schools. It is hoped that the findings of the study would offer elementary principals specific, practical recommendations for transitioning from traditional schools to PLCs so that their students may learn at higher levels and educators feel that their profession has become more rewarding, satisfying, and fulfilling.

This study addresses practices of successful principals related to reading in schools that are "beating the odds". These schools are at or above the district mean proficiency on the MCAII and have higher ELL and poverty levels than other elementary schools in the district.

Research Questions

This study addressed successful practices of principals in schools that "beat the odds" in reading through the investigation of the following questions:

- What are the actions practiced by elementary school principals related to the development of professional learning communities in schools that have "beat the odds" in reading?

- What are the practices and procedures related to the development of professional learning communities in schools that have "beat the odds" in reading?

Definitions

The following terms and definitions will be used in this study:

Professional Learning Community (PLC):

Educators committed to working collaboratively in ongoing processes of collective inquiry and action research to achieve better results for the students they serve. Professional learning communities operate under the assumption that the key to improved learning for students is continuous job-embedded learning for educators (DuFour, DuFour, & Eaker, 2008, p. 469).

Best Practice: Evidence-based practices refer to an instructional practice that has a record of success. There is evidence that when this practice is used with a particular group of children, the children can be expected to make gains in reading achievement (Gambrell, Morrow, & Pressley, 2007).

Reader's Workshop: An organized set of language and literacy experiences (typically, a teacher led mini-lesson, student reading, teacher-student conferring, and student sharing) designed to help student become more effective readers. Student reading could be in the form of independent reading, guided reading, or literature study (Fountas & Pinnell, 2001).

Guided Reading: A small group of students with similar reading strategies work with the teacher to learn more about reading. The teacher selects a text at an appropriate level, introduces it, and provides supportive teaching that helps the group understand what reading is and how it works (Fountas & Pinnell, 2001).

Measures of Academic Progress (MAP): A computer-based assessment created by Northwest Evaluation Association. MAP dynamically adapts to a student's responses as they take the test. If a student answers a question correctly, the test presents a more challenging item. If the student answers a question incorrectly, MAP offers a simpler item. In this way, the test narrows in on a student's learning level (http://www.nwea.org).

Rasch Unit (RIT): The RIT Scale is a curriculum scale that uses individual item difficulty values to estimate student achievement. An advantage of the RIT scale is that it can relate the numbers on the scale directly to the difficulty of items on the tests. In addition, the RIT scale is an equal interval scale. Equal interval means that the difference between scores is the same regardless of whether a student is at the top, bottom, or middle of the RIT scale, and it has the same meaning regardless of grade level (http://www.nwea.org).

RIT Band: RIT band is also referred to as RIT Score Range. RIT scores are represented in ranges of 10, for example 151–160, 161–170, etc. . . . Each band has identified skills in each subject area (math, reading, language arts, and science) as well as each goal area or strand within the subject area assessment. In addition, signs, symbols, and vocabulary terms have been identified for each RIT Score Range (http://www.nwea.org).

SMART Goals: Setting a goal that's Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant, and Time-bound has an impact on professional and personal performance (Locke & Latham, 1990).

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

School Reform

Historical Context

Historical benchmarks, political initiatives, and educational reform movements are interwoven throughout America's past. Since the 1700s, the United States has advocated for free universal education for all its children. The 19th century's industrial revolution saturated the education world and the factory model became the norm for school district organization. The factory model called for centralization, standardization, and hierarchical top-down management. Teachers taught the prescribed curriculum with the required materials, and followed the specified schedule. Students were sorted and selected based on their aptitudes and economic resources.

In 1919 the Progressive Education Association was founded as a stark contrast to the existing factory model. Led by John Dewey, progressive educators objected to the growing national movement that led to academic education for the few and a limited vocational preparation for the majority. The cornerstones of progressive education were *child-centered* and *social reconstructionist* approaches. Students' interests shaped the curriculum and social and hands-on learning replaced rote learning. As the progressive movement gained moment, it became increasingly under attack from traditionalists. With the launching of Sputnik in 1957, many blamed the laissez-faire programming of public schools for the United States falling behind Russia in the race to space. During the Cold War, anxiety increased and progressive education was largely abandoned.

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In 1983, a quarter of a century after Sputnik, President Reagan's National Commission on Excellence in Education released its report titled *A Nation at Risk: The Imperative for Educational Reform*. The report added intensity to an already growing sense that American schools were failing, "The educational foundations of our society are presently being eroded by a rising tide of mediocrity that threatens our very future as a nation and as a people" (p. 5). *A Nation at Risk* served as a catalyst for an eruption of school improvement initiatives throughout the United States. The initiatives collectively became known as the Excellence Movement. The Excellence Movement can be summarized as "more"—more homework, more days to the school year, and more hours to the school day. Unfortunately, more of the same resulted in student achievement remaining the same (Alsalam & Ogle, 1990). The lack of student achievement gains was blamed on the excellence movement's top-down structure with increased mandates and lack of input from educational professionals.

In response, in 1989, President George Bush met with the nation's governors and created Goals 2000 aimed at setting high standards for America's schools. The goals included kindergarten readiness, graduation rates, competency in core curriculum areas, global competiveness, drug and violence free schools, and increased parental involvement. Goals 2000 established high standards, but local control was allowed to determine the best path to meet the standards. Undergirding Goals 2000 was the assumption that educators would embrace the flexibility in achieving the standards which would then lead to a much needed overhaul of the education system. Thus, the efforts became known as the Restructuring Movement. As a product of the movement, most

states and districts in the 1990s adopted some form of outcome-based education (OBE).

A state would create a committee to adopt standards, and choose a performance-based

assessment to assess whether the students knew the required content or could perform the

required tasks. Unfortunately, the movement did not result in increased discussion

amongst educators on teaching and learning. The standards of Goals 2000 were not

reached by the year 2000. Student achievement was not impacted and another failed

reform movement came and went.

Contemporary Reform Movement

The 21st century brought yet another education reform in the United States with

the passage of the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act in 2002. The legislation was

created by the President George W. Bush administration and passed congress with strong

bipartisan support. NCLB increased assessment requirements, mandating annual testing

in reading and mathematics in Grades 3 through 8 and once in high school. Student test

results were disaggregated by race, poverty, and special education. NCLB required

schools to attain adequate yearly progress (AYP) on state tests as a congregate and in

each subgroup. If schools do not make AYP, they receive sanctions such as mandatory

district funding for transporting students choosing to transfer to better performing schools

and mandatory district funding for student tutoring beyond the school day. The law

included annual increases in the percentage of students achieving proficiency on the state

assessments until 2014, when 100% of students are to be proficient.

No Child Left Behind is clearly an ambitious reform movement, but not all

educators agree with the positive influences of the act or that the AYP process has or will

improve student reading achievement and improve schools. Concerns have emerged that NCLB has had a negative impact on students, the teaching profession, and the quality of instruction. The stakes associated with the assessment may be for the student in the form of retention or denial of graduation. There is evidence that high-stakes tests are prompting a rise in dropout rates, especially for black and Hispanic students. Schools face the high-stakes front-page headlines of their results and possible 'black listing' for inadequate progress. Administrators may be transferred or reassigned if scores are not high enough (Hoffman, Paris, Salas, Patterson, & Assaf, 2003).

High-stakes tests are driving good teachers, who entered the field because of intrinsic rewards, right out of the profession (Hoffman, et. al., 2003). As high-stake assessment results are used for teacher pay raises or reprimands, stress and the intensity of teacher's work is at an all time high. Too often teachers work in isolation and increasingly feel frustrated and burnt-out with imposed curriculum and accountability demands (Fullan, 2001).

Accountability, through annual testing, drives schools to focus on improving test scores and education professionals look externally for answers. "Districts seek the best programs to teach reading and the most effective professional development providers for their teachers' inservice. Publishers of test preparation materials provide schools with resources needed to improve student scores" (Cobb, 2005, p. 472). Classroom curriculum narrows to tested content at the expense of untested content. Teachers instruct specific subject matter and formats used on the test rather than fundamental concepts or principles (Hoffman, et. al, 2003).

Professional Learning Communities

Political reform efforts call for structural changes to the education system. Structural changes such as increases in standards or testing are visible to the public at large and implementation can be verified. A much more complex change is required to bring about school improvement and increased student achievement. A mechanism promoting school improvement is a professional learning community. Joyce and Showers write of the cultural change associated with the development of a PLC, "We have come to realize over the years that the development of a learning community of educators is itself a major cultural change that will spawn many others" (1995, p. 3).

To the degree that schools' professional cultures are robust, instructional improvement is more likely to take place. Studies show that a sense of professional community is correlated positively with desirable student outcomes (Newman & Wehlage, 1995). "Community leads us to critically examine the values that play out in schools, the nature of the affective space we create for children and our actions as educators" (Furman-Brown, 1999, p. 10). Professional communities enhance teacher professionalism which has been documented as a necessary precursor in efforts to promote more challenging academic work for all students (Bryk et al., 1999).

In a PLC, collaboration is a systematic process in which teachers work together to analyze the impact of professional practice in order to improve results for their students, their team, and their school. Professional learning communities allow people to talk across grade levels, departments, and schools within a district.

> This simple, powerful structure starts with a group of teachers who meet
> regularly as a team to identify essential and valued student learning,

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develop common formative assessments, analyze current levels of achievement, set achievement goals and then share and create lessons to improve upon those levels (Schmoker, 2006, p. 176).

Reflective discussion, open sharing of classroom practices, developing a common knowledge base for improvement, collaborating on the design of new materials and curricula, and establishing norms related to pedagogical practice and student performance are hallmarks of a professional culture (Louis & Marks, 1998). Collaborative conversations make public what has traditionally been private—goals, strategies, materials, pacing, questions, concerns, and results (DuFour, 2004). Teachers ask questions about their practice and view teaching in a more analytic fashion (Bryk, Camburn, & Louis, 1999). Engaging in discussion with colleagues about their work and examining the assumptions basic to quality practice lead to deepened understandings of the process of instruction (Schmoker, 2006).

The very essence of a learning community is a focus on and a commitment to the learning of each student. When a school operates as a PLC, staff members hold high levels of learning for all students as both the reason the institution exists and the primary responsibility of those who work within it. Dufour (2004) summarizes research in the field, a

professional learning community flows from the assumption that the core mission of formal education is not simply to ensure that students are taught, but to ensure that they learn. It is a shift from a focus on teaching to a focus on learning (p. 8).

In a PLC, educators are hungry for evidence that students are acquiring the knowledge, skills, and dispositions deemed most essential to their success. Schools systematically monitor student learning through formative assessments and respond

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immediately to students who experience difficulty. A coordinated directive strategy that is timely and based on intervention rather than remediation is the response when students do not learn.

Undergirding a professional learning community are shared norms focused on student learning and collective responsibility for school processes and improvement which provide a structure that directs professional behavior (Bryk, et. al., 1999). These behavior guidelines are internally developed and agreed upon, rather than externally imposed. Three core practices characterize adult behavior in a school-based professional community (Bryk et al, 1999, p. 753): (a) reflective dialogue among teachers about instructional practices and student learning; (b) a deprivatization of practice in which teachers observe each other's practices and engage in joint problem solving; (c) peer collaboration in which teacher engage in actual shared work. A PLC is a school-wide culture in which teamwork is "expected, inclusive, genuine, ongoing, and focused on critically examining practice to improve student outcomes" (Waters, et. al., 2004). School administrators and teachers build a collaborative culture in which they work together and embrace accountability for the learning of all students.

<div align="center">Attributes of Professional Learning Communities</div>

Researchers (Hord, 1997; Louis & Marks, 1998) have identified characteristics of a school-wide professional community: shared leadership, shared values and vision, deprivatized practice, collective creativity, and supportive conditions. The five identified attributes were used to guide this study. A more in-depth description of each attribute follows.

Shared Leadership

Shared leadership is also referred to as distributed, decentralized, collaborative, democratic, and participative leadership. The principal accepts a mutually respectful relationship with teachers to share leadership, power, and decision making (Hord, 1997). In shared leadership, efforts to influence members of the organization are carried out by more than one person. Distributed leadership adopts a set of practices that are possessed by people at all levels rather than a set of personal characteristics found in people at the top (Leithwood et al., 2004). The relationship fashioned between principals and teachers leads to shared and responsive leadership in the school, where all develop capacity and are "all playing on the same team and working toward the same goal: a better school" (Hoerr, 1996, p. 381).

Decentralization of authority allows decisions affecting the school to be made by the educators nearest the students who are learning and the community. Leithwood, et al., cite the benefits of this approach "Through increased participation in decision making, greater commitment to organizational goals and strategies may be developed" (2004, p. 29). Distributed leadership increases the occasions for the school to capitalize on capacities of more of its members, enables members to benefit from the range of their individual strengths, and develops greater awareness of interdependence and how one's behavior affects the school as a whole.

Louis and Kruse (1995) cite the supportive leadership of principals as a necessary precursor to the development of a school-wide professional community focused on student achievement. An "inclusive, facilitative leadership style that encourages teachers

to be involved, to innovate and to take risks supports a professional community" (Bryk et al., p. 768). In most high performing schools, democratic processes were the means for decision making, and teachers focused their empowerment on teaching and learning (Marks & Louis, 1999). Shared power arrangements where authority was distributed among the staff and targeted at issues central to the collective good, depicted schools most successful in producing strong student performance (Marks & Louis, 1999).

Characteristics of principals in schools that undertake school restructuring include: a readiness to share power, the ability to assist and ease the labor of staff, and the ability to participate without dominating (Hord, 1997). This aligns with the tenet that transformation of a school into a learning community can only be done with the support of the administrator and the fostering of the staff's growth as a community.

Shared Values and Vision

Sharing vision is not just agreeing with a good idea; it is a detailed mental picture of what is valuable to a staff member and to the school (Hord, 1997). Staff members are encouraged to be active in the process of developing a shared vision and to use that vision as a guide in making decisions about teaching and learning. These behavior guidelines are internally developed and agreed upon, rather than externally imposed.

A professional community elicits the culture of a school where teacher collaboration is common, and teachers' practices are regulated by collective standards focused on the improvement of pedagogy and student learning (Bryk et al., 1999). Shared values and vision lead to standards of behavior that the staff supports. In such a

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community, the individual staff member is responsible for his/her actions, but personal ambitions are second to that of the common good.

In a professional learning community, a fundamental feature of the vision is an unwavering focus on student learning (Louis and Kruse, 1995). Professional communities turn data into useful and relevant information for staff. Professional learning communities evaluate their effectiveness on the basis of student outcomes. The use of data is evidence of the fact that every day the students and adults in the educational system are getting better and better (Reeves, 2006).

Deprivatized Practice

Peer dialogue focused on teacher's behavior is the norm in professional communities (Louis & Kruse, 1995). Teachers communicate to better understand curriculum and expectations, with a focus on how to best meet student needs (Taylor, Pearson, Peterson, & Rodriguez, 2005). Collaborative conversations make public what has traditionally been private—goals, strategies, materials, pacing, questions, concerns, and results (Louis, Marks, & Kruse, 1996). This practice is not evaluative but considered collegial assistance. Little (2006) found when teachers engage regularly in authentic "joint work" focused on explicit, common learning goals, their collaboration pays off abundantly in the forms of higher quality instruction, increased teacher confidence and notable gains in achievement.

Through strategies such as team teaching and peer coaching, teachers share and observe each other's methods and philosophies and come to know each other's strengths. Teachers call on their team colleagues to help them reflect on areas of concern. Each

teacher has access to the ideas, materials, strategies, and talents of the entire team.

Teachers' open dialogue reflecting on and developing classroom practices, elicits deep

team learning, improves classroom practice of teachers individually and collectively, and

leads to higher levels of student achievement (DuFour, 2004). The practice is created out

of the desire for individual and community improvement.

Collective Creativity

A professional learning community focuses on increasing the school's capacities,

innovation and creativity (Hallinger & Heck, 1998; Gijsel, Sleegers, Leithwood, & Jantzi,

2003). A professional learning community promotes the production of novel ideas with in

the school, while empowering and supporting teachers as allies in decision making

(Leithwood, 1994). Collective creativity encompasses collaborative brain storming and

thinking outside the box.

Such collaborative work is founded in what Louis and Kruse (1995) call reflective

dialogue, in which administrators and teachers participate in conversations about

students, teaching, and learning that include recognizing shared concerns and dilemmas.

Participants in such conversations learn to apply new ideas and information to problem

solving and are able to create improved learning opportunities for students. Engaging in

collegial activities may spur critical reflection and expose teachers to new ideas for

practice and provide teachers with opportunities to learn new ways of teaching (Bryk et

al., 1999).

Supportive Conditions

Physical or structural conditions, and human resources and capacities must be optimal in order for learning communities to function productively (Louis & Kruse, 1995). Principals facilitating professional community conditions provide time and resources and nurture a climate in which professional growth activity is supported and encouraged (Bryk et al., 1999). Louis and Kruse (1995) identify the following factors that support learning communities: (1) time to meet and talk, (2) small school size and physical proximity of the staff to one another, (3) interdependent teaching roles, (4) well developed communication structures, (5) school autonomy, and (6) teacher empowerment. In regards to human resources, Louis and Kruse (1995) cite the following qualities, in learning community members, as needed: willingness to accept feedback and to work toward improvement, respect and trust among colleagues, possession of an appropriate knowledge and skill base that enables effective teaching and learning, and supportive leadership from administrators.

Leadership

When the first studies of effective schools were conducted, strong building leadership was cited as a key factor (Brookover & Lezotte, 1979). The critical role of the principal in creating the conditions for school improvement has continued to be found in research over the past 30 years. Liethwood, et al. (2004) summarize, "Indeed, there are virtually no documented instances of troubled schools being turned around without intervention by a powerful leader. Many other factors may contribute to such turnarounds, but leadership is the catalyst" (p. 5). Evans (2001) states, "Principals are

widely seen as indispensable to innovation. No reform effort, however worthy, survives a principal's indifference or opposition" p. 202.

Theories of Leadership

There has been a great deal written about school leadership. It has been studied from multiple perspectives, and has been a challenge to researchers attempting to understand and define it. Sergiovanni (1994) states, "Defining leadership is not easy, yet most of us know it when we see it" (p. 6). The following reviews the literature on leadership models commonly cited in professional publications with the topic of professional learning communities: instructional leadership model, transformational leadership model, and shared leadership model.

Instructional Leadership Model

The instructional leadership model began in the 1980s as an innovative model countering the tradition role of the principal as a removed "overseer" which was found in most schools. In the instructional leadership model, the principal influences school productivity primarily as the school's instructional manager (Andrew& Soder, 1987). Instructional leadership focuses on the principal's role in managing school practices and procedures associated with instruction and supervision. The responsibilities of a person or persons providing instructional leadership include: helping the group develop a school mission and goals; coordinating, monitoring, and evaluating curriculum, instruction, and assessment; promoting a climate for learning; and creating a supportive work environment (Marks & Printy, 2003).

Working with staff in the development of a school mission and goals is a vital action of a principal following the instructional leader model. "Goals form a central part of the vision principals use to bring consistency to an otherwise unmanageably diverse set of demands" (Leithwood, Begley, & Cousins, 1990, p. 14). Instructional leadership frames the principal as a resource provider who positions staff and resources to attain the school's vision and goals. Instructional leaders connect their daily practice and the needs and resources of the school with the school's goals for students.

A high priority for an instruction leader is effective and clearly articulated school curriculum, instruction, and assessment. The principal advocates for ways to integrate instructional planning and goal attainment and establish performance standards for instruction and teacher behavior. Staff responsibilities are made explicit and student performance is expressed in measurable terms (Hallinger et al., 1996). A principal providing successful instructional leadership needs to have knowledge of effective schools' research and provide staff with opportunities for training and reflection of practice (Bryk, et al., 1999). Instructional leaders set expectations for continual improvement of instruction through staff development that enhances learning.

Supervision and evaluation of instruction focus on determining if school goals are transferred to the classroom. A principal providing instructional leadership makes formal and informal classroom visits and provides post observation feedback to teachers that elicits thoughtful attention to instructional improvement. Successful principals typically value conversations that encourage teachers to become conscious of and reflective of their learning and professional practice. Specific feedback strategies used to promote

reflection include making suggestions, giving feedback, modeling, using inquiry and soliciting advice and opinions, and giving praise (Blasé & Blasé, 1999). The principal as instructional leader establishes a problem-solving approach founded on trust and respect, discusses issues regarding student behavior, addresses classroom interactions and relationships, and maintains availability for follow-up discussion (Blasé & Blasé, 1999).

The instructional leader model holds the principal responsible for the climate of the school both as a place of learning and positive place to work. Bossert, Dwyer, Rowan, and Lee (1982) state that the principal influences student learning by shaping the school's instructional climate and instructional organization. Effective principals create the conditions for schools to be successful by working with teachers to provide coherence to their school's instructional goals and setting high academic standards. The principal also needs to stay informed of policies and teacher's problems, make frequent classroom visits, create incentives for learning, and maintain student discipline (Bossert, et. al, 1982).

The principal, as instructional leader, has an active role in the daily functions of the school. A principal who maintains high visibility increases her opportunities for interactions with staff which may provide her information on the needs of teachers and students. This visibility has been shown to positively impact teacher and student attitudes (Hallinger & Murphy, 1989).

In the instructional leader model, the principal can influence student achievement by working to raise teachers' expectations for student learning and to shape teacher's attitudes concerning students' ability to master school subject matter (Purkey & Smith,

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1983). Administrators support high academic standards and provide incentives for students by frequently rewarding and recognizing student academic achievement and improvement in the classroom and school-wide. Incentives for teachers include private or public rewards and recognition of teachers for their efforts (Blasé & Blasé, 1999).

Critics regard the instructional leadership model as paternalistic, archaic, and dependent on docile followers (Sheppard, 1996). Several observation studies report that principals do not serve as instructional leaders, but spend most of their workday on managerial tasks unrelated to instruction. Studies indicate that most principals infrequently evaluate instruction and the evaluations they do perform tend to be neither systematic nor valid (Cohen & Miller, 1980).

Transformational Leadership Model

The 1990s brought about an evolution of the educational leadership role in which leaders focused on changing the organization's normative structure (Leithwood, 1994). A leadership model frequently associated with change is called transformational leadership. Transformational leadership emphasizes problem finding, problem solving, and collaboration with the objective of improving school performance as measured by student outcomes (Hallinger, 1992). Leaders in transformational leadership roles seek to elevate teachers' degree of commitment, to support them to attain their fullest potential, and to encourage them to surpass their own self-interest for a larger good (Marks & Printy, 2003).

Gijsel, et al., (2003, p. 230) identified four dimensions of transformational leadership:

- Idealized influence—role modeling of high morals, putting others' needs first

- Inspirational motivation—elevating goals and inspiring enthusiasm and optimism

- Intellectual stimulation—developing colleagues' capacities, innovation, and creativity

- Individualized consideration—coaching, mentoring

Transformational leadership focuses on the importance of the principal's role in initiating entrepreneurship and influencing school culture (Leithwood, 1994). Transformational leadership focuses on a leader increasing the school's capacity to advance and produce novel ideas (Hallinger & Heck, 1998). A transformational leader provides intellectual guidance and promotes innovation within the school, while empowering and supporting teachers as allies in decision making (Leithwood, 1994).

Transformational leaders try to shape a positive school culture and contribute to school effectiveness by fostering collaboration and activating a practice of constant analysis of teaching and learning (Fullan, 1991). Transformational leaders encourage teachers to think about their beliefs about their work and to modify pedagogy. They institute expectations for quality instructional process and support teachers' professional growth (Marks & Printy, 2003).

Transformational school leaders focus on the individual and collective knowledge, competence, and dedication of teachers (Hallinger, 1992). The existence of transformational leadership within a school has direct effects on teachers' commitment to

school reform and the extra effort they allocate to the reform (Geijsel et al., 2003). It has indirect effects on teachers through teacher motivation (Geijsel et al., 2003). A model of transformational leadership is in place when staff members engage with others in such a manner that leaders and followers elevate each other to "higher levels of motivation and morality" (Geijsel et al., 2003). Greater teacher capacities and commitment have been shown to generate extra effort and increased productivity (Leithwood & Jantzi, 1999).

The transformational model has been criticized for merely extending greater autonomy to classroom teachers (DuFour et al., 2008). A concern has surfaced that the model lacks a focus on factors that increase student achievement. (Barnett, McCormick & Conners, 2001). Critics claim that autonomy and empowered individuals did not guarantee school improvement (DuFour et al., 2008).

Shared Leadership Model

The shared leadership model in which decision making is made jointly with teachers and staff has been cited as an effective model in a school operating as a community of learners. Ogawa and Bossart (1995) claim that shared leadership across administrators and teachers alters traditional school structures by generating coordinated efforts throughout a school staff. "Shared instructional leadership involves the active collaboration of principal and teachers on curriculum, instruction, and assessment" (Marks & Printy, 2003, p. 371). It is not dependent on a role or position. "The principal and teachers share responsibility for staff development, curricular development and supervision of instructional tasks" (Marks & Printy, 2003, p. 371). Shared leadership is inclusive and works well with proficient and empowered teachers (Marks & Printy,

2003). The principal is not the sole instructional leader but the leader of instruction leaders (Glickman, 2003).

The shared leadership model reflects the division of labor amongst school staff which is experienced on a daily basis and reduces the chances of error more likely to result from decisions based on the limited information available to a single leader (Leithwood et al., 2004). The principal pursues teachers' insights and expertise and works with teachers for school improvement. This inclusive approach to governance promotes effective methods of instruction and school conditions supportive of teaching and learning (Heck, Larsen, & Marcoulides, 1990).

Teachers exhibit leadership responsibilities when they collaborate with adults around school reform efforts, support others to improve their professional practice, or learn together with their school peers (Marks & Printy, 2003). Teachers are given the latitude to make their own curricular and instructional decisions based on the needs of their students (Hallinger, 1992). The authority to make decisions has been shown to improve teachers' work life and student achievement (Marks & Printy, 2003).

In the shared instructional leadership model, collaborative inquiry displaces principal-centered supervisory practices (Reitzug, 1997). Principals and teachers converse about alternatives rather than directives or criticisms and work together as a "community of learners" committed to students (Blasé & Blasé, 1999). Principals promote teacher reflection and professional growth (Marks & Printy, 2003). The principal becomes less an assessor of teacher proficiency and more a catalyst of teacher

growth. In tandem, teachers assume responsibility for their professional growth and for instructional improvement (Poole, 1995).

Chapter Summary

Public pressures and political policies have aimed to improve student achievement and the quality of schools throughout the United State's history. Waves of reforms have aimed at impacting school leadership and instruction. Current federal legislation, No Child Left Behind, has raised the stakes for schools and brought a new meaning to accountability. Concurrently, research has found schools operating as professional learning communities to be answering the call of NCLB with increased student achievement. The role of the principal in developing and sustaining professional learning communities seems to pull from various leadership models.

The instructional leadership model, transformational leadership model, and shared leadership model contain elements that align with eliciting a culture of a professional learning community in schools. The instructional leadership model brought about principal and staff collaboration in establishing a shared mission and goals guiding professional development, pedagogy, and resource allocation. The transformational leadership model builds staff capacity and commitment toward the school's goal of increased student performance. The shared leadership model involves the active collaboration of principal and teachers on curriculum, instruction and assessment and has been shown to promote effective instruction and school conditions supportive of teaching and learning.

Each model holds characteristics that align with the identified attribute of professional learning communities. Yet, a model in isolation does not encompass all the attributes nor is free from criticism. Also, more research on the everyday decision and actions of elementary principals in the development of PLCs in effective schools is needed. The purpose of the study described in the remainder of this paper is to shed light on this important aspect of effective schools.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

Research Questions

Schools are faced with high levels of accountability for increasing student reading achievement. Professional organizations and researchers encourage educators to organize schools into professional learning communities (PLCs) to improve student learning. Despite the increasing popularity of the term PLC, actually transforming the culture of a school into a PLC continues to be a complex and challenging task. Leadership has been identified in studies as a critical element of change that leads to improvement.

> Because of their positional authority and control over school resources, principals are in a strategic position to promote or inhibit the development of a teacher learning community in their school. . . . School administrators set the stage and conditions for starting and sustaining the community development process (McLaughlin & Talbert, 2006, p. 56).

The purpose of this research was to study the actions of elementary principals that foster, support, and sustain professional learning communities.

This study addresses successful practices of principals in schools that are beating the odds in reading through the investigation of the following research questions:

- What are the actions practiced by elementary school principals related to the development of professional learning communities in schools that have "beat the odds" in reading?

- What are the practices and procedures related to the development of professional learning communities in schools that have "beat the odds" in reading?

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The Criteria for School Selection

This study focused on discovering the daily actions demonstrated by elementary principals in schools that have "beat the odds". The sample selected for this study was purposely chosen to better understand leadership in schools that have "beat the odds".

Several steps were involved in identification of principals for this descriptive study. First, school districts meeting the following initial criteria were considered: Minnesota, public, non-charter, serving students of poverty and ELL (English language learners), and three or more elementary schools encompassing Grades 3 through 5 in the district. Minnesota schools were considered that were within 90 miles of the researcher due to time constraints of the researcher. Poverty was defined by students meeting criteria for subsidized lunch. Poverty was a criteria factor because it is significantly associated with lower reading and mathematics achievement scores for children. Students served for ELL services met criteria on a statewide English proficiency assessment. The ELL population was a criteria factor because achievement data suggest that English-language learners lag behind their peers. The Minneapolis School District and St. Paul School District were excluded from the study because they are characterized by special challenges such as higher levels of poverty, high student mobility, limited resources, and low levels of parent involvement (Breaux & Pearson, 1998). There has been and continues to be a great amount of research conducted on inner-city schools, and the researcher was interested in the impact of the principal in schools other than inner-city, where less research has been completed.

The second step was identifying "beat the odds" schools in each district by comparing schools' Minnesota Comprehensive Assessment II (MCAII) reading proficiency percentages from 2006 to 2008 in relation to the combined percentage of students who are ELL and/or in poverty. ELL and poverty percentages were summed for simplicity in identifying schools.

The MCAII was created via the Minnesota Department of Education to test the reading achievement of students. The MCAII aligns with the Minnesota Academic Standards in Reading. The test is constructed of multiple choice and short answer questions and comprised of vocabulary, comprehension and literature strands. Students score in four achievement levels—does not meet proficiency, partially meets proficiency, meets proficiency, or exceeds proficiency. School MCAII data and demographic information can be found on an online report card through the Minnesota Department of Education (http://education.state.mn.us/ReportCard2005/index.do).

This study was concerned with reading MCAII proficiency percentages in Grades 3, 4, and 5, and school-wide demographics. Schools that showed a historical trend of one standard deviation above the mean in combined ELL and poverty, yet attained the district mean proficiency or greater on the reading MCAII were ear marked as schools beating the odds. Five schools met the established criteria.

The Schools

The five schools identified as "beat the odds" schools in reading, based on the pre-established criteria, were asked to participate in the study. Four schools agreed to

participate and one school declined participation. Two of the schools were from the same, large school district.

The descriptive study examined the leadership of four elementary principals identified as Principal A, Principal B, Principal C, and Principal D. Consequently, the schools involved in the study are referred to as School A, School B, School C, and School D.

School A enrolled 515 students in kindergarten through Grade 5. School A is a member of a very large suburban school district in Minnesota. Forty-seven percent of the students qualified for free and reduced lunch and 21% were identified as English language learners. The poverty and ELL population at School A had steadily increased over the past 3 years. Eleven percent of the students qualified for special education programs. Thirty-four percent of the students were from a minority background. Seventy-eight percent of School A students in Grades 3 through 5 were proficient or exceeded proficiency on the reading MCAII. School A made AYP as a congregate and in all subgroups.

The school district's 3-year history of combined percentages of students receiving ELL services and/or meeting poverty guidelines was 42, 40, and 40. School A's 3-year trend was 68, 64, and 56. The school district's 3-year history of the percentage of students in Grades 3 through 5 scoring proficient or exceeding proficiency on the reading MCAII was 76, 74, and 79. School A's 3-year trend was 78, 71, and 80.

School B enrolled 454 students in kindergarten through Grade 5. School B is located in a suburban school district in Minnesota. Seventy-four percent of the students

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qualified for free and reduced lunch and 42% were identified as English language learners. School B had the largest poverty and ELL population at the elementary level in the district. Fourteen percent of the students qualified for special education programs. Seventy-three percent of the students were from a minority background. Sixty-seven percent of School B students in Grades 3 through 5 were proficient or exceeded proficiency on the reading MCAII. School B made AYP as a congregate and in all subgroups except for special education.

The school district's 3-year history of combined percentage of students receiving ELL services and/or meeting poverty guidelines was 103, 99, and 94. School B's 3-year trend was 116, 110, and 106. The school district's 3-year history of the percentage of students in Grades 3 through 5 scoring proficient or exceeding proficiency on the reading MCAII was 59, 57, and 75. School B's 3-year trend was 67, 73, and 91.

School C enrolled 350 students in kindergarten through Grade 5. School C is located in a suburban school district in Minnesota. Forty-four percent of the students qualified for free and reduced lunch and 15% were identified as English language learners. School C had the largest poverty and ELL population at the elementary level in the district. Ten percent of the students qualified for special education programs. Thirty-two percent of the students were from a minority background. Seventy-six percent of School C students in Grades 3 through 5 were proficient or exceeded proficiency on the reading MCAII. School C made AYP as a congregate and in all subgroups.

The school district's 3-year history of combined percentage of students receiving ELL services and/or meeting poverty guidelines was 37, 35, and 32. School C's 3-year

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trend was 59, 54, and 58. The school district's 3-year history of the percentage of students in Grades 3 through 5 scoring proficient or exceeding proficiency on the reading MCAII was 78, 76, and 81. School C's 3-year trend was 76, 77, and 81.

School D enrolled 363 students in kindergarten through Grade 5. School D is a member of a very large suburban school district in Minnesota. Forty-nine percent of the students qualified for free and reduced lunch and 24% of the students were identified as English language learners. School D had, historically, the highest poverty and ELL population at the elementary level in the district. Thirteen percent of the students qualified for special education programs. Thirty-three percent of the students were from a minority background. Seventy-four percent of School D students in Grades 3 through 5 were proficient or exceeded proficiency on the reading MCAII. School D made AYP as a congregate and in all subgroups except special education.

The school district's 3-year history of combined percentage of students receiving ELL services and/or meeting poverty guidelines was 42, 40, and 40. School D's 3-year trend was 73, 80, and 83. The school district's 3-year history of the percentage of students in Grades 3 through 5 scoring proficient or exceeding proficiency on the reading MCAII was 76, 74, and 79. School D's 3-year trend was 74, 69, and 77.

<center>Data Collection</center>

Participants in each school included the principal, one teacher from Grades kindergarten through 5, an ELL teacher, and a special education teacher. If the school had a literacy coach and/or a reading intervention teacher (Title 1 or Reading Recovery), the positions were asked to participate.

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Elementary principals were sent email invitations of participation in the study. The study was described as focused on the daily actions of a principal that promote a school-wide professional learning community. Principals were notified that they were selected as a possible participant because his/her school had a large poverty and ELL population, yet had achieved the district mean or greater proficiency on the Reading MCAII. Participation was defined as partaking in a 30-minute interview, being observed during regularly scheduled activities, and gathering documents. A follow-up phone call was placed to each principal reiterating the purpose of the study and why the principal had been invited to participate.

Four principals agreed to participate in the study. Three of the principal's school districts required district level approval for conducting research. Two of those schools resided in the same school district. Two district review processes were completed and permission was granted.

After receiving permission, the researcher met with each principal and conducted a semi-structured interview using the interview questions listed in Appendix A: Principal Interview Questions. Following the principal interviews, each principal was given an artifact folder with a list of possible documents to be collected. Documents included staff and parent newsletters, memos written by the principal, agendas and minutes from committee meetings, school improvement plans, grant applications, and district information reports. The researcher also requested possible upcoming observation times such as staff meetings, curriculum meetings, or teacher observations. Each principal was

shadowed on a minimum of four occasions totally a minimum of 16 hours. Field notes were used to collect data.

In each school, one teacher from each grade level (kindergarten–fifth grade), one English language learner teacher, and one special education teacher were randomly selected to be interviewed. A reading intervention teacher (Title 1 or Reading Recovery) and literacy coach was interviewed if the building had the position. The initial contact with the randomly selected staff members was an invitation to be in a research study of the daily actions of a principal that promote a school-wide professional learning community. The invitation was placed in the teacher's school mailbox. It explained that the teacher was selected as a possible participant because his/her school had a large poverty and ELL population, yet had achieved the district mean or greater proficiency on the Reading MCAII. Participation was defined as partaking in a 30-minute interview. A follow-up email was placed to each teacher reiterating the purpose of the study and why the teacher had been invited to participate. If no response was received, a follow-up phone call was placed to the teacher requesting acceptance or denial of participation. If participation was denied, a second randomly selected participant from that representative group was invited to participate. There were incidents when a second participant was not an option because the position did not exist.

Table 1.

Teacher Interview Response by Invitation Round

Sequence of Invitation to Participate	Counts Participated/Invited	Percentage of Possible Interviews
First Round Participants	28/37	76%
Second Round Participants	4/7	11%
Third Round Participants	1/1	3%
No Additional Teaching Position to Ask in the Representative Group	4	11%

Teacher interviews were scheduled at the teacher's time request, typically before or after school. Face-to-face semi-structured interviews were conducted using the interview questions listed in Appendix B: Teacher Interview Questions.

The interview protocols were created with the support of the professional learning communities assessment survey developed by Oliver, Hipp, & Huffman (2003). The interview questions were designed to gather information about the school's procedures and practices related to the development of professional learning communities. Questions were derived from the five attributes of a PLC—shared leadership, shared values and vision, deprivatized practice, collective creativity, and supportive conditions (Hord, 1997; Louis & Marks, 1998). The interview questions also asked the respondents to list attributing factors to the establishment of a professional learning community centered in reading and how dilemmas were worked through in the development of a professional learning community. The interviews were deigned to take 30 minutes to complete. Principal responses were longer than teacher responses, so fewer questions were asked in

the protocol. The interviews were digitally recorded and transcribed, with the names withheld on all documents.

Eighty-two percent (9 out of 11) of the possible representative participant groups were interviewed at School A. Grades kindergarten through 4 were represented. The Grade 5 reading teacher declined participation and there was not a second reading teacher to invite to participate. Two special education teachers declined participation. The ELL teacher, coach, intervention teacher and principal participated in the interview.

One hundred percent (9 out of 9) of the possible representative groups were interviewed at School B. Grades kindergarten through 5, special education, ELL, and the principal were represented. The first randomly selected third-grade teacher declined, so an alternate was invited and agreed to participate. The school did not have a coach or intervention teacher.

Ninety percent (9 out of 10) of the possible representative groups were interviewed at School C. Grades kindergarten through 5 were represented. The first randomly selected second-, third-, and fourth-grade teachers declined participation, alternates were invited to participate and all accepted. An intervention and ELL teacher participated in the interview. The only special education teacher in the school declined to participate. The building did not have a coach.

Ninety-one percent (10 out of 11) of the possible representative groups were interviewed in School D. Kindergarten, first grade, second grade, fourth grade and fifth grade were represented. Two first-grade teachers declined participation, the third agreed to participate. Both third-grade teachers declined participation and there were no more

teachers at that grade level. A special education teacher, intervention teacher, ELL teacher, coach and the principal participated in interviews.

Data Analysis

The interviews with verbatim transcriptions were analyzed quantitatively and qualitatively. The principal data was compared between schools. The teacher data were compared between schools, grade levels and positions.

The principal and teacher interview transcriptions were analyzed using a constant comparison method (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). The process began with a thorough reading through all of the interview responses. The second step included using grounded theory analysis (Strauss & Corbin, 1998) by open coding to compare individual responses to others to determine which phenomena shared sufficient similarities that they could be considered instances of the same construct. The responses were classified based on the commonalities. These commonalities were then used to form a description of each category. Each interviewee was color coded and the page number of the response was documented. Counts were made for each category. A chart was created which defined the categories for each attribute of a professional learning community and exemplary responses were pulled from the interview transcripts (see Appendix C: Teacher Interview Categories by PLC Attribute and Appendix D: Principal Interview Categories by PLC Attribute).

Principal interview data was analyzed through two additional filters. The first was a comprehensive study of field notes from principal observations. The categories established in the interview data were identified in the observation field notes and

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documented by observation number and page number for each school. The second was a detailed review of the artifacts collected. A log of artifacts for each school was created (Appendix E: Artifacts Collected). The categories established in the interview data were identified in the artifacts and documented by artifact number for each school. The data was compiled in a chart (see Appendix F: Evidence of Categories from Artifacts & Observations).

Finally, the principal interview data, artifact and observation data, and teacher interview data were aligned to check for consistencies in findings. The teacher responses were used to confirm or weaken the strength of the principal's actions documented in the first research study question.

<center>Quality and Rigor of the Study</center>

The expansion of qualitative research has stimulated a growing interest in the matter of research validity. Guba and Lincoln (1994) explain that in research guided by an interpretive orientation terms such as credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability replace the traditional positivist standard of internal and external validity, reliability, and objectivity.

In quantitative research, external validity is concerned with generalizing the findings to other situations, but this study is more aligned to reader generalizability whereby each reader of the research determines the applicability of the findings in their own situations (Wilson, 1979). Qualitative studies can serve as a conduit for others to understand their experiences through a different lens (Eisner, 1998). The thick description of the participants and contexts that comprise this descriptive study, help

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readers determine how similar they are to the situation of interest to them. For example, this study represents a small sample of suburban school leaders. While I will identify actions of principals that support the development of a school-wide professional learning community from my findings, they will not be applicable to all situations. The findings will, however, offer a useful guide for inquiry for leaders not only in suburban schools, but also of those working in other school settings.

Triangulation was achieved in the study through the use of principal interview transcripts, document analysis, observation field notes, and teacher interview transcripts. An audit trail was made that documented the research process including sources and methods of recording raw data, data reduction, and analysis products. The interview responses were analyzed by another researcher trained in the methods of constant comparative analysis in order to check for inter-rater reliability. Ten percent of the interview responses were randomly analyzed and coded. The inter-rater reliability of the interview responses was 89%.

CHAPTER 4

FINDINGS

Introduction

Principals, as school leaders, are integral components to the overall culture of schools. The principal position holds potential for developing the identified attributes of professional learning communities. The attributes are shared leadership, shared values and vision, deprivatized practice, collective creativity, and supportive conditions. The purpose of this study was to identify everyday decisions and actions that principals of "beat" the odds schools took to bring these attributes to fruition in a school setting.

This study addresses successful practices of principals in schools thar are "beating the odds" in reading. These schools are at or above the district mean proficiency on the MCAII and have higher ELL and poverty levels than other elementary schools in the district. The research questions are:

- What are the actions practiced by elementary school principals related to the development of professional learning communities in schools that have "beat the odds" in reading?

- What are the practices and procedures related to the development of professional learning communities in schools that have "beat the odds" in reading?

Ninety percent of the 41 maximum number of participants from the four schools agreed to be part of the individual interview process. In each school the principal, one teacher from Grades kindergarten to 5, an ELL teacher, and a special education teacher

were asked to participate. In addition, if the school had an instructional coach and/or a reading intervention teacher (Title 1 or Reading Recovery), the positions were asked to participate.

Table 2.

Interview Data Response Rates

Position (representative group)	Counts	Percent
Grades K–5 Teacher	22/24	92%
Special Education Teacher	2/4	50%
ELL Teacher	4/4	100%
Intervention Teacher	3/3	100%
Coach	2/2	100%
Principal	4/4	100%
Total	37/41	90%

In this chapter, a brief background description of each of the four schools and the principals in each school is included along with the findings for the research questions.

Background of the Four Schools

School A

Demographics. School A served 515 students in kindergarten through Grade 5 in a large suburban school district in Minnesota. Forty-seven percent of the students qualified for free and reduced lunch. Twenty-one percent of the students were identified as English language learners and 11% qualified for special education programs. Thirty-four percent of the students were from a minority background. The Black population was

the largest minority population with 17%. The Hispanic and Asian populations were the second largest ethnic population at 7% each.

Principal. Principal A attained her bachelor's degree at a Minnesota private liberal arts college and attained her master's and educational specialist degree from another Minnesota private liberal arts college. She completed an Ed. D. program through a Minnesota university via a cohort focused on urban leadership and social justice. Her dissertation was on African American middle school mothers and their reflections on their schooling and then comparing that to their perceptions of their child's education. Her dissertation work steeped her in social justice issues and the achievement gap.

Principal A worked in education for 33 years. She taught for 17 years, primarily in the district she currently works in as an administrator. Principal A was an assistant principal at a middle school for 6 years. Her first principal position was at the elementary level. She was at that school for 7 years before being asked to transfer to School A. This was her seventh year as principal at School A.

Principal A was on the state board for MESPA (Minnesota Elementary School Principals' Association) and for a number of years served as committee chair. She is one of the founding members of the Minnesota Principals' Leadership Academy during which she received 1 year of intense training through NISL (The National Institute for School Leadership). School A participated in the Reading First grant, which was a highly intensive staff development opportunity through the University of Minnesota. Principal A was twice a National Distinguished Principal finalist.

School B

Demographics. School B served 454 students in kindergarten through Grade 5 in a suburban school district in Minnesota. Seventy-four percent of the students qualified for free and reduced lunch. Forty-two percent of the students were identified as English language learners and 14% qualified for special education programs. Seventy-three percent of the students were from a minority background. The Black population was the largest minority population with 39%. The Hispanic population was the second largest ethnic population at 25%.

Principal. Principal B attained her undergraduate degree from a Minnesota private liberal arts university. Her career began as a secondary and special education teacher in Canada. A few years later, Principal B returned to Minnesota and taught at an elementary parochial school and attended a central Minnesota public university to attain her master's degree in special education and her licensure in educational administration. She taught special education at a rural elementary school. Then became the principal at a rural school district for 2 years. Later, she became principal at a large elementary school in the metro area. She is currently the principal at two elementary schools in the same district as well as the Title 1 coordinator for the district. This is her fourth year at School B.

School B was a MESPA (Minnesota Elementary School Principals' Association) School of Excellence and a National Blue Ribbon School. Principal B was the division president for 1 year and received the division leadership award the following year. She was also the winner of the MESPA magazine "My Principal as a Learner" contest.

School C

Demographics. School C served 350 students in kindergarten through Grade 5 in a suburban school district in Minnesota. Forty-four percent of the students qualified for free and reduced lunch. Fifteen percent of the students were identified as English language learners and 10% qualified for special education programs. Thirty-two percent of the students were from a minority background. The Black population was the largest minority population with 14%. The Asian population was the second largest ethnic population at 13%.

Principal. Principal C attained a bachelor's degree in psychology and a minor in child development and sociology. She continued her education at a rural university and received her post-baccalaureate teaching license. Principal C continued her education at a metro public university attaining a masters' of arts in educational psychology. Several years later, she went back to the university where she received her teaching license and earned her K–12 principal license.

Principal C taught for 11 years in a suburban district. Her teaching ranged from high school EBD (Emotional Behavior Disorder), elementary special education, and elementary classroom teaching. Principal C's licensure hours were almost all completed at the secondary level.

Principal C served as an assistant elementary principal in a suburban district for 6½ years prior to becoming the principal in her current building. This is her first year as principal of School C.

In her previous school, Principal C participated the Reading Excellence Act which provided intensive professional development through the University of Minnesota that was very similar to the Reading First professional development received by School A. Principal C's previous school received a Title 1 national award for improvement based on being one of the four schools in Minnesota that had the most growth based on MCA data after starting the REA grant efforts.

School D

Demographics. School D served 363 students in kindergarten through Grade 5 in a large suburban school district in Minnesota. Forty-nine percent of the students qualified for free and reduced lunch. Twenty-four percent of the students were identified as English language learners and 13% qualified for special education programs. Thirty-three percent of the students were from a minority background. The Hispanic population was the largest minority population with 14%. The Black population was the second largest ethnic population at 11%.

Principal. Principal D attained her associate's degree at a metro community college and then finished her Bachelor of Science degree at a central Minnesota public university. She completed her administrative licensure coursework through a metro satellite of a rural university and is currently enrolled at the same university in courses toward a superintendent license.

Principal D's professional career has all been in the same large suburban district. She taught middle school for 1 year, then moved to the elementary and taught Title 1 and fourth grade the remaining years. She has spent 13 years as an administrator either as an

intern, a dean, or a principal. Principal D has 3 years of experience at the district level in Title 1. This is her ninth year as the administrator in School D.

School D participated in the REA (Reading Excellence Act) grant, which was out of the University of Minnesota. The principal emphasized the staff development orientation of REA efforts.

Table 3.

School Demographic Data 2008

School	Student Population	Grades Served	Limited English Proficient	Special Education	Free and Reduced Price Lunch	American Indian	Asian	Hispanic	Black	White
A	515	K–5	21%	11%	47%	2%	7%	7%	17%	67%
B	454	K–5	42%	14%	74%	2%	6%	25%	39%	27%
C	350	K–5	15%	10%	44%	0%	13%	5%	14%	68%
D	363	K–5	24%	13%	49%	4%	5%	14%	11%	67%

Research Question One

The first question addressed in this study was, "What are the actions practiced by elementary school principals related to the development of professional learning communities in schools that have 'beat the odds' in reading?" Data was gathered through individual principal interviews, observations, and artifacts to examine the five identified broad attributes of a school-wide professional learning community:

- Shared leadership

- Shared values and vision

- Deprivatized practice

- Collective creativity

- Supportive conditions

Two additional questions were asked to grasp a broader view of the school and reveal themes that did not emerge through the attribute questions. Specifically:

- Factors for advancing teaching and learning to improve student reading achievement

- A dilemma or conflict regarding the development of a learning community centered on reading instruction and how it was worked through.

Table 4.

Principal Data Summary

Attributes of PLCs	Interview Count	Observation Count	Artifact Count
Shared Leadership			
Teacher input in curriculum, instruction, and assessment	4/4	4/4	3/4
Decision making is grounded in research and student data	4/4	4/4	4/4
Building level decision making and information dispersion in place	4/4	4/4	4/4
			(cont.)

Attributes of PLCs	Interview Count	Observation Count	Artifact Count
Shared Values & Vision			
Schools have a reading instructional framework informed by research	3/4	4/4	4/4
Grade-level and cross grade-level collaboration on reading support shared values and vision	3/4	4/4	2/4
Deprivatized Practice			
Instructional practice is shared during grade-level and cross grade-level collaboration through lesson sharing, reflecting on practice, reviewing student work, and analyzing data	4/4	4/4	3/4
Teaching peers provide instructional support to colleagues by mentoring, observing, and co-teaching	3/4	3/4	3/4
Collective Creativity			
High commitment to quality instruction and achievement elicits collective creativity—seek research, professional development, internet resources	4/4	4/4	4/4
Grade-level and cross grade-level collaboration on instructional planning, student needs, and student work support collective creativity	4/4	4/4	3/4
Supportive Conditions			
School schedule prioritizes reading instruction—research-based, prescribed, daily structure, includes support staff	4/4	4/4	4/4

(cont.)

Attributes of PLCs	Interview Count	Observation Count	Artifact Count
Extrinsic recognition of student reading achievement	3/4	3/4	1/4
Intrinsic recognition of student reading achievement	3/4	1/4	1/4
Factors for Advancing Teaching & Learning			
Collaboration and communication amongst staff that includes common planning and studying research on instructional practices	4/4	4/4	3/4
Professional development that is narrowly focused, committed, and includes diversity training	3/4	4/4	4/4
High expectations for student achievement and collective efficacy amongst staff	3/4	4/4	4/4
Schools have a reading instructional framework informed by research	3/4	4/4	4/4
Working Through Dilemmas			
Teachers empowered to deal with dilemma	3/4	4/4	3/4

Table 5.

Observations

School	Staff Meeting	Cross Grade-level Meeting	Building Level Committee Meeting	District Level Meeting	1:1 Parent Meeting	Principal Visiting Classrooms and Halls	Grade-level Meeting	Title 1 Meeting	Diversity Professional Development	Parent-Student Picnic	Meeting with Principal or Coach	Observation and/or Post-observation Meeting	P.T.O. Meeting	First Lady School Visit
A		X	X	X	X	X				X	X			
B	X					X	X	X				X	X	X
C	X		X	X		X								
D	X	X	X	X		X			X		X	X		

Shared Leadership

Each principal was asked how staff was involved in making decisions about reading curriculum, instruction, and assessment?" Common themes emerged from the constant comparison analysis and themes were supported with observation data and artifacts.

All of the principals reported that teachers have input in curriculum, instruction, and assessment. Principal C shared, "So, if they (teachers) find materials that they want, then we will get them, in addition. Whether it is leveled books or vocabulary focus, something with writing." In an observation of the principal at School C, the principal was meeting with the fourth-grade team. The teachers and principal were discussing a building effort to differentiate instruction in reading based on student Measures of Academic Progress (MAP) RIT bands. The principal asked the fourth-grade teachers to discuss the pros and cons of multi-grade-level differentiation with fifth grade. The teachers were to decide if it would be best for the students to move between teachers in fourth grade or include fifth-grade teachers and students. Principal C said she would support what the teachers decided. Principal C conducted a teacher survey (Appendix E: Artifact C-17) to learn more about teacher instructional decision making by asking questions such as, "What causes achievement?", "How can we increase student engagement?" and "In any given lesson, what % of your questions ask students to analyze, synthesize or evaluate?" In an observation at School D, a teacher wrote a grant for bilingual books that could be checked out and brought home to read.

One hundred percent of the principals stated that decision-making was grounded in best practice. Best practice included data driven and research-based decision making. A research example from principal interviews, "Then we make sense of it here and implement it here in the building and the teachers choose their methods which come from best practice reading and learning." A data example, "The thing that I'm finding out is that they (teachers) are coming in before school or the first day of workshop and saying, 'O.k. Where is the data on this child?' and that's really changed over the years." In the main entry at School A, there was a large visual display posted in the windows titled *School A Reading All Stars.* The display had pictures of staff and students during reading instruction. Text on the display included research-based practices "Effective Classroom Instruction—Differentiated Instruction, Active Engagement, Assessment/Progress Monitoring, Effective Intervention, Instructional Conversation" and "Scientifically Based Reading Research—High Level Independent Work, Fluency, Comprehension Strategies, Non-Fiction Text, Cute Kids." A weekly newsletter written by Principal D (Appendix E: Artifact D-37) included the school's program improvement goals for the school year. Goal 1 was, "Staff will increase knowledge and understanding of researched best practices to teach reading resulting in improved student achievement in reading."

Every principal referenced building level decision-making and information dispersion through committees and reform efforts. Principal A, who participated in an intensive school reform effort explained

> Instruction, well, for example, the Reading First grant, the staff had to buy in and sign off on doing this intensive staff development over a period of 3 years and 3 summers to be a part of the Reading First grant. They had a 100% decision to go that route.

Building level decision making was evident in the Building Leadership Team meeting notes (Appendix E: Artifact A-12) from School A. The notes summarize the committee's discussion and decision making regarding the school's mission and vision statement as well as schedule suggestions for the upcoming year. In an observation at School D, the principal and instructional coach share their concern about the training needed for incoming staff (involuntary transfers due to district budget cuts). The principal and coach stated that the non-renewed teachers at School D had art integration training and intervention training that were specific to School D. New, transferred teachers would be lacking that background.

Shared Values and Vision

The four principals were asked to describe the process for developing shared values and vision in reading among staff and to explain how these values guide behavior and decisions about reading teaching and learning.

Three of the respondents cited clear and closely followed reading instructional frameworks as a shared value in their building. These frameworks included specific pedagogy such as reader's workshop (one school) and research-based practices such as Early Intervention Reading. EIR (Taylor, B.M.) meets the What Works Clearinghouse evidence standards (one school). The principal of School A created a document titled *Reading First Grant School Reflections* (Appendix E: Artifact A-4). The final statement in the document was, "This has been a wonderful opportunity for our students. Our test scores reflect the change in practice and I don't think we would be in the same place without the Reading First Grant." Principal of School B responded, "I think the values are

that we have a consistent level of training for teachers and we have a consistent standard of teaching and reader's workshop. If you go to any classroom in my building . . . you will see a short mini-lesson and then you will see the students getting into guided reading groups. You should see a closure every time you go in." In School D, the staff read the book *The Daily Five* (Boushey & Moser, 2006). The book attempts to bridge the knowing (research)-doing (practice) gap by structuring reading instruction into teacher mini-lessons, student authentic application, and students sharing their learning. Teachers implemented components during their literacy block. In a first-grade classroom a Daily Five poster was on the whiteboard. The teacher instructed a guided reading lesson while students rotated through the Daily Five activities.

Another theme emerging from interviews, reported by three of the four principals, was that grade-level and cross grade-level collaboration on research-based practices supported shared values and vision. Principal A, who participated in Reading First, commented, "We spent 3 solid years, once a week, in our professional learning communities whether it's grade level or across grade level, looking at different units on reading instruction whether it be how to use assessment, how to use the Daily Five, for example." Principal B, who participated in the REA grant responded, "In our study groups, then, we would study these central topics and all work together to bring that initiative forward." The mission statement for School D, an art specialty school, was discussed at a committee meeting. Representatives from grade levels and departments shared the focus of their group's efforts toward integrating arts into other academic areas.

School A and School D had year-long prescribed PLC group and study group meeting

schedules (Appendix E: Artifact A-18 and Artifact D-10).

Deprivatized Practice

Principals were asked, "What opportunities exist for staff to provide feedback to

peers related to reading instructional practices?" and "What opportunities exist for staff to

collaboratively review student work and to share and improve reading instructional

practices?"

Grade-level and cross grade-level collaboration in PLC groups/study groups and

team time were cited by all four principals as junctures for sharing research-based

instructional practice. The principal at School D said, "They (teachers) discuss and talk

together in their PLCs. They still look at their video clips. They look at student work.

They discuss how they are teaching and they reflect upon that." During a staff meeting in

School B, teachers presented information on academic choice to the staff. Student choice

is a hallmark of motivating reading instruction (Guthrie & McKenna, 2000). One of the

teachers had a student attend the staff meeting and the student sang a song she wrote as

an academic choice after reading the novel *Bridge to Terabithia*. Teachers at the grade

level shared academic choice lessons they used as part of an ocean unit and after a class

read aloud. An observation in School C included a kindergarten team meeting. The

teachers were discussing activities they had assigned to parent volunteers. One of the

teachers had a licensed teacher as a parent and was having the parent find student reading

levels. The agenda for a staff meeting at School D (Appendix E: Artifact D-39) included

a study group share session. Each mixed grade-level group verbally summarized their

group's efforts. Effective practices were verbalized and teachers in other study groups had access to instructional strategies found successful with their student body.

Three of the principals answered that teachers at the school provided instructional support for each other through mentoring, observing, and team teaching. Principal B gave a historical look at school efforts, "We're at a different phase because we are out of implementation and into more practice but there was a lot of, not peer coaching, but peer mentoring back and forth where teachers would be freed up to go visit classrooms and watch reading workshop lessons and give feedback to other staff members and vice versa." A tri-fold public relations brochure for School B (Appendix E: Artifact B-1) emphasized, "Collaborative teachers at each grade level who provide co-teaching opportunities in literacy, math, and science." After observing a portion of a Reading Recovery lesson in School D, the principal said that she has all new teachers observe the Reading Recovery teacher and tells new teachers that the Reading Recovery teacher is a good resource for questions that come up. Reading Recovery meets the What Works Clearinghouse evidence standards. Cox & Hopkins (2006) contend that the theory and assumptions of Reading Recovery can be considered as core to good literacy instruction for all children.

Collective Creativity

The study's elementary principals described the level of staff commitment to reading programs and explained how staff members planned and worked together to search for solutions to address diverse student needs in reading.

All of the principals stated that a high commitment to effective reading instruction and achievement elicited collective creativity. The high commitment was evident in the use of data driven decision-making, research, and professional development. Principal C gave an example, "Either we are looking at MCA results or we are looking at MAP results. . . . They (teachers) know that they are really working hard. So, that said, what area is the weakest? Let's focus on that. Give me three things you (grade level) are going to do." The use of data and brainstorming efforts were observed at School A during a Student Intervention Team (SIT) meeting. The student being discussed received ELL services and had improved his Developmental Reading Assessment (DRA) level from 6 to 14. The SIT committee discussed quality reading assessments for students in ELL programming. The group brainstormed interventions, resources, and available staff members who could focus on increasing the students' reading fluency. In School C, the kindergarten Title 1 teachers collaborated with Dr. Snow, a prominent educator from Harvard University, to implement and collect data on Early Access to Success in Education (EASE) in hopes of increasing letter identification and sound correlation. A handout titled *Arts Facts . . . Improved Academic Performance* (Appendix E: Artifact D-27) from School D summarized research that student participation in arts correlated with higher academic achievement. The handout supported the school's initiatives to become a school for the arts.

Each of the four principals listed grade-level and cross grade-level collaboration as an opportunity for staff to address diverse student needs in reading. Collaboration occurred during team time, PLC groups, and study groups. It included sharing ideas,

student work and teacher reflection. Support staff members were contributors to the collaborative efforts. The Building Leadership Team (BLT) at School A,— a committee comprised of grade-level representatives and curriculum leaders—compiled meeting notes (Appendix E, Artifact A-13) which prescribed directions for grade-level teams that included:

> Review documents SMART goals as a team. Identify those students who did not meet or partially met grade-level proficiency. Determine steps to move at least 10% of these students to grade-level proficiency. Return to next BLT with discussion output.

Principal of School B stated, "They are collaboratively working and they get an ELL teacher and a special education teacher to work with them because every grade has one." and "It is a commitment of the staff to stay together, as a grade level to stay together. They share ideas about what works and what didn't work. Because they plan together, they are able to get so many more ideas and try so many more things because they are not individually inventing the wheel." At a School D staff meeting teachers openly discussed the impact student reading achievement had on student success on the district's new math curriculum. Teachers transferred their knowledge of intentional vocabulary instruction during reading to math (National Reading Panel, 2000). A study group in School D comprised of second-grade teachers, third-grade teachers, and Title 1 teachers decided to make vocabulary posters for each unit.

Supportive Conditions

The interviewed principals were asked how the school schedule affected collective learning and shared practice. One hundred percent of the principals said that the school schedule prioritized reading instruction by designating grade-level literacy

block times without interruptions that included support staff. The school schedules had

prescribed reading blocks, daily structure, and included specified roles for support staff.

The principal of School D described their school schedule:

> We have a very prescribed schedule . . . these are where guided reading
> groups . . . and that is when all of our support staff come in. Our teachers
> doing guided reading. Our ESL teacher is in there. Our Title is in there.
> Special ed. is in there. They are all working in small groups in that piece.
> What we have said is that you cannot deviate, so there is a little less
> autonomy in that way.

An observation at School B involved visiting classrooms during reader's

workshop. The classroom teacher and the ELL teacher or special education teacher

cooperatively presented instruction. The co-teaching model required the reading block to

be clearly scheduled. There were consistent components from classroom to classroom

and grade level to grade level that included an easel with a flip chart that contained the

mini-lesson for the day, anchor charts posted in the room, independent reading, partner

reading, and guided reading lessons. School B had a master schedule for the school year

(Appendix E: Artifact B-2) that clearly labeled times for reader's workshop and writer's

workshop as well as special education staff and ESL staff room location.

Positive student efforts in reading and gains in reading achievement were

recognized in all four schools in a variety of ways. Three principals listed extrinsic

recognition of student reading achievement such as reading logs, certificates, pencils, and

a bike. An example from School C was that students received a book, stickers, notebook,

and a snack for working hard at August kindergarten assessments. School C applied for

and received the national Blue Ribbon Award (Appendix E: Artifact C-12). The Blue

Ribbon Award recognized School C for closing the achievement gap based on MCA data.

A large banner was displayed outside the main entry and every staff member and student was given a Blue Ribbon t-shirt.

Three principals reported an emphasis on intrinsic recognition of reading achievement on daily work and standardized assessments. Principal A responded, "One of the things that we really try, as all probably, is for internal student recognition that I am moving along, that I am learning . . . I just think it is that individual teacher saying, 'Great job!' more than the glitzy programs." Principal A was observed verbally praising a class for their MAP scores and stopping a teacher in the hall to congratulate the teacher on her student RIT growth from fall MAP to spring MAP. A back-to-school PowerPoint presentation (Appendix E: Artifact A-3) contained a slide titled 'Beating the Odds' highlighting and celebrating the school's MCA results.

Factors for Advancing Teaching and Learning

When asked to list the three most important factors for advancing teaching and learning to improve student achievement in reading, all four principals listed collaboration and communication amongst staff. Specifically, collaboration occurred during study groups, PLC groups, *collab time*, grade-level meetings, and common planning time. Collaboration included classroom teachers and support staff. Examples of collaborative efforts included viewing student work samples, reviewing student achievement data, reading professional literature, and planning instruction. Study groups and PLC groups were predetermined groups of mixed grade level and mixed department staff that met for half a year and grade-level or department groups that meet the other half of the year. *Collab time* was the short term used by school staff for collaboration time.

Collab time was a 25-minute block of time an entire grade level has for a shared prep time. Grade-level meetings were held before school, after school or during the school day. Common planning time occurred when all of the students in a grade level attended specialists (art, music, Phys. Ed., science) at the same time or when students were at recess and supervised by paraprofessionals. Principal D responded, "Study groups, which I would list under that, study groups, collaborative time, and not just 1 day only but really from a school approach and a team approach. They are determining what they want to study and how that is being done." The principal at School C listed, "Two, that this is a collaborative work. That when we have grade-level meetings, the ESL, Title 1, and specialist teachers are there. . . . It is that collaboration and creative problem solving that I think is incredibly powerful." A high level of collaboration was observed in School B during a staff meeting focused on class meetings. A teacher asked what to do if the same students brainstorm ideas for dealing with class meeting issues. Multiple teachers shared ideas such as pull names, fish bowl, and tell students in advance that they should be thinking about it for tomorrow. The Building Leadership Team Meeting Notes (Appendix E: Artifact A-13) from School A stated, "What's Working Well—Great support in Grade 4 with Title, SPED and ESL, as well as Student Intervention Team. Collaboration time has been really beneficial."

Three of the principals cited a reading instructional framework informed by research as a factor for advancing teaching and learning and improving student reading achievement. They described their school's reading curriculum and instruction as viable, balanced, and supported with research and resources. All three schools had participated in

collaborative efforts with the University of Minnesota. The efforts consisted of REA, Reading First, and EIR (Taylor, B.M.) training. The principal at School A clearly articulated,

> Do you have the curricula that are going to get those kids at their correct instructional level and at the correct pacing? The correct level of rigor that is going to push those kids? . . . So, I really believe the guided reading programs and the resources that we use support that.

School C gave each new teacher a bound handbook titled, *Building Blocks for Teaching Students to be Successful Readers and Writers: A Framework for a Comprehensive Literacy Program* (Appendix E: Artifact C-5). It included a research summary, program components, assessments, interventions, and professional development.

Committed and narrowly focused professional development was cited by 3 of the 4 principals interviewed. Principal B defined School B's professional development efforts, "So, things I'm willing to send people to, unless it's Responsive Classroom, it needs to either be tied to professional learning communities, using data to make decisions, or maybe something with reader's workshop. But there are very few things that we'll allow people to go to because we are so narrowly focused." The staff meeting agenda at School B (Appendix E: Artifact B-4, Artifact B-5, and Artifact B-6) supported the principal's statement. The focus of each meeting was a component of Responsive Classroom. Principal D summarized, "Then the staff development, you can't move these huge initiatives without quality staff development." School D had a particularly strong SEED (Seeking Educational Equity and Diversity) program with the largest membership in the school district. The premise of SEED is to train teachers to integrate

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multiculturalism and diversity in their classrooms. SEED efforts align with Kathryn Au's (2006) research promoting culturally responsive instruction to bring students of diverse backgrounds to high levels of literacy by promoting engagement through activities that reflect the values, knowledge, and structures of interaction that students bring from their homes. One observation included staff members gathering at the movie theater to view *Gran Torino* followed with dinner and scripted discussion questions. School D had a year-long SEED syllabus (Appendix E: Artifact D-33) that focused on ethnic and socioeconomic cultures and included books, articles, and field trips.

An additional theme that emerged from the principal interviews, three principals cited high expectations for student reading achievement as a factor. The principal of School A described her role, "I think that a really critical factor is just helping your staff see the vision and understand that they have the capacity to move all the students' reading scores to a high level. Principal C listed, "I guess the third one is we are here for the kids. We are not here to make it easy for ourselves. We will do whatever we need to do for the child to be successful and lift them up." An observation at School C involved a team meeting with the principal and fourth-grade teachers. The principal reviewed each teacher's student results on open-ended MCA questions. The principal encouraged the teachers to look at the staff that had done well and ask those teachers what they were doing to get the results. The Principal at School C compiled a packet *School C End of Year Results Report* (Appendix E: Artifact C-4) and presented the report at a staff meeting. The results included grade-level goals in math and reading, student progress toward the goals, and student MAP results.

Dealing with Dilemmas and Conflicts

Principals were asked to describe a dilemma or conflict regarding the development of a school wide professional learning community centered on reading instruction and how they worked through it. Three of the principals empowered teachers to deal with the dilemma. The principal at School D responded, "We worked through that together. They (staff) believed that it was important and we continued to do it. It never works when they have to do it because someone told them to. It has to be, it works because it is important to their work."

A similar response was given by the principal of School C, "I work very hard to honor their expertise and not be overly directive and work behind the scenes to encourage the creative up-to-date teachers to speak up in the staff meetings and that has worked extremely well." Each teacher in school C was asked to review his/her student MAP data, identify students not meeting proficiency and create a plan for moving that student toward proficiency (Appendix E: Artifact C-8).

Summary of the Results for Question One

Research Question 1 focused on the principal's response to interview questions focused on the development of a professional learning community in the school they lead. The responses given by at least 3 out of 4 (75%) principals in each attribute of a professional learning community were documented. The interview data findings were identified in observation field notes and artifacts.

In response to questions concerning shared leadership, all of the principals cited teacher input in curriculum, instruction, and assessment. Individual teachers made daily

decisions on how to meet their students' needs. All four principals cited decision making

grounded in best practice which was defined as assessment, data, and research base. In

addition, all four principals cited building level decision making and information

dispersion. Building level decisions were made by the representative committees such as

the leadership team and reading committee, as well through agreed upon school reform

efforts.

In regard to the responses concerning shared values and vision, 3 out of 4

principals affirmed an instructional framework as integral to the school's values and

vision. Frameworks were constructed from research and best practice and included

pedagogical models such as reader's workshop and guided reading. Three principals

shared that grade-level and cross grade-level collaboration helped develop shared values

and refine vision. Collaboration included PLC groups, study groups, and team time. A

product of the collaboration was cross grade articulation of skill sequence and

instructional vocabulary.

According to the interview data, deprivatized practice occurred when teaching

peers provided instructional support through mentoring, observing, and team teaching.

Three principals cited that instructional practice was shared during grade-level and cross

grade-level collaboration in venues such a PLC groups and study groups through

discussion of research, reflection on practice, sharing student work, and sharing videos of

teaching.

A high commitment to quality research-based instruction and achievement was

reported as eliciting collective creativity by every principal. Commitment was visible in

the use of data and research in decision making, using the internet to find new ideas, and a dedication to ongoing professional development for continued learning. Collective creativity occurred during grade-level and cross grade-level collaboration in team time, PLC groups, and study groups and consisted of teacher reflection on instruction, sharing ideas of how to meet student needs, and reviewing student work. Collaboration included support staff such as ELL, special education, and Title 1.

The highest reported condition supportive of the development of professional learning communities, reported by all four principals, was that the school schedules prioritized reading instruction. The schools' schedules had prescribed reading blocks that included practices such as guided reading, flexible grouping, and shared reading. These practices were built on the precedent that there were no interruptions during the reading block, and included support staff as reading service providers. Principals claimed the schedules were based on research and what was best for kids. Most of the principals, 3 out of 4, reported extrinsic recognition of student reading achievement. Three principals reported intrinsic recognition of student reading achievement.

When principals were asked to list factors for advancing teaching and learning and improving student reading achievement, every principal listed collaboration and communication amongst staff. Collaboration included reading professional literature, sharing work sampling, studying achievement data, and planning instruction. Three principals listed a reading instructional framework informed by, committed and narrowly focused professional development, and high expectations for student reading achievement.

The interview data regarding how staff worked through dilemmas or conflicts in the development of a professional learning community centered on reading revealed that in the majority of the schools' teachers were empowered to deal with dilemmas. Teaching staff worked through it together, administrative efforts were geared toward giving teachers confidence, teachers were encouraged to speak up, and the leadership team worked to create a resolution.

Research Question Two

The second question in this study was focused on the practices and procedures reported by teachers that are related to the development of professional learning communities in schools that have 'beat the odds' in reading. Data were gathered through interviews of 33 participants, including kindergarten through fifth-grade classroom teachers, coaches, intervention teachers, special education teachers, and English language learner teachers to examine the extent to which the five identified broad attributes of a school-wide professional learning community existed in the schools:

- Shared leadership

- Shared values and vision

- Deprivatized practice

- Collective creativity

- Supportive conditions

Two additional questions were asked to attain a broader view of the school and revealed themes that did not emerge through the attribute questions. Specifically:

- Factors for advancing teaching and learning to improve student reading achievement

- A dilemma or conflict regarding the development of a learning community centered on reading instruction and how it was worked through

The second research question was investigated to determine the degree of support from teachers for findings from the first research question on principal practices. Teachers reported school procedures and practices were an indirect reflection of the principal's leadership as the administrator of the building.

Shared Leadership

Interview participants responses to questions focused on shared leadership were analyzed through constant comparison analysis methods to determine the most salient responses. Eighty-two percent of the respondents reported teacher input in curriculum, instruction, and assessment existed at their school. Examples include, "We are always looking for best practices and that is what is encouraged—whatever you need to do that works effectively for your 30 students" and " . . . the decisions about what they're (classroom teachers and Title 1 teachers) going to teach in regards to reading is based on, it's their decision."

According to interview data, approximately 64% of the respondents reported decision making occurred during grade-level and cross grade-level meetings. The discussion and decision making took place during collaboration time, team time, PLC groups, and study groups. The ELL teacher from School A shared, "The decisions related to reading, probably, I would say for this year anyway, come out more with collaboration

time where grade-level teachers can meet together and then they talk about what the needs are and how to best address them and find those ways to make modifications to help kids be successful."

Sixty-four percent of the participants responded that a curriculum leader played a role in shared leadership. A second-grade teacher stated,

> As the ILA (Integrated Language Arts) rep, I go to meetings about once a quarter and I take notes and bring back the information to the staff. I either share it at a staff meeting or type up notes and distribute those so they know what is happening at the district level.

The curriculum leaders were responsible for relaying information related to curriculum materials, instructional methods, and literacy standards between their building and the district.

The fourth most salient response was building level decision making and information dispersion. Building level organizational structures were constructed as representative staff served on committees or led school initiatives. Specific teacher cited responses were the leadership team, intervention committee, and reading committee. The representatives served as conduits between their grade-level team or department and the decision making body, usually a committee, they were a member of. Staff meetings were listed as one venue at which teacher representatives updated the staff on their committees' work. In all four schools, representative teachers served to create student achievement goals for the building. An intervention teacher responded, "We kind of have a lot to do with the reading process and also the BLT (Building Leadership Team), our school leadership team, too, through discussion."

Shared Values and Vision

Each interview participant (N=33) responded to questions regarding the development of shared values and vision related to reading instruction at the building level. Ninety-seven percent of the respondents cited student reading achievement evident on daily work (such as students' reading levels) and standardized assessments results (such as Minnesota Comprehensive Assessments [MCAII] and Measures of Academic Progress [MAP]) as a shared value at their school. The teachers' responses focused on high expectations and student gains. Teachers used assessment data as a tool to monitor student reading progress and inform instructional decision making. Respondents claimed that the school invested a great deal of funding and staff time/energy in student reading achievement. For example, a third-grade teacher shared, "I think we all value reading as one of the most important things that kids learn how to do because they need to be readers for life. I think the whole process we have here is that everybody's very dedicated to helping the kids learn how to read and to help them become readers and be very excited about reading."

Most of the respondents (82%) spoke of a research informed reading instructional framework as a shared value. Two of the schools had an external support, the University of Minnesota via REA and Reading First, bringing about a new way of approaching research and emphasis on research-based instruction. One of the schools had a district-wide reading reform during which every classroom in every school was required to use reader's workshop as pedagogy. An ELL Teacher explained, "It's sort of like we all have the same policy. We all run the same schedule during reader's workshop, so if kids do

that from kindergarten through fifth grade they know what to expect and they kind of know what to do." Similarly, a fourth-grade teacher stated, "Guided reading, balanced literacy, we do a lot, all of us talking about how we work our guided reading groups and changing them . . . making sure that we're all kind of unified on that. Modeled reading and shared reading, all of our classrooms are kind of modeled in a similar way."

Deprivatized Practice

The 33 interview participants were asked questions about coaching and mentoring in their school, as well as about the opportunities to provide feedback to peers related to effective reading instructional practices and for staff to collaboratively review student work. Ninety-one percent of the teachers said that instructional practice was shared during grade-level and cross grade-level collaboration. Lessons were shared via written plans and verbal summaries as well as videotaped lessons. Typically, teachers focused on one aspect of the lesson (i.e., student engagement) for its effectiveness; what went well and what could be done to make it better. Grade-level meetings were also referred to as team time and collab or collaboration time. Cross grade-level meetings were referred to as PLC groups or study groups. An example from a fourth-grade teacher in School D, "We have study groups at our school where we get together and do lesson shares, video shares, and talk about articles we've read and training we've had. . . . We meet as a grade level and discuss student work or what's going on in our classrooms so we're all pretty updated on what they're learning. . . . "

A majority of respondents (70%) cited that teaching peers provided instructional support through coaching, mentoring, observation, and co-teaching. An ELL Teacher

responded, " . . . I've co-taught reader's workshop with different teachers. That's cool because then there's always two teachers in there and you can give informal feedback, like, 'Wow! That was a really awesome lesson.' And you trade ideas. I've learned significantly just from watching other teachers I co-taught with." Specific positions of people who provided instruction support were Tile 1 teachers and Reading Recovery teachers. A first-grade teacher shared, "Well first of all, Reading Recover Teacher at School D, has always offered and been available to us especially as new teachers and she says we can come in and sit in on a lesson at anytime. She can come down and do a lesson and we can watch. So that's one thing that's really been kind of cool."

A third strong response on deprivatized practice in reading from interview participants was the role of a building level instructional coach. Sixty-four percent of the participants cited a coach working with staff or a consultant providing instructional support. One coach described his role, "They (teachers) always have an opportunity to do coaching cycles that can involve modeling a lesson, it can involve team teaching, it can involve coming in and visiting the classroom and looking at a specific goal."

Collective Creativity

A high commitment to effective instruction and student reading achievement was cited as the catalyst for collective creativity. Eighty-eight percent of the interviewees focused on research-based practices such as using assessment data to monitor individual student progress and inform instructional decision making using assessment data as triggering collective creativity. Teachers persevered and worked together to find new

ways to meet student needs in reading and ensure students made reading achievement

gains. An example found in a third-grade teacher's response:

> I think the staff commitment here is really high to reading. I think that's
> the main thing, reason, that we ended up with the Blue Ribbon was that
> the staff here is awesome. Anybody will help you with anything. If you're
> stuck you can go up and down the hall and somebody will come up with a
> solution, somebody will volunteer to help you. So their commitment is
> really, really high, so as they want to see that everybody is successful.

Professional development was listed by 82% of the respondents as supporting

collective creativity. Professional development included staff presentations, professional

reading, workshops and district training. Each school had a process for teachers to access

professional development fund. Teachers' professional development requests were

required to align with the schools' goals or major initiatives. An ELL teacher responded,

> Workshops. If they come up and staff is interested, they go to them and,
> like I said, do a teach-back and it gets people excited that way. Some
> people are, we do have a book club for staff. So, some people get ideas
> through sharing that way.

Sixty-seven percent of the teachers reported that collective creativity occurred

during grade-level and cross grade-level collaboration. A kindergarten teacher

explained," That kind of goes back to those days where we're given time to look at

student work and collaborate, sit together as either a grade level or K–2 or 3–5 and talk

about things that are working." The collaboration included common planning, video

sharing, sharing and discussing student work, and sharing teaching materials.

Sixty-four percent of the interview participants said that classroom teachers and

support staff worked together to meet student needs. For example, a kindergarten teacher

emphasized the push in model where students qualifying for services such as special

education or English as a second language are serviced within the classroom setting and the need for collaboration,

> . . . We do push in special ed, Title, and ESL. That is a lot of coordination and communication. . . . We do meet with our push in support staff continually so that is another way that we get together to make solutions and that is ongoing and all the time.

Supportive Conditions

Eighty-eight percent of the teachers interviewed reported that resources such as conference registration fees, substitutes, and coach support were available as professional development. An intervention teacher described the plethora of professional development opportunities, "Yes, like I said, we have the summer institute, workshops, staff development through the year and then in the fall we always have a Reading Recovery conference that most of our primary teachers attend."

Extrinsic recognition of student reading achievement was referenced by 79% of the interview participants. Examples include, "In fourth grade they're (students) supposed to read every night for 20 minutes, so they have a calendar that they record the minutes they read each night and their parents sign it. When they bring it in and meet the goal, the principal will bring in a pencil and a certificate every month." Another example, "We do a variety of things. We have our *Book It* and so we do that. . . . If I see so many different entries (in reading journals) or if they hand in extra book reports, we'll do pizza parties."

Scheduled meeting times for grade-level and cross grade-level collaboration were cited as a supportive condition by 73% of the interviewees. A kindergarten teacher stated, "We have collaboration time set out for us which is something that happens every day of

the week. We have PLC groups every other week. That's in the morning before school, so we all come at 8:20 and then it's before school until school starts."

Factors for Advancing Teaching and Learning

Interview participants were asked to list three factors for advancing teaching and learning to improve student achievement in reading and why they were the most important. The most frequent response (73%) was that a reading instructional framework informed by research advanced teaching and learning. Multiple interviewees cited research-based instruction and/or best practice instruction, defined as effective in increasing student achievement. The Coach at School D explained the benefit of keeping current on research versus blindly following the teacher's manual, " . . . knowing the reasons behind (instructional practices), the research behind (instructional practices), really helps . . . knowing what the new research says so you are operating, in a sense, on the newest playing field . . . " A kindergarten teacher, who serves as her school's ILA (Integrated Language Arts) representative at the district level, explained the importance of effective instruction from a student's perspective, "I think teachers just need to be, they need to be up to date on best practices. They need to have experience teaching reading and learning the best ways to teach reading because if you have an ineffective teacher that's going to be very difficult for you to have the tools you're going to need and the strategies you'll need to learn to read."

Included in the framework were instructional materials gained during the reform initiative school sites participated in (REA, Reading First and reader's workshop). The Reading Excellence Act and Reading First were federal programs implemented in

Minnesota with the support from the University of Minnesota. Reader's Workshop was a pedagogical reform based on gradual release of responsibility, a research-based instructional model developed by Pearson and Gallagher (1983). In this optimal learning model, the responsibility for task completion shifts gradually over time from the teacher to the student. A second-grade teacher shares how acquired teaching materials have positively impacted student learning, "Resources are important, too. If I didn't have the amazing library that I have in my classroom of different leveled books for my students, our reading program just wouldn't even exist without the resources." The leveled texts were used to scaffold instruction. Vygotsky defined scaffolding instruction as the "role of teachers and others in supporting the learner's development and providing support structures to get to that next stage or level" (Raymond, 2000, p. 176).

Sixty-one percent of the respondents listed collaboration and communication on instructional practices and student achievement amongst staff as a factor for advancing teaching and learning. A first-grade teacher stated, "I think one of the most important factors is definitely collaboration. . . . It's not only helpful for new teachers but helpful just so that everybody is on the same page because it's really important that everybody is up to the same level. So that we're all kind of working together to become better teachers, and I think that collaboration time really, really helps that."

Dealing with Dilemmas and Conflicts

The respondents were asked to share a dilemma or conflict regarding the development of a school wide professional learning community centered on reading instruction and how they worked through it. There were no high frequency responses or

trends in teacher responses. Responses ranged from complying with top-down decisions (36%), teachers making decisions (24%), as well as several less frequent responses.

Summary of Results for Question Two

The interview data targeted licensed teachers including classroom teachers, special education teachers, intervention teachers, ELL teachers, and coaches working with students in Grades kindergarten through 5. The most salient responses in each attribute of a professional learning community were documented.

In response to questions concerning shared leadership, 27 of the 33 interviewees responded that teachers had input in curriculum, instruction and assessments. Twenty-one respondents reported that decision making occurred during grade-level and cross grade-level meetings. Twenty-one participants highlighted the role of a curriculum leader, such as ILA (Integrated Language Arts) rep, in shared leadership and 20 interview participants cited building level decision making and information dispersion occurred in their school.

In regard to the responses concerning shared values and vision, 32 of the 33 participants identified student reading achievement in daily work and on standardized assessments as a shared value. A majority (27) of the respondents listed a reading instructional framework informed by research as a shared value and vision.

According to the interview data, deprivatized practice occurred in grade-level and cross grade-level meetings when teachers shared lessons, reflected on their practice, read and discussed research articles, and used data to monitor student reading achievement. Instructional support was provided by teaching peers, classroom teachers, Title 1 teachers, and Reading Recovery teachers, via mentoring and co-teaching. Additionally,

the building coach was cited as having a role in the deprivatization of practice by modeling instructional practices, providing research-based instructional guidance, and procuring instructional resources.

The teachers reported a high commitment to reading instruction and achievement as eliciting collective creativity. Professional development supported collective creativity amongst teachers. Teachers reported that collective creativity occurred during grade-level and cross grade-level collaboration. Collective creativity took place when classroom teachers and support staff (ESL, special education, Title, paraprofessionals) worked together to meet student needs. The support staff members held a knowledge base different than a regular education classroom teacher and the additional student service provider in the classroom allowed for more small group and individualized instruction.

Most of the teacher participants, 29 out of 33, stated that a supportive condition for the development of school wide professional learning communities was that resources were available for professional development. Resources included financing registration fees for conferences, providing substitute teachers to free teachers to attend professional development opportunities or for grade-level planning meetings during the school day, and funding professional speakers and consultants to provide services in the district. Twenty-six interviewees cited extrinsic recognition of student reading achievement, such as completing a designated amount of at-home reading, accurately reading a leveled text during guided reading, or attaining high standardized test results as a supportive condition. Many of the teachers felt scheduled meeting time for grade-level and cross grade-level collaboration supported collective learning and shared practice.

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When interview participants were asked to list factors for advancing teaching and learning and improving student reading achievement, two responses were repeated frequently. Twenty-four respondents listed a reading instructional framework informed by research as a factor and 20 respondents listed collaboration and communication on instruction and meeting students' needs amongst staff as a factor.

The interview data contained no high frequency responses regarding how staff worked through dilemmas or conflicts in the development of a professional learning community centered on reading.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSIONS

Introduction

The call for school reform is resounding. In the words of President Barack Obama
(2009), "In a global economy where the most valuable skill you can sell is your
knowledge, a good education is no longer just a pathway to opportunity— it is a pre-
requisite. The countries that out-teach us today will out-compete us tomorrow."

President Obama's insight follows one of the most notable federal education acts,
No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB), which was passed in 2002. The intent of NCLB was
to close the achievement gap by holding schools accountable for student skill acquisition
and continuous yearly gains. Today, as more schools are being pressured to meet the
federal and state demands of the NCLB legislation by ensuring all students in Grades 3
and higher are reading proficiently by 2014, many schools are earnestly seeking ways to
improve their students' reading achievement.

Transforming a traditional school into a professional learning community (PLC)
has been found to have a positive impact on student outcomes. The most prominent
student results are larger academic gains in reading, math, and science than traditional
schools. Teacher collaboration that is evidence based improves the quality of
instructional practice, resulting in significant, measurable improvements in student
learning (Hargreaves, 2003).

Moving a school toward meaningful improvement is a great challenge faced by
educational leaders. Historically, principals were expected to maintain a status quo, but

now a school leader is asked to be a catalyst for change, fostering continuous school improvement. "Creating, developing and sustaining a professional learning community is a major leadership and management task, one which emerged from the data as a critical strategic process" (Bolam, McMahon, Stoll, Thomas & Wallace, 2005, p. 117).

Summary of Purpose

The purpose of the study was to gain insight on the leadership practices of elementary principals conducive to the development of professional learning communities in schools that are "beating the odds" in reading. These schools are at or above the district mean proficiency on the MCAII and have higher ELL and poverty levels than other elementary schools in the district.

The research questions guiding this qualitative study included:

1. What are the actions practiced by elementary school principals related to the development of professional learning communities in schools that have "beat the odds" in reading?

2. What are the practices and procedures related to the development of professional learning communities in schools that have "beat the odds" in reading?

Thirty-seven individual interviews were conducted with principals, literacy coaches, classroom teachers, intervention (Title 1 or Reading Recovery) teachers, special education teachers, and ELL teachers. Sixty-four hours of principal observation were completed. Artifacts such as meeting agendas, meeting minutes, and assessment results were collected.

Conclusions and Discussion

The data gathered during principal interviews, observations, and artifacts for Question 1 was in direct relation to the purpose of the study. The data gathered during teacher interviews for Question 2 was supportive of and shed further light on the purpose of the study. Teacher interview data served to verify the accuracy of the Question 1 data and aided the researcher in developing a broader, deeper understanding of the school as an institution. A good relationship existed between the principal data and teacher data.

The table below displays with an "X" principal findings if 75% (3 out of 4) of the principals gave the interview response. An "X" indicates the category was evident in 75% (3out of 4) of the schools' observation field notes or artifacts. An "X" indicates the category was reported in over 50% (17 out of 33) of the teacher interviews and in at least 75% (3 out of 4) of the schools.

Table 6.

Evidence of Category in Data Sources

Attributes of PLCs	Principal Interview	Teacher Interview	Principal Observations	Principal Artifacts
Shared Leadership				
Teacher input in curriculum, instruction and assessment	X	X	X	X
Decision making grounded in research and student data	X		X	X
				(cont.)

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Attributes of PLCs	Principal Interview	Teacher Interview	Principal Observations	Principal Artifacts
Building level systems for decision making and information dispersion in place	X	X	X	X

<center>Shared Values & Vision</center>

Schools have a reading instructional framework informed by research	X	X	X	X
Grade-level and cross grade-level collaboration on reading instruction support shared values and vision	X	X	X	

<center>Deprivatized Practice</center>

Instructional practice is shared during grade-level and cross grade-level collaboration through lesson sharing, reflecting on practice, reviewing student work, and analyzing student data	X	X	X	X
Teaching peers provide instructional support to colleagues by mentoring, observing, and co-teaching	X	X	X	X

<center>Collective Creativity</center>

High commitment to quality instruction and achievement elicits collective creativity—seek research, professional development, internet resources	X	X	X	X
Grade-level and cross grade-level collaboration on instructional planning, student needs, and student work support collective creativity	X	X	X	X

(cont.)

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Attributes of PLCs	Principal Interview	Teacher Interview	Principal Observations	Principal Artifacts
Supportive Conditions				
School schedule prioritizes reading instruction—research-based, prescribed, daily structure, includes support staff	X		X	X
Extrinsic recognition of student reading achievement	X	X	X	
Intrinsic recognition of student reading achievement	X			
Factors for Advancing Teaching & Learning				
Collaboration and communication amongst staff that includes common planning and studying research on instructional practices	X	X	X	X
Professional development that is narrowly focused, committed, and includes diversity training	X		X	X
High expectations for student achievement and collective efficacy amongst staff	X		X	X
Schools have a reading instructional framework informed by research	X	X	X	X
Working Through Dilemmas				
Teachers empowered to deal with dilemma	X		X	X

Shared Leadership

Shared leadership was found in the "beat the odds" schools. Principals sought

input from teachers in curriculum, instruction, and assessment. Teachers were expected to

make decisions based on their knowledge of instructional practices and meeting the needs

of their students. In addition, principals organized building level structures for decision making and information dispersion. The school's leadership team, reading committee, intervention committee, and Responsive Classroom committee were comprised of representative teachers from grade levels and departments who made building level decisions. Building level decisions were also implemented as a part of school reform efforts with intense professional development (REA, Reading First).

Decision making grounded in research and student data was frequently reported by principals but not frequently reported by teachers. Responses cited by a majority of teachers, but not principals, include decision making at grade-level and cross grade-level meetings and the role of the curriculum leader in shared leadership.

Shared Values and Vision

Principals and teachers reported that a reading instructional framework was a shared value and vision. The framework was based on research and best practice. The framework identified instructional practices to be implemented in classrooms and, therefore, served as the basis for intentional, ongoing professional development. Balanced literacy and its components such as shared reading and guided reading were cited. Reader's workshop was a specific pedagogy cited by multiple teachers in one school. Schools focused on specific strategies and vocabulary at grade levels and articulated strategies and vocabulary across grade levels. Grade-level and cross grade-level collaboration supported on reading instruction shared values and vision. PLC groups, study groups, team time, and collaboration time were listed as collaborative meetings.

A frequent response by teachers that was not reported by ¾ of the principals was that student reading achievement was a shared value. Teachers described student reading achievement as having high expectations for students that includes all students reaching grade-level performance on reading levels and standardized assessments (MCA), teaching students at their level and making sure they progress, and standardized assessment (MAP) gains.

Deprivatized Practice

Principals and teachers reported that effective instructional practice and new instructional strategies gained from participating in a research-based professional development experience were shared during grade-level and cross grade-level meetings. The collaborative efforts listed were PLC groups, study groups, collab time, and team time in the schools. During the meetings, teachers discussed student data and reflected on their practice by sharing lesson videos and student work. Teaching peers provide instructional support through coaching, mentoring, observing, and team teaching or co-teaching. Specific teaching positions cited as instructional support providers were Title 1 teachers and Reading Recovery teachers.

Teachers reported that the school's coach played a role in deprivatization of practice by working with staff and serving as a consultant, but it was not a high principal response.

Collective Creativity

A high commitment to quality instruction and achievement elicited collective creativity. Reading was deemed the most important academic subject for the schools.

Teachers used data from assessments to make decisions and monitor individual student progress. In efforts to meet students' needs, teachers collaboratively searched for applicable research, explored the internet for new ideas found effective in other classrooms, and sought specific inservice experiences to learn new practices. Grade-level and cross grade-level collaboration supported collective creativity. Teachers reviewed lesson videos and student work, shared teaching ideas and materials, and reflected on their practice.

There were two frequent teacher responses that were not shared by ¾ of the principals. The first, professional development supported collective creativity through workshops, training, staff presentations, articles and books. Teachers viewed professional development as an opportunity to learn new ideas to help meet the needs of their students. Principals viewed professional development as promoting the school initiatives. The second, classroom teachers and support staff worked together to meet student needs. Classroom teachers and support staff discussed students' classroom performance and created plans to address student needs that often involved small group or one-to-one instructional support. Support staff included the ELL teacher, special education staff, Title 1 instructors, and paraprofessionals. Further research would shed light on the discrepancies in teachers' and principals' responses.

Supportive Conditions

There was not a strong relationship between principal data and teacher interview data in the attribute of supportive conditions. The only common category with a majority of respondents reporting was extrinsic recognition of student reading achievement.

Examples included reading logs, certificates, pencils, reading to younger students, and taking a trip to the library.

Additional highly reported principal responses included the school schedule being developed prioritizing reading instruction. Additional highly reported teacher responses were resources being made available for professional development such as conferences and substitutes and time for scheduled grade-level and cross grade-level collaboration.

Factors for Advancing Teaching and Learning

Teachers and principals paralleled two responses when asked to list factors contributing to the development a professional learning community centered on reading. The first was the establishment of a reading instructional framework. Principals described the framework as viable (practical and effective), balanced, and supported with resources. Teachers described the framework as research and best practice based with a scope and sequence that includes articulated vocabulary for instruction and a vertical alignment of increasing rigor that builds on previously learned skills. Teachers reported being supported with leveled books of a variety of genres, supplemental materials for literature circles and guided reading, and technology. The second contributing factor was collaboration and communication amongst staff. The schools were described by staff members as supportive, collaborative in nature, and as a safe environment for student learning. Collaboration occurred during study groups, PLC groups, collab (collaboration) time, and grade-level meetings. Study group and PLC group meetings were by grade level for half the year and in mixed grade level and department groups for the other half of the year. Collaboration time was a daily 25-minute grade-level meeting time. Grade-

level meetings took place before school, during the school day during lunch or common specialist times, or after school. These groups lesson planned, studied reading research, observed each other's lessons, reflected on their practice, analyzed student data, and created plans for meeting students' needs and increasing student achievement.

Salient principal cited factors contributing to the development of professional learning communities were committed, narrowly focused professional development and high expectations for student achievement. Student reading achievement was measured by assessments such as NWEA's (Northwest Evaluation Association's) MAP (Measure's of Academic Progress) and the state assessment, MCA (Minnesota Comprehensive Assessment).

Dealing with Dilemmas and Conflicts

There were no consistent responses between principals and teachers regarding how the school worked through dilemmas as they developed into a professional learning community centered on reading. Three principals cited examples of teachers being empowered to deal with dilemmas. Only ¼ of the teachers cited teacher decision making as the means for working through a dilemma as their school established a professional learning community. The highest recorded teacher response was teachers complying with top-down decisions when dealing with a dilemma. Specific teacher examples of top-down compliance include support staff complying with classroom teachers and classroom teachers complying with curriculum leaders or instructional coaches.

Limitations

The researcher is a school principal and had to be aware throughout the study of any bias resulting from differences with the subjects of the study in personal philosophies of leadership. The researcher's personal beliefs had to be set aside while engaged in the study in order to remain open to facets of leadership other than her own.

This study is limited as a descriptive study of four principals in four schools in metropolitan, suburban cities in Minnesota. Thus, the results of the study are directly applicable only in that context, and are not generalizable to the leadership of all schools. The study is limited by the researcher's definition of "beat the odds" and the researcher's method of identifying schools as "beating the odds."

In addition, descriptive studies cannot provide information concerning causality. Descriptive studies do not measure the impact of factors on student achievement. Schools in this study were impacted by district level efforts and decision making as well as the role of parents.

Suggestions for Further Research

This study suggests areas in need of additional research. The sample for this study was small. As mentioned earlier in the study, Grades 3 through 5 MCAII results, English language learner population, and poverty were the major factors in determining school eligibility for the study. The four schools that met criteria for participating in the study and agreed to partake in the study were all located in suburban districts. It would be valuable to investigate urban, suburban, and rural schools that have "beat the odds" in reading. The researcher would need to develop different criteria that would allow for

single elementary districts and schools of varying grade-level configurations to be evaluated for effectiveness. A broader geographical study with a larger sample size would be valuable to confirm the findings of this study and to determine what principal actions, regardless of location of their school, were identified as contributing to the development of a professional learning community.

In principal and teacher interviews, the most frequent answers in response to shared leadership questions created a category described as top-down decision making (see appendix C: Teacher Interview Categories by PLC Attribute and appendix D: Principal Interview Categories by PLC Attribute). This is in contrast to the intent of the question. Participants cited district curriculum planning, writing, and mapping and state standards and assessments as key to decision making. The findings are clear that the district office plays a role in student achievement and school functioning. Future research identifying district practices that are conducive to professional learning communities would be a natural extension of this study.

<center>Implications for Educational Practice</center>

Current federal education initiatives, such as Race to the Top funded by the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA), include principals as key factors in school operations. ARRA also highlights the need to address and "turn around the lowest-achieving schools" to become "beat the odds" schools. Race to the Top is an ambitious plan for implementing coherent, compelling, and comprehensive education reform with a specific focus in four core areas. The United States Department of Education's Office of Elementary and Secondary Education (2009) defined the areas:

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- Adopting standards and assessments that prepare students to succeed in college and the workplace and to compete in a global economy;

- Building data systems that measure student growth and success, and inform teachers and principals about how they can improve instruction;

- Recruiting, developing, rewarding, and retaining effective teachers and principals, especially where they are needed most; and

- Turning around our lowest-achieving schools.

Professional learning communities have the potential to enable a school to meet the demands of the future in education. The findings of this study provide examples of every day practices a principal can partake in that will support a school transitioning into a professional learning community. Findings suggest the following for elementary school principals:

School leaders need to clearly prioritize quality, research-based reading instruction and student reading achievement. Principal efforts that promote a school culture focused on high student reading achievement include using assessment results to make data driven decision making related to instructional planning and monitoring student progress, searching research for scientifically based practices that will meet student needs, attending inservice opportunities to learn new instructional strategies, and using the internet as a resource for instructional ideas. The elementary principal has the responsibility to establish school procedures for recognizing student reading achievement. Reading achievement can be measured by standardized assessment results, amount of at-home reading, and evident in daily work such as accurately reading a more

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rigorous text level. Examples of student reading incentive efforts are reading logs, pencils, certificates, and drawings for large prizes.

Principals must call for the development of a reading instructional framework. The framework should be based on research. The reading framework must be clearly articulated in writing and communicated to teachers as expected instructional practices. The framework needs to be supported with professional development and instructional materials Principals should share decision making regarding reading curriculum, instruction, and assessment with teachers through organized venues such as curriculum leaders or leadership committees, as well as the autonomy for a teacher to make decisions using a research-based background knowledge to meet the needs of his/her students.

The school principal needs to organize and nurture grade-level and cross grade-level collaboration. Principals must ensure support staff members (special education, Title 1, English language learner) participate in grade-level and cross grade-level collaboration. Collaboration should focus on teachers sharing and reflecting on instructional practices (input) and how the practices impact student achievement (results). Effective collaboration includes lesson shares, reviewing and discussing student work, and analyzing student data. Efforts should be focused on individual student needs and teachers sharing effective, research-based instructional strategies for meeting the needs.

The principal must implement procedures that support teaching peers in providing instruction support to each other. Teachers should be freed from their classrooms and encouraged to observe other teachers. Observation serves a dual purpose; those who are

observed gain feedback on their practices and observers learn new ideas from their experience.

In conclusion, schools are facing high levels of accountability for student reading achievement as measured on state assessments. Experts in the education field site that schools functioning as professional learning communities elicit higher levels of student achievement (Newman & Wehlage, 1995). Parallel to these findings, researchers site principals as factors in effective schools (Evans, 2001). Through an examination of principal leadership in elementary schools that have beat the odds in reading, data can be gathered to help guide the everyday actions and decisions of school administrators that support the development and sustainability of professional learning communities. In the words of Eaker, DuFour, & DuFour (2007), "Leaders of PLCs must consistently communicate, through their words and actions, their conviction that the people in their school or district are capable of accomplishing great things through their collective efforts" (p. 31).

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APPENDIX A

Principal Interview Questions

Background Question

1.   Tell me about yourself and your background in education.

- Leadership experience—when, where, what

- Teaching experience—when, where, what

- Education

- Awards or recognitions received

Shared Leadership (2)

2.   How is the staff involved in making decisions about reading curriculum, instruction, and assessment?

Shared Values and Vision (3–4)

3.   Describe the process for developing shared values and vision in reading among staff.

4.   How do these values guide behavior and decisions about reading teaching and learning?

Deprivatized Practice (5–6)

5.   What opportunities exist for staff to provide feedback to peers related to reading instructional practices?

6.   What opportunities exist for staff to collaboratively review student work and to share and improve reading instructional practices?

Collective Creativity (7–8)

7.   How do staff members plan and work together to search for solutions to address diverse student needs in reading?

8.   Describe the level of staff commitment to reading programs.

Supportive Conditions (9–10)

9.   How is student reading achievement recognized?

10.   How does the school schedule affect collective learning and shared practice?

Additional Questions

11.   As you reflect on the continuous learning and improvement work in your school, what do you identify as the three most important factors for advancing teaching and learning to improve student achievement in reading? And, why do you view these as the most important?

12.   Describe a dilemma or conflict regarding the development of a learning community centered on reading instruction and how did you work through it?

APPENDIX B

Teacher Interview Questions

Background Question

1.   Tell me about yourself and your background in education.

- Teaching experience—when, where, what

- Education

- Awards or recognitions received

Shared Leadership (2–4)

2.   How is the staff involved in making decisions about reading curriculum, instruction, and assessment?

3.   How is key information about reading curriculum, instruction, and assessment made accessible to staff members?

4.   What are some groups or individuals that make decisions regarding reading curriculum, instruction, and assessment?

Shared Values and Vision (5–7)

5.   Describe the process for developing shared values and vision in reading among staff.

6.   What are the shared values about reading teaching and learning at your school?

7.   How do these values guide behavior and decisions about reading teaching and learning?

Deprivatized Practice (8–10)

8.   What opportunities exist for staff to provide feedback to peers related to reading instructional practices?

9.   What opportunities exist for staff to collaboratively review student work and to share and improve reading instructional practices?

10.   Tell me about reading coaching and mentoring in your school?

Collective Creativity (11–13)

11.   How do staff members plan and work together to search for solutions to address diverse student needs in reading?

12.   Can you tell me how staff members work together to seek reading knowledge, skills, and strategies and apply this new learning to their work?

13.   Describe the level of staff commitment to reading programs.

Supportive Conditions (14–16)

14.   How is student reading achievement recognized?

15.   How does the school schedule affect collective learning and shared practice?

16.   Are fiscal resources available for professional development?

Additional Questions

17.   As you reflect on the continuous learning and improvement work in your school, what do you identify as the three most important factors for advancing teaching and learning to improve student achievement in reading? And, why do you view these as the most important?

18.   Describe a dilemma or conflict regarding the development of a learning community centered on reading instruction and how did you work through it?

Teacher Interview Categories by PLC Attribute

Table C-1.

Shared Leadership (Based on questions #2, 3, 4).

Topic	Quote
Teacher input in curriculum, instruction, and assessment	Grade 5 Teacher, School D: We are always looking for best practices and that is what is encouraged—whatever you need to do that works effectively for your 30 students.
(27/33) - Classroom teacher - Reading Recovery - ELL - Title	Kindergarten Teacher, School B: My first year 'Teacher' had been doing the Lucy Calkin's program for writer's workshop in her classroom. She brought it and shared it with the rest of us in kindergarten and we were all really excited about it and decided to try t. As a result, that was recognized through the building principal to the district level and they came in and observed Abby teaching writer's workshop. . . .
	Intervention Teacher, School D: I've never been a classroom teacher at School D so it either be Title 1 or Reading Recovery but the decisions about what they're going to teach in regards to reading is based on, it's their (teacher's) decision.
Grade-level and cross grade-level meetings include discussion and decision making	ESL Teacher, School A: The decisions related to reading probably, I would say for this year anyway, come out more with collaboration time where grade-level teachers can meet together and then they talk about what the needs are and how to best address them and find those ways to make modifications to help kids be successful.
(21/33)	*(cont.)*

Topic	Quote
- Collaboration time - Team time - PLC - Study group - Video share	Grade 2 Teacher, School B: Now that I've been here, I see that we have input within our teams and we collaborate together with what works best for our students. Grade 2 Teacher, School C: Just in the small time that I have been here, we have had teach-backs on several things and it's been kind of nice to be able to share those things with each other in inter-team meetings or just our immediate team meetings." Intervention Teacher, School C: Team meetings, of course, are huge at the classroom level. If they have the same specialist time, they do a lot of the curriculum and instruction and what assessment they are doing within that as well.
The role of a curriculum leader in shared leadership (21/33) - ILA rep - Teach-back - Decision maker	Grade 2 Teacher, School A: As the ILA rep I go to meetings about once a quarter and I take notes and bring back the information to the staff. I either share it at a staff meeting or type up notes and distribute those so they know what is happening at the district level. Kindergarten Teacher, School C: We have a couple curriculum leaders in our school and each of the schools in the district have a couple curriculum leaders and it starts in the district and the curriculum leaders get together and discuss . . . Then they bring back those suggestions or what they've gotten from the district down to each school. So our curriculum leaders talk to us in staff meetings or staff development days about what's being brought to the district. . . . Then teachers bring their ideas to the curriculum leaders. Grade 5 Teacher, School D: 'Teacher' is our kindergarten teacher, she is the ILA rep for our building in the primary and I am the ILA rep for the intermediate. So 'Teacher' and I have a lot of say on what's being taught and how we should teach it and how we should address critical thinking strategies. . . .

(cont.)

Topic	Quote
Building level systems for decision making & information dispersion (20/33) - Leadership team - Building Goals - Intervention committee - Reading committee - Staff meetings	Intervention Teacher, School D: We kind of have a lot to do with the reading process and also the BLT team, our school leadership team, too, through discussion. Kindergarten Teacher, School C: We used to have, when I was first here, we had smaller individual groups teams that would work on reading. We had a literacy team, math team, climate tea, and now what we've done is kind of grouped them and we all discuss all of those goals. So, I want to say we have had little groups, little clusters, that have worked on those types of things and we've also now more incorporated it more as, well everybody has good input. Grade 3 Teacher, School B: Leadership committee, which I happen to be on in the building, not only deals with that (decisions regarding reading curriculum, instruction and assessment) but has a lot of input into decisions that are being made.
The role of a principal in shared leadership (18/33) - Decision maker - Information dispersion - Gets everyone on board	Grade 4 Teacher, School A: I think we are as a whole are very involved and a lot of that comes from the principal. She has gotten us all to work together and sequence the kids as they come through—where they are at each year. Watching them growing and keeping track of that through different assessments and a lot of talking. Intervention Teacher, School C: 'Principal' is instrumental. Our principal is instrumental at keeping everybody up to speed. If one grade level has an issue, it can have a trickle-down effect because if they have students that aren't meeting a criteria, then we look at the grade levels on either side." Grade 5 Teacher, School D: We have a building leadership team where, since we have a small school, most of the staff is at the meeting. 'Principal', the principal, will put together some questions on what we need to do as a school. She'll open it up and there will be a dialogue or conversation.

(cont.)

Topic	Quote
	After that they'll decide on how they want to implement it. And sometimes the feedback is given in, you know, chosen, and sometimes it is just carefully weighted. She makes the final decision but she gives us a lot of input at all the meetings.
The role of a coach/consultant in shared leadership (17/33) - Training - Decision making	Grade 4 Teacher, School D: . . . we have 'Coach', who's our instructional coach, and she's a great asset for all of us as far as if we need any information in our tips and how to reach a certain student or something. Grade 4 Teacher, School A: We also have coaches, too. For me, if I'm not sure about something, he can find out. I've done some team teaching with the coaches which has helped so trying new strategies and modeling. Special Education Teacher, School B: We had a week long training prior to school starting and then for that entire year we had consultants that came into the building and gave us a lot of support. That continued for at least the next year and then we go a literacy coach that was hired for our building.
Schools have a reading instructional framework informed by research (13/33) - Reader's workshop framework - Balance literacy - Gradual release - Strategies - Best practice	ESL Teacher, School A: We figure out where they (students) are at and then we try and address individual needs based on groupings and within guided reading. Grade 2 Teacher, School D: As far as instruction again in that balanced literacy, gradual release model. I don't know if you are familiar with balanced literacy. It's a five component. We do shared reading, guided reading, independent reading, modeled reading. ESL Teacher, School B: . . . I know when I came they said that they did reader's workshop and they took us through training. *(cont.)*

Topic	Quote
Professional development supports reading curriculum, instruction, and assessment (10/33) - Conferences, workshops - Books, articles	Grade 1 Teacher, School D: . . . so we have a lot of outside opportunities that are always emailed or flyers are given to us . . . Grade 4 Teacher, School C: We also get a lot of our information from going to different events, conferences, and bringing that back. . . . Grade 2 Teacher, School A: . . . our building has started several years ago doing book studies and PLCs on our own so we were 2 years ahead of the district with guided reading.
Teachers have instructional resources (8/33) - Books - Curriculum	Grade 2 Teacher, School D: As far as curriculum, we are provided with curriculum, but it's really our choice on what we use, the materials. I have guided reading materials. I have leveled readers for social studies, science; our media center has materials so I'm free to choose whatever books I want to. ESL Teacher, School A: We have a pretty extensive library of guided reading books and that's been used quite a bit and I think combined with strategies that we studied. . . . I think Rigby is what you might call the backbone of our curriculum for the district but at least as far as I can tell relied upon heavily. So, it's just a piece of it.
Informal sharing among staff (7/33)	Grade 3 Teacher, School C: There is a lot of side conversations in the hallway, "This isn't working, what can I do? I got an idea. Let's try this. What do you think?" Those kinds of things. Grade 1 Teacher, School D" One way is through emails. We're always getting emails about new practices or in-services or conferences. . . . So just everybody's really good at sharing whatever they find out.

(cont.)

Topic	Quote
Instructional support for new teachers (3/33) - Training - Mentors	Grade 1, School B: Trainings before school starts—reader's workshop, that's our reading curriculum, and so new staff are trained for that before school starts. They pay to have new staff to come so that they're trained. Coach, School D" I meet with individual teachers a lot, especially for those that are new. They also go through training . . . We also have the mentors for those teachers, too.

Table C- 2.

Does not represent shared leadership

Topic	Quote
Top-down decision making (30/33) - District curriculum writing, planning, & mapping - District Training - State standards & assessments	Grade 5 Teacher, School B: I think starting at the district level . . . So from the district it filters down to the principal who then in staff meetings will occasionally guide or say things need to be included or you need to focus on certain things. . . . Oh, going off of the standards. So obviously that sort of guides the whole year. The Minnesota state standards . . . Coach, School A: They (teachers) can fall back on some other training that they've had in staff development and we do staff development pretty well in this district. We spend enormous amounts of money and time and energy on that. There are a lot of staff development opportunities where those things can get discussed and talked about, also. Grade 3 Teacher, School C: It would be the curriculum directors and the director for curriculum for the whole districts seems to make a lot of those decisions on her own. As far as the rest of us, there really isn't a lot of input. We can tell our curriculum directors a little bit and they will try to share that but a lot of those decisions seem to be made higher on the food chain than we are.

Table C- 3.

Shared Values and Vision (Based on questions #5, 6, 7)

Topic	Quote
Student reading achievement is a shared value (32/33) - High expectations - Student gains - Assessment/data driven - Time investment - Financial investment - Schedule prioritizes - Language rich environment - Student motivation a priority	Coach, School A: I think there's some good assessments going on and pretty constant check of where students are at, where they're growing whether that be through DRAs or MAP testing or the MCA results and following through with those goals. Grade 2 Teacher, School B: . . . I know our team has started looking at the data and using it as a launching pad to really hone in on the areas of weakness for those kids and the struggling students. We use that to then really be much more focused on helping those individual students . . . Grade 3 Teacher, School B: I think we all value reading as one of the most important things that kids learn how to do because they need to be readers for life. I think the whole process we have here is that everybody's very dedicated to helping the kids learn how to read and to help them become readers and be very excited about reading. Grade 2 Teacher, School C: So the shared value is that it is an investment. . . . I've seen the investment that they've had to do in terms of money for books and setting aside time in the classroom to read. Grade 1 Teacher, School C: Every child can learn. That is just bottom line. We don't give up on any student. Every student can learn. It may be at a different pace then someone else, but we know that every child can make gains . . . We really have high expectations for all our students. It is a given. Grade 2 Teacher, School D: Values, well, reading first . . . So I think that is number one and everybody knows it is number one but every once in awhile we remind ourselves.*(cont.)*

Topic	Quote
Schools have a reading instructional framework informed by research (27/33) - Reader's workshop - Skills block - Balanced literacy/components - Same vocabulary - Strategies - Curriculum materials	Grade 4, School D: Guided reading, balanced literacy, we do a lot, all of us talking about how we work our guided reading groups and changing them . . . making sure that we're all kind of unified on that. Modeled reading and shared reading, all of our classrooms are kind of modeled in a similar way. ESL Teacher, School B: It's sort of like we all have the same policy. We all run the same schedule during reader's workshop, so if kids do that from kindergarten through fifth grade they know what to expect and they kind of know what to do. Grade 3 Teacher, School A: I think we have a pretty unified staff and that is from top to bottom. Everyone want the same vocabulary all the way through which I think is very important to when the third-, fourth-, fifth-grade teachers are saying, "Let's do some predicting" or "summarizing" it's not a new word to that classroom.
Grade-level and cross grade-level collaboration support shared values and vision (18/33) - PLC - Study groups - Collaboration time - Team time	Kindergarten Teacher, School A: So during that collaboration time and during that PLC time that's the time where we really get to talk about what we feel is important, what we want to accomplish and it's a good way during cross grade it's a good way to see what my kids need to know in order to be successful in first grade. So it's good to talk to, see what values are important in first grade, what language they're using, what their learning so I know what I need to be teaching my kids so they're ready. Kindergarten Teacher, School B: . . . I know a lot of times it seems to fall back more on grade level instead of across whole staff. It's kind of just been a given like, "Here is what we expect and here's where we want to go" and then the grade level decides where we want to progress or what goals we have. Kindergarten Teacher, School C: I would say more by grade level, not only as a whole, but communicating by grade level. I know each grade gets together quite a bit and just discusses kind of their goals for their particular grade. *(cont.)*

Topic	Quote
	Special Education Teacher, School D: We'll do grade level for half the year and then we mix up the grades and so I think it's good to know what the third graders are doing in reading groups and then what the 4th graders are doing . . . I think we just have to work together you know the shared vision has to come from both the regular ed. and the special ed. and have the paras involved and all grade levels. I think here what we've been doing is trying to communicate with our team meetings.
School community is a shared value (17/33) - Sharing, open - Communication - Develop leaders - Teach-back - Co-teach	Kindergarten Teacher, School D: . . . when we have struggles we talk about it and we are open about it. We work together to try and get students where they need to be. Our support staff is critical to teachers in that way and we communicate a lot with them about where students are at.
	ESL Teacher, School C: I think everybody is like really, really open to any suggestions. At least the idea is that we try something new and if it works, great. And if we need to tweak it, we just let everyone know what works for us and keep going from there.
	Grade 1 Teacher, School B: Now we are a reader's workshop school and we teach collaboratively and I think we all believe that. That's one of our philosophies. I think it's come from all of us taking our time and working together.
Teachers use shared values and vision as a foundation for instructional decision making (11/33) - Set at the beginning of the year - Materials	Grade 1 Teacher, School A: I think when we're purchasing materials it's like—Is this going to help a wide range of children? Is it going to be suited for individual use? Small group use as well as whole group? Our instructional strategies we use we say—Do we have something that's going to meet everybody's needs? We need something for the higher kids to challenge them and something to give more practice to the kids who are taking a little bit longer and need a little bit more practice."
	Intervention Teacher, School D: Well, they (shared values) provide the framework for your decisions that you make as a teacher. . . . *(cont.)*

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Topic	Quote
Role of the principal in shared values and vision (10/33) - Verbal reminder - Newsletter - Instructional leader	Grade 3 Teacher, School A: I'd say high expectations and that initially comes from 'Principal' but the staff has really picked up on the first day that she came . . . you could tell when 'Principal' came in that there is an atmosphere of high expectation. Grade 3 Teacher, School C: . . . our principal will introduce a new idea. We will spend some time discussing it and usually come to some kind of group decision on what we want to do . . . She, 'Principal' is pretty open to trying different kinds of things and not always following the rules.
Professional development supports shared values and vision (7/33) - Workshops - Staff development days - Texts - New staff	ESL Teacher, School C: We kinda do a lot of workshops and stuff. People get workshops. We all kinda do a teach-back and share with everybody kinda all our workshop ideas and stuff. Then once we go there we get ideas from staff about the workshops they've been at or we go through our process, some of our staff development days are designated for reading and looking at assessments. Grade 4 Teacher, School B: It was book studies. We went through several of the reader's workshop books that were put out by some of the famous authors and they're on my shelf. We read chapters and share like one night a week. We also had assignments and we had to try some of those strategies in the classroom and then bring them and do the show and do the model.
Shared values and vision established at the building level (9/33) - Staff meetings - Goals	Grade 2 Teacher, School D: As far as expectations for scores and things like that we have a BLT that comes in and we have set up plans every year. They are called TIP plans and it has to do with what our focus is going to be in certain areas and every year we make a focus in reading. . . . Grade 4 Teacher, School C: Our vision is a collective. We have to work on it together and discuss, you know, these are the steps that we're going to go through to get to our goal . . .

(cont.)

Topic	Quote
- Leadership team - Intervention team - Reading committee	For example, we have decided, as a school, that we will all have word walls and the word walls will have pictures that go with the words. Grade 2 Teacher, School C: I think just about every teacher I know does a read aloud with the kids and it even up to the fifth grade and it's so important. I think how it grew out of discussions in staff meetings. Talking about, let's share something that works for us and we do that.
District role in shared values and vision (4/33) - High expectations - Mandates	Kindergarten Teacher, School B: I think having the high values challenges teachers to step up to the plate more often than not. It's a district wide policy as well.
Cultural responsiveness as a shared value (2/33) - Family support - Celebrate diversity	Kindergarten Teacher, School A: I think one of our shared values is that our school is very multicultural and we have many different backgrounds, many different cultures and kids are coming in at all different levels. . . . To talk about different cultures and different things that they do and kind of celebrating the diversity that we have here is very important.
Responsive classroom as a shared value (1/33)	ESL Teacher, School B: I think in regards to teaching and learning, we do the RC model, responsive classrooms. It's very much like consequences go with the actions and that type of community all day every day.

Table C- 4.

Deprivatized Practice (Based on questions #8, 9, 10)

Topic	Quote
Instructional practice is shared during grade-level and cross grade-level collaboration through lesson sharing, reflecting on practice, reviewing student work, and analyzing data (30/33) - Collaboration - Team time - PLC - Study group - Videotaping	Kindergarten Teacher, School A: During our PLCs we each have a job to do for the time and one of our jobs is to bring in student works. So we actually have examples of what's been going on and talk about what was working at that time. Grade 1 Teacher, School A: I think at grade-level meetings we've gotten used to talking to each other about reading." Grade 1 Teacher, School B: Sometimes it's very specific in some of the meetings that we've had as grade levels. . . . What do you have that you can look at to say, these groups of kids aren't getting this? What can we do to help? Kindergarten Teacher, School C: . . . we have had a lot of time in our groups with K–1 or 1–2 to provide that (reading instruction) feedback to one another. Grade 4 Teacher, School D: We have study groups at our school where we get together and do lesson shares, video shares, and talk about articles we've read and training we've had. That's helped a lot, especially me; I'm a new teacher . . . We meet as a grade level and discuss student work or what's going on in our classrooms so we're all pretty updated on what they're learning. . . ."
Teaching peers provide instructional support by mentoring, observing, and co-teaching (23/33)	Intervention Teacher, School A: . . . a lot of it (coaching and mentoring) is probably peer coaching and not necessarily coming from the coach here at 'School A'. Grade 1 Teacher, School D: Well, first of all, 'Reading Recovery Teacher,' has always offered and been available to us especially as new teachers and she says we can come in and sit in on a lesson at anytime. *(cont.)*

Topic	Quote
- Title - Reading Recovery - Senior teacher	She can come down and do a lesson and we can watch so that's one thing that's really been kind of cool. ESL Teacher, School B: . . . I've co-taught reader's workshop with different teachers. That's cool because then there's always two teachers in there and you can give informal feedback, like, "Wow. That was a really awesome lesson" and you trade ideas. I've learned significantly just by watching other teacher I co-taught with.
Role of the coach in deprivatized practice (21/33) - Works with staff - Consultant	Grade 4 Teacher, School D: Having 'Coach' around is a really great tool because anytime we have questions about what's going on or even when I first came in I thought, "Oh my gosh. I have no idea how to run a guided reading classroom completely on my own." She was really great to step in and show how it might run, or what I modeled, what it looked like. Grade 3 Teacher, School B: When we had a reading coach it was great. We had somebody here as a full time position. She would be very good about if we needed help or if we needed lessons modeled or we needed more materials for something or we just need some information about a certain way to do things. . . . Coach, School A: They always have an opportunity to do coaching cycles that can involve modeling a lesson, it can involve team teaching, it can involve coming in and visiting the classroom and looking at a specific goal.
Professional development supports deprivatized practice (15/33) - Staff development day - Workshop, training, teach-	Grade 1 Teacher, School C: Any time that we go to a conference or we are at a training session, we have, are mandated to provide a teach-back to staff. . . . You will teach back because it is a sharing of your expertise and it is sharing what you learned. . . . Grade 4 Teacher, School A: We would have summer institutes that we all would have to attend. . . . We were constantly getting new ideas and things like that. Then we would come back and try to include the intermediate. *(cont.)*

Topic	Quote
back - Articles, books	
A commitment to student reading achievement elicits shared practice (13/33) - data/assessment driven	Grade 2 Teacher, School B: We would meet as a whole school, look at our data or be given the focus for the day of what they'd like us to do. Then we go back to our grade-level team and comb through the data and decide from there what our focus is going to be. Grade 5 Teacher, School D: Again, it's backwards design. Here's the goal and how do we reach it. I think 'Principal' and I think the rest of the staff is pretty aware of everything from MCAs to TEAE test to the SLOLOM to every test. What do we need to do to get these kids to pass? That's where you start and then you go back to look at the MAP data and then you go back and look at the DRA scores and then look at the work they've done at class.
Building level systems in place to increase deprivatized practice (12/33) - Leadership team - Intervention team - Staff meetings	ESL Teacher, School A: I see it on our student intervention team, we're looking at how to help a kid make progress and identifying, how do you isolate that one spot that seems to be holding him or her back? To really work to develop interventions to move that kid along. I think it's become such an ingrained part of what we do, that tweaking that happens all the time. ESL Teacher, School C: Some staff meetings we have we talk about curriculum and then when it comes up we usually talk about all the curriculum, so that we have time to share. Grade 4 Teacher, School A: So we had a leadership team. There was a representative from each grade level and we would attend quite a few meetings. . . . They would do presentations and we would have to come back and share the information.

(cont.)

Topic	Quote
Individual teachers share informally (10/33) - Share - Talk - 1:1	Grade 4 Teacher, School B: We do it on the fly a lot. You know how it goes. Although there are times that we'll take some time after school or maybe at the end of one of those workshop days . . . A lot of it's on the fly, though. Grade 3 Teacher, School C: Spur of the moment. Run over, "Oh, look at this." We did it yesterday. We wrote descriptions for some pictures that we had put on the board and we were exchanging them between our classrooms.
Role of the principal in deprivatized practice (6/33) - Observation - Coach, mentor - Data focus	Grade 5 Teacher, School D: Well, 'Principal' will always ask questions like, "What do you want students to do? What is the goal? What are they going to do? What is the focus?" ESL Teacher, School B: She'll (principal) pop in during the grade-level data meetings and make note of what we're doing, make comments or suggestions, observations, and things like that.
District level efforts promote deprivatized practice (3/33) - ILA - Cross building	Grade 1 Teacher, School B: It (data discussion) comes from the district office, so 'District Personnel Staff'. Really how we go about it as a grade level is different from grade level to grade level but our focus definitely comes from over there. . . .
School community supports deprivatized practice (3/33) - Safe environment	Intervention Teacher, School A: . . . then the last one I wrote down was just kind of that overall school feeling of belonging to a team, kind of we're in this together. I think. It doesn't matter if I work with you or not, or kids in your class or not, it's just that safe environment again of feeling like I can go to anybody with questions. *(cont.)*

Topic	Quote
- In it together	
Teacher curriculum feedback forms available (1/33)	Coach, School A: The blue feedback forms we talked about before would be one (opportunity for staff to provide feedback to peers).
Same materials and vocabulary the result of deprivatized practice (1/33)	Grade 2 Teacher, School D: We were a part of an REA grant and I'm sure you are award of that. It was 3 years of **** because it was intense learning but it was really good to get on the same page on vocabulary and terms where you are speaking with other professional.

Table C- 5.

Collective Creativity (Based on questions #11, 12, 13)

Topic	Quote
High commitment to quality instruction and achievement elicits collective creativity (29/33) - Individual student progress monitor - Data/assessment driven - Reading is first	Grade 3 Teacher, School B: I think we're very dedicated to it (reading programs) and know that we have to. I think that No Child Left Behind and the MCAs put lots of pressure on everyone to do that. I think we're also committed to reading itself and knowing what an important lifelong skill it is for learning. Grade 3 Teacher, School C: I think the staff commitment here is really high to reading. I think that's the main thing, reason, that we ended up with the Blue Ribbon was that the staff here is awesome. Anybody will help you with anything. If you're stuck you can go up and down the hall and somebody will come up with a solution, somebody will volunteer to help you. So their commitment is really, really high, so as they want to see that everybody is successful. Intervention Teacher, School C: Very high cause we are very data driven here, too. So, these teachers are just so strong at getting these kids up to speed and if they're not up to speed, they do everything in their power to get them there. . . . I have a first-grade teacher that is taking one of her students and she reads with him every single morning because Mom doesn't have time, and she knows that. ESL Teacher, School D: We feel that reading supports everything . . . Reading first I think . . . We are passionate about having kids read and read a lot. Intervention Teacher, School D: It's really knowing your student, and really planning for it because every child is just so individual in reading. You think that you can group them up into this one group just because they're an ESL student but they're still very different.

(cont.)

Topic	Quote
Professional development supports collective creativity (27/33) - Workshop, training, continued learning - Staff presentations - Articles, books - District training	Grade 1 Teacher, School A: I think people are always willing to go to workshops and get new information and to read books. It could be something the district offers or something outside the district. ESL Teacher, School C; Workshops. If they come up and staff is interested, they go to them and, like I said, do a teach-back and it gets people excited that way. Some people are, we do have a book club for staff. So, some people get ideas through sharing that way. Grade 5 Teacher, School B: My best answer would be when we've had a couple of staff book studies . . . it was basically this—strategies for the reading workshop. We had to present a chapter. We did a jigsaw where each group had a chapter, then you had to put it in action in class, and then report back the results.
Grade-level and cross grade-level collaboration on instructional planning, student needs, and student work support collective creativity (22/33) - Collaboration - Team time - Common planning - PLC - Video - Material share - Study groups	Grade 3 Teacher, School A: We take those scores and see what areas we need to work on and usually it is the same around the grade level. If it's nonfiction, comprehension, vocabulary, or whatever. We can look at that and say, "O.k. This is something we need to work on as a grade level." So in our small reading groups that is a focus we can work on. That is a focus in our collaboration time then. Grade 4 Teacher, School A: Also, in our PLCs we decide what we want to work on. We look at the data and we look at MLAs or MAP scores and see vocabulary—ouch, we better do something and figure it out. We have to find something. What is going to be useful for us to use. It might be an article or it might be a book. We had to do videotaping and people might not have liked it, but it definitely helps. Kindergarten Teacher, School B: That kind of goes back to those days where we're given time to look at student work and collaborate, sit together as either a grade level or a K–2 or 3–5 and talk about things that are working.

(cont.)

Topic	Quote
	ESL Teacher, School B: I think when we plan weekly together as a fourth-grade team and share things that work well, things that don't, and things that we're going to do. It's real informal, but anytime I organize something I'm going to use, I just pass it along to everyone else on my team and see if they want to use it.
	Coach, School D: Well then of course we have collaboration time and we've had that for the last 6 years at least. . . . The teachers say, "I've been working with a student in reading or math and do you have any idea because they just aren't getting off this."
Classroom teachers and support staff work together to meet student needs (21/33) - ESL, sped, Title, paraprofessionals, coach - Intentional scheduling	Kindergarten Teacher, School D: . . . talked about how we can get improvement, what do we need to do, and how do we collaborate better, how are we going to work this with our push in model because we do push in special ed., Title, and ESL. That is a lot of coordination and communication. . . . We do meet with our push in support staff continually so that is another way that we get together to make solutions and that is ongoing and all the time.
	Kindergarten Teacher, School A: One thing I do is I meet with 'ESL Teacher', the ESL teacher who works with my kids and we talk about certain things that some of my children that don't speak English very well, we work together.
	Grade 4 Teacher, School C: . . . and then we talked with the ELL teacher and the special ed. teacher to see what they thought was best. If they did have to pull students out during a social studies period, did they want leveled readers? What are the things they needed to support them in their classrooms and how can they support us. We do a lot with ELL in terms of vocabulary development. She'll preview the text with them.

(cont.)

Topic	Quote
Informal teacher sharing (18/33) - Bouncing ideas - Communication - Halls, morning	Grade 3 Teacher, School C: Again, it is a lot of in the morning kinds of things, "I went to this great class" or "I found this website and this website and you should really check it out." So it is a lot of talking the hall about what they've discovered and share it. Grade 1 Teacher, School D: Everybody is just really willing to share whatever they have; people email and say, "Oh, here's a vowel flip chart that works really cool." Everybody's just sharing things all the time. Kindergarten Teacher, School A: If we find something that we think might work or that we found interesting we're very open with each other and kind of sharing.
Flexible grouping aimed at meeting students' needs (11/33) - With in a class - Between classes - Between grades	Grade 2 Teacher, School A: During collaboration time we will look through our reading groups and see if we can combine two groups because they are at the same level and some of the students in those groups have moved up. So can we deliver more efficient instruction? We talk about different strategies to use to help those students. ESL Teacher, School B: They're always supposed to be reading books that are challenging but not too challenging or too easy; that's differentiated and then we have different reading groups. If we have a bunch of kids reading at this level and a bunch reading here, we can group them according to their level or according to what they need like fluency or vocabulary. The groups change throughout the year and things like that.
Building level systems in place to increase collective creativity (11/33) - Committees - Intervention Team - CST	Sped Teacher, School B: . . . we do have a SAT team where teachers meet to discuss students that are struggling; it's the Student Assistance Team. That's really been helpful to a lot of teachers to get some ideas. ESL Teacher, School C: We do several staff meetings. I've done, personally, a couple and shared tips and ideas. I do give out, this year I am giving tips every few weeks on strategies they could use for diverse learners, especially ELL learners. *(cont.)*

Topic	Quote
- Staff Meetings	Grade 1 Teacher, School A: We (Student Intervention Team) meet once a week and teachers will come and they will share what their concerns are and if they have any data on the children already. Then the group will brainstorm what things you could try. . . .
Teachers engage in culturally responsive efforts (6/33) - SEED - Culturally diverse literature - Parent voice/volunteer	Kindergarten Teacher, School A: They're (teachers) basically the leaders (of SEED) and each month we read a book on differentisms that are happening, reading a book about different cultures and then we come together. It's a 2-hour class and we just talk about what's happening outside of the world and also what's happening in our building and what to do to change our instruction to meet the needs of all of our learners. ESL Teacher, School B: I know this last one it seemed like we had a whole lot of reaching out to Latino students or dealing with African American families, kind of like they were geared towards different diversity of race or language that we have here and applying that to academics or working with the families and things like that.
Individual teacher strengths and styles cited as assets in meeting student's needs (4/33)	Intervention Teacher, School D: I think just using the staff members, your own teammates, your own grade level; they are also great ways of learning new things, too. The new teachers that come in always have new things to offer, too. Everyone has something of value.
Reading program not all bad (1/33)	Grade 5 Teacher, School C: I don't think the reading program is all bad. I just don't think there is enough reading. I think it's good for the skills.
Reader's workshop (1/33)	Special Education Teacher, School B: I think the same thing, just to go back to reader's workshop because that's really the way the model was designed.

Table C- 6.

Supportive Conditions (Based on questions #14, 15, 16)

Topic	Quote
Resources are available for professional development (29/33) - Conferences - Substitutes - Grade-level planning - Coach support	Grade 1 Teacher, School A: Right now if you have something that you can go to and you can document how that's going to affect your teaching and students, you're pretty guaranteed that you will be able to go. We're going to go to IRA. Grade 5 Teacher, School B: I know when we had 'Principal' here, she wanted everyone to sign up for at least on educational development out of school and go outside of school to a workshop or additional training. We definitely have district in-services and a good range of offerings as well. Intervention Teacher, School D: Yes, like I said we have the summer institute, workshops, staff development through the year and then in the fall we always have a Reading Recovery conference that most of our primary teachers attend.
Extrinsic recognition of student reading achievement (26/33) - Reading logs - Read to younger students - Principal recognition - Mystery reader - Trip to library	ESL Teacher, School B: In fourth grade they're (students) supposed to read every night for 20 minutes, so they have a calendar that they record the minutes they read each night and their parents sign it. When they bring it in and meet the goal, the principal will bring in a pencil and a certificate every month. Kindergarten Teacher, School C: I know some of the rooms are having mystery readings and making reading be just well known and important and other ones are taking their kids to the library . . . we have reading log that we send home and we are having incentives for if the class reaches a certain goal then we get, everybody gets to pick a prize out of the prize jar.

(cont.)

Topic	Quote
	Grade 4 Teacher, School D: We do a variety of things, we have our Book It, and so we do that. We do a lot in the classroom. I do reading journals and things. If I see so many different entries or if they hand in extra book reports, we'll do pizza parties.
Scheduled grade-level and cross grade-level collaboration supports collective learning and shared practice (24/33) - Common prep - PLC - Collaboration time - Sharing time - Planning days - Staff meetings	Kindergarten teacher, School A: We have the collaboration time set out for us which is something that happens every day of the week. We have PLCs every other week that's in the morning before school so we all come at 8:20 and then it's before school until school starts. Grade 1 Teacher, School D: Again our schedule with that collaboration time right after lunch. I keep going back to that but it really is one of the most valuable things I've found so far. So I really think that works out nicely for kindergarten and first grade together so we have our team time at the same time. We overlap a little bit with second grade so our team time is during their lunch time so if we do need to talk to second grade we can pop in while they're eating lunch or whatever. So I really like the way that we're at the same time sort of at the grade levels directly surrounding us and that just kind of makes sense. Grade 5 Teacher, School C: I think it is important that my colleague and I have the same prep period so I know that is not necessarily the case in some schools and I feel that is highly important. We have the same lunch schedule, so that works. Scheduling is not really an issue here. Intervention Teacher, School C: Mornings are set for our staff meetings and they're set at 8:00 so it's not super early. A lot of specialists, or paras, who don't start until later can still make it but it's not really, really early.

(cont.)

Topic	Quote
Intrinsic recognition of student reading achievement (15/33) - Verbal	Special Education Teacher, School B: For instance in fourth grade when we determine what a just right level is for a student at the beginning of the year, they (students) set their own goals and they get very excited as they move up through each level and they get closer to their goals. That's a big part of what we work on and focus on to help them to achieve their own goals.
	Grade 1 Teacher, School C: They (students) kind of really like the movement and really see growth themselves. I really like that they see it and internalize it versus me saying, "Oh, look what you're doing."
	Grade 1 Teacher, School D: I always tell the kids when they're moving up to the next reading level and they get really excited . . . so it's more of kind of an internal motivation for them as far as what I use. You know I don't do anything like a sticker or an award or anything.
Home-school connections established (10/33) - Family nights - Progress notes to parents	Grade 1 Teacher, School A: Sending notes home to parents, progress notes on how they're doing and report cards.
	Intervention Teacher, School C: I do things where I send a 'We Both Read' book and it's more of a parent involvement activity but its half where a child reads, half where a parent reads and they get candy for that when they bring it back to me after it for a week.
Staff communication occurs informally (10/33) - Before/after school - Lunch	Grade 4 Teacher, School D: We do it (communicate) before school, after lunch, in fourth and fifth grade we have the same lunch together so afterwards and even during lunch usually we're discussing what we need to be working on. I think, we're always talking, in the hallways, in passing, sending out emails is big . . . *(cont.)*

Topic	Quote
- Hallways	Grade 3 Teacher, School C: If we really want to discuss something, we are on the phone at night talking. I know a lot of the teachers stay after school. I can't do that. A lot of the rest of them will talk after school.
School schedule prioritizes reading instruction (7/33) - Maximizes time with student (reading block) - Includes support staff during reading block	ESL Teacher, School D: Scheduling is a tricky one. It is a huge puzzle and I think they did a really good job and, well, the ILA block making sure the kids get the services they need whether it be from Title or special ed. or ESL. Grade 1 Teacher, School A: They've tried to put bigger blocks of time so you can have a longer block for reading and a longer block for math.
Team teaching increases collective learning and shared practice (2/33)	Kindergarten teacher, School D: And then we're unique in kindergarten that we have team teaching positions. We are doing a shared practice really all of the time and we are collaborating all of the time. . . .
Schedule is flexible if students cross grade levels for flexible grouping (1/33)	Grade 2 Teacher, School C: We were kind of given a sample schedule but it wasn't something that was, you had to do, but it just seemed to work out well that way . . . I think the schedule has been flexible enough that you can do those shared, because I am doing second, first, and third. We're collaborating with second, first, and third.
Teachers use work day for team planning (1/33)	Kindergarten Teacher, School C: Anytime we just have a work day, not a staff day, not anything else, it is just devoted to working, we will usually, I'm pretty sure most the teachers take a big chunk of that and do curriculum planning just with their other teachers.

Table C- 7.

Factors Attributed to the Development of a PLC (Based on questions #17)

Topic	Quote
Schools have a reading instructional framework informed by research (24/33) - Books - Supplemental materials - Resources including technology - Best practice - Shared vocabulary - Vertical alignment - Daily reading - Flexible grouping - Reader's workshop - Continuity with the program - Time dedicated to reading block	Grade 3 Teacher, School A: The second one, the universal vocabulary, keeps the transition from grade level to grade level smooth and I think that is pretty important. Grade 2, School B: Resources are important, too. If I didn't have the amazing library that I have in my classroom of different leveled books for my students our reading program just wouldn't even exist without the resources. Coach, School D: " . . . knowing the reasons behind (instructional practices), the research behind (instructional practices), really helps . . . knowing what the new research says so you are operating, in a sense, on the newest playing field. . . . " Kindergarten Teacher, School D: I would say one would be reading every day. They just need to have books in their hands. They need to have that experience. Especially for our students, a lot of them don't have print rich environments that they grew up in or have any books on their own. . . . I think teachers just need to be, they need to be up to date on best practices. They need to have experience teaching reading and learning the best ways to teach reading because if you have an ineffective teacher that's going to be very difficult for you to have the tools you're going to need and the strategies you'll need to learn to read.

(cont.)

Topic	Quote
Collaboration and communication amongst staff that includes common planning (20/33) - Conversation/discussion - Study groups/PLCs - Cross grade level - Time (peer, talk, plan) - Supportive, collaborative nature - Safe environment - Peer observation	Grade 2, School A: I think the study groups and learning new strategies and things help us get out of—sometimes you get in a rut and teach the same things year after year, but it helped us get more new things and try new things to help students achieve. The collaboration helps you continue to share ideas and say this isn't working and how can I help this student? Kindergarten Teacher, School C: Well, I think one of them is the teachers being able to work together cross grade-level and like I was talking about, being able to put the kids where is appropriate. Grade 1 Teacher, School D: I think one of the most important factors is definitely collaboration. . . . It's not only helpful for new teachers but helpful just so that everybody is on the same page because it's really important that everybody is up to the same level. So that we're all kind of working together to become better teachers, and I think that collaboration time really, really helps that.
High expectations for student reading achievement and collective efficacy amongst staff (15/33) - Data and assessment - Celebrate achievement gains - Know students individually - Believe students can learn	Grade 1, School A: I think the value of believing that every kid can learn and will learn if we find the right way to teach them and help them I think that's a really important factor that we never give up and say, "That child can't do it." We have high expectations, maybe that's a better way of putting it. ESL Teacher, School A: Data I think is important because, not that I think we should be assessing kids six ways to Sunday all the time, but I think if you can in general know where they're at and where they need to go or where they're having difficulty—Is it phonemic awareness or fluency? What specific pieces are holding them back? Special Education Teacher, School B: We use data and we're getting better and better at collecting data and learning how to use the data to help us do a better job with teaching for the most part. *(cont.)*

Topic	Quote
- Teachers committed to student achievement	Special Education Teacher, School D: I think to have, just to believe in the children that they can learn, that would be my second one.
Professional development (14/33) - Inservice/training - Workshops - Continued education - Knowledgeable staff	Kindergarten Teacher, School A: I think as a building and as a teacher it's important to continually educate yourself on new strategies or new ways of learning how to read or learning how to write. Kindergarten Teacher, School B: Challenging yourself to learn new things, to come in and learn about differentiated learning and then learn about how it's the same as academic choice and different than academic choice and trying those things. There's a lot of flexibility and a lot of youth, not necessarily age youth, but youth of mind and things that you want to do and the ways you want to challenge yourself as an educator. ESL Teacher, School D: As teachers, just professional development and continued learning. Seeking as many ways as we can to grow in our teaching whether it be through professional development or other ways that we can learn more.
School leadership (6/33) - Confidence in teachers	Intervention Teacher, School A: Then the overall leadership, the school leadership, the principal, I think really sets the tone. She's so excited in talking about new opportunities or just ways to increase student achievement. That really drives her. Grade 3 Teacher, School C: I think having your principal have confidence in you and know that even if you aren't doing what you are suppose to be doing you are probably doing something that makes sense for the kids in your room at the time.

(cont.)

Topic	Quote
Home-school connection (4/33) - Know the diversity of students - Family involvement	ESL Teacher, School A: . . . I think what really makes a huge difference is family involvement and if there's a way to get families involved in some way, shape or form in their student's reading and supporting reading at home, I think that really makes a big difference.
Classroom atmosphere (2/33) - Learning is fun - Competitiveness	Grade 5 Teacher, School C: Two would be a good classroom atmosphere. My classes are fairly structured especially at the beginning of the year. Now, not so much. I mean I joke around a lot in class but I have to build the atmosphere that when I say we have to get to work, we get to work.
Support staff (1/33) - ESL, Title special education	Coach, School D: That you are able to share and able to open your classroom to other people by having Title people right in your classroom. Their desk is in the classroom. Having that support staff come in. I think that is really key because the students see everybody working together and we know you and care about you.

Table C- 8.

Working Through a Dilemma to Establish a PLC (Based on questions #18)

Topic	Quote
Comply with top-down decisions (12/33) - Gentle push - Support staff comply to teachers - Teachers comply to mandates (Reading First, reader's workshop) - Principal or coach deal with the conflict - ILA/district level	Intervention Teacher, School A: I think somebody talked to the principal and it changed. That person (had been late) then made more of an effort to get there on time. Intervention Teacher, School C: It blew me away that this grade level in particular was not doing guided reading for our students that really, really need it. It's a great team and they didn't have guided reading. I was just like, how is this even possible? And so, myself, the ELL teacher and the principal all sat down with the teachers and said, "OK, this is something that is high on the priority list." . . . We really worked hard with them to show them how to get it done. Special Education Teacher, School D: I always do what they (classroom teachers) want because I believe as a special ed. teacher, if the regular ed. teachers are happy then everybody's happy. I have my things that I have to do but they're with those kids all day and I just pop in for 20 minutes here, 20 minutes there, so I think it's more important that they be happy.
Teachers make decisions (8/33) - Based on student needs - Integrate subjects	Kindergarten Teacher, School A: One of the dilemmas that we've found is math skills were kind of not increasing as much as the reading skills were. One thing that we've done is incorporated in the ILA block is that we have different centers, one of them being a math center. They're getting a little more math time in but also we're still doing the reading groups.

(cont.)

Topic	Quote
	Grade 3 Teacher, School B: I think reader's workshop works but everybody's had to realize that you have to adapt to the kids in your room and it can't look the same exactly in every room, which we kind of got the feeling people were trying to push in the first place.
	If I've got gifted kids in here, I'm not going to have a guided reading group with them all the time. They're going to be out reading books together and they're at this point. They don't need as much individual guidance.
Collaboration and communication amongst staff (6/33) - Conversations - All voices heard - Building rapport/relationships - Accountable for study group notes - Work with teacher strengths - Team teaching	Grade 4 Teacher, School B: Then feelings changed, motivations changed and I think that the next year they brought in a collaborator for me. Then it's nothing because you didn't have to do everything by yourself and you didn't have to try to make a program work that wasn't designed for operating all by yourself. Having two people in the classroom is huge. Intervention Teacher, School D: I think a lot of it is just developing relationships with people. I think if you develop relationships with people it's easier to deal with problems. If you don't have a relationship, it's difficult.
Provide support (5/33) - Professional development time and money -	Special Education Teacher, School B: I think it all depends on the kid and knowing lots of different ways to teach reading, that's the most valuable thing that I can do is to keep building that knowledge and trying different things with different kids. *(cont.)*

Topic	Quote
- Resources, programs - Build teacher's knowledge	Grade 4 Teacher, School C: I really do think that it is important for us to take those days when we're given the chance to have a day off and to really plan our curriculum and those have been really beneficial for our team. . . . Also, our after school workshops that we'll do, just in terms of, we'll sit and plan during those time periods and we'll look through our students and sometime we'll group based on this group needs this reading level skill.
Celebrating progress (1/33)	Coach, School D: You do the baby steps. . . . We did celebrations and everything else . . . and I was always doing that and always giving kudos to the people, writing them notes.
Vision (1/33)	Coach, School D: If you don't have all the different pieces in a row, if you don't have the communication, if you don't have the vision, if you don't have that support, if any of those things breaks down you always have to have that in mind.
Home-school connection (1/33)	Grade 4 Teacher, School D: Finding ways to get people excited about it and finding ways to get that connection with home and saying, "This really is important. We're working really hard and how can you get your kid excited." So just sending home tools, questions, sample questions or sending home books.

Principal Interview Categories by PLC Attribute

Table D- 1.

Shared Leadership (Based on questions #2)

Topic	Quote
Teacher input in curriculum, instruction, and assessment (4/4)	Principal, School A: So, there is some autonomy in making decisions about instructional practices with the caveat that we want it to be researched and best practices instruction. . . . I suppose, ultimately, they (teachers) have some decisions on how they are going to use the assessment in their day whether you are talking about formative or summative.
	Principal, School B: . . . but I think the flexibility of some teachers went through CGI math training last summer, some teachers did not. So their option of putting CGI information into Everyday Math is their choice. . . .
	Principal, School C: So, if they (teachers) find materials that they want. Then, we will get them in addition, whether it is leveled books or vocabulary focus, something with writing.
Decision making is grounded in research and student data (4/4) - Assessments - Research-based	Principal, School A: The thing that I'm finding out is that they are coming in before school or the first day of workshop and saying, "O.k. where is the data on this child?" and that's really changed over the years.
	Principal, School C: What they (district level team) did was looked at all the research that has been done plus what is coming from the federal government and decided what constitutes a balanced literacy curriculum. *(cont.)*

Topic	Quote
	Principal, School D: Then we make sense of it here and implement it here in the building and the teachers choose their methods which come from best practice reading and learning.
Building level systems for decision making & information dispersion in place (4/4) - Leadership team - Reading committee - Reform effort	Principal, School A: Instruction, well, for example the Reading First grant, the staff had to buy in and sign off on doing this intensive staff development over a period of 3 years and 3 summers to be a part of the Reading First grant. They had a 100% decision to go that route. Principal, School B: So on that committee we have one teacher per grade level, myself and a parent representative which is the same way we do staff development as well. It's the same committee format. So, basically, everything that comes through leadership committee, if it's curriculum decisions or instructional decisions, assessment will come through that committee. Principal, School D: Now we have it's really figured into a BLT, building leadership team, and so that's representative of all the grade levels but most of the folks that are on the BLT are teacher leaders . . . So our decisions are wrapped into the BLTs. Their reps would gather information from their colleagues and bring it forward at our BLT.
The role of a curriculum leader in shared leadership (2/4) - ILA rep - Curriculum leader	Principal, School C: Each school has two curriculum leaders. It is a small position, but it is a paid position beyond their regular school day. They work on improving instruction but also if we are doing looking at new social studies curriculum or new science curriculum specialists are brought in to work with them. They bring lessons back to teach back to the staff.

(cont.)

Topic	Quote
Grade-level teams have discussion and decision making (1/4)	Principal, School D: We also meet as grade-level teams. I always take input.
Team teaching supports implementation of decisions made (1/4) - Classroom teacher - ELL - Special education	Principal, School C: Since they are all teaming all the time—the ELL teacher is in the regular classroom, the Title teacher is in and out. We all have to be on the same page because if we are not, there is going to be a disconnect. There are no disconnects here.

Table D- 2.

Does not represent shared leadership

Topic	Quote
Top-down decision making (4/4) - District level - Model - Framework	Principal, School A: Alright, in 'District' there is very centralized curriculum and so a building does not go about making its own curricular choices. A number of years ago, 'District' decided to go with the guided reading model and so no matter which 30 elementary schools you would be in, you are going to find the same curriculum. Principal, School B: I basically get things from the district office coming down on assessment. If we are going to do CBM testing, it's going to be the district-wide. It's going to be a decision coming from the district saying that we are going to test all of the students on one day and we are going to put together a committee to do it. Principal, School D: Of course, all of our work is determined as far as curriculum, instruction, and assessment on district initiatives. This is a large district, largest in 'State'. We have a very good central office with people who are curriculum leaders, so the directives come from them.

Table D- 3.

Shared Values and Vision (Based on questions #3, 4)

Topic	Quote
Schools have a reading instructional framework informed by research (3/4) - Reader's workshop - Best practice	Principal, School A: Well, just the fact that they use the instructional best practices. That is not something that they have not just learned and discounted Principal, School B: I think the values are that we have a consistent level of training for teachers and we have a consistent standard of teaching and reader's workshop. If you go to any classroom in my building or in one in the other two elementary schools you will see a short mini-lesson and then you will see the students getting into guided reading groups. You should see a closure every time you go in. Principal, School C: One of the things we were trying to do is to go to year-round school . . . We did a lot of site visits. We did a lot of research.
Grade-level and cross grade-level collaboration on reading instruction support shared values and vision (3/4) - PLC - Study groups - Cross grade articulation - Team	Principal, School A: We spent 3 solid years, once a week, in our professional learning communities whether it's grade level or across grade level, looking at different units on reading instruction whether it be how to use assessment, how to use the Daily Five, for example. Principal, School C: That, how the school looks to the outside world is what's important. That our team, how is our team doing? Not each individual teacher. Principal, School D: In our study groups then we would study these central topics and all work together to bring that initiative forward.

(cont.)

Topic	Quote
Student reading achievement is a shared value (2/4) - Reading is central - All students can be successful - Assessment/data driven - Reflection on instruction	Principal, School C: They're more than willing to say, I haven't made any progress with Jon. His RIT moved one point and obviously whatever I have been doing, this is what I have been doing, and it hasn't worked. What would the rest of you suggest? Principal, School D: That's how our vision came to be, all wrapped around what is best for kids and how can we improve reading achievement. . . . I think the biggest piece here at 'School' is that our values are all based on our kids and every student who comes here can be successful.
Role of the principal in shared values and vision (2/4)	Principal, School A: Ultimately, I think principals have to have their eyes on the prize and what we communicate is very important. I have always been about reading instruction. Principal, School C: When we do the January, teachers are willing to be honest because they know how much I care about them. I take care of the teachers. The teachers take care of the kids.
Professional development supports shared values and vision (2/4) - Workshops - Staff development - Consultant	Principal, School B: So they used their workshop days and used district in service days completely for reader's workshop for a couple of years and then they brought in outside consultants to support continuous training. Principal, School D: Most of that is the value of that staff development, learning how we can teach in the best possible way. . . . That value for yourself being a constant learning, a life-long learner, I think is the value that I think we have brought forward. . . .

(cont.)

Topic	Quote
Shared values and vision established at the building level (2/4) - Leadership team - Reading committee	Principal, School A: I think that part of the discussion that has happened in that literacy committee. The vision was established there, I think. The values those folks had to value what we were doing. Principal, School D: The leadership team then brings that out to the grade levels or to the study groups. The teachers then bring it forward further to their grade-level little team collaborations and then to the students. A central vision of the kids and what they need and how we can wrap that out.

Table D- 4.

Deprivatized Practice (Based on questions #5, 6)

Topic	Quote
Teaching peers provide instructional support to colleagues by mentoring, observing, and co-teaching (3/4) - Team teach	Principal, School A: Well, one of the things we have done is to provide that cross-grade-level or intra-grade-level observing of each other. I think that it is huge, but the opportunity has been there for folks to do that. Principal, School B: We're at a different phase because we are out of implementation and into more practice but there was a lot of, not peer coaching, but peer mentoring back-and-forth where teachers would be freed up to go visit classrooms and watch reading workshop lessons and give feedback to other staff members and vice versa. Principal, School D: We also have some of our staff take advantage of other staff development dollars and go and observe other teachers teaching and collaborate in that fashion.
Instructional practice is shared during grade-level and cross grade-level collaboration through lesson sharing, reflecting on practice, reviewing student work, and analyzing data (3/4) - PLC - Study groups	Principal, School A: I think another way that has been really great through the 3 years that we did this is that during the professional learning communities an important component of that was sharing student work and also to have the comfort to bring in student work that maybe isn't the best. Principal, School B: They also have grade-level team meeting time. Every week they have to set aside and that is the purpose of those meetings. . . . It is looking through the curriculum and looking at the unit tests they have given or different activities and discussing actual student work. Principal, School C: They're really good at going across. Like third goes to second or fourth . . . How did we do? *(cont.)*

Topic	Quote
- Team time	Principal, School D: They discuss and talk together in their PLCs. They still look at their video clips. They look at student work. They discuss how they are teaching and they reflect upon that.
	Principal, School D: Grade-level meetings they discuss and collaborate.
Individual teachers share informally (1/4) - Share materials - Hallway	Principal, School C: The teachers will very much go across the hall to their teammate or another and say, "You know I got these two kids and they are way down on this RIT. Do you have some materials that I could borrow that will work for that?"

Table D- 5.

Collective Creativity (Based on questions #7, 8)

Topic	Quote
High commitment to quality instruction and achievement elicits collective creativity— seek research, professional development, internet resources (4/4) - Data/assessment driven	Principal, School A: Oh, I would say it (level of staff commitment to reading programs) is extremely high. I have said we are pretty much about three things—reading, writing, and mathematics. So, they have a high level of commitment. Principal, School B: Very high commitment. This staff knows that for reader's workshop to work there has to be great commitment for not only the teaching that needs to happen at each grade level, its accountability of if kindergarten teaches this, then they will be ready for first grade and so on up the grades. Principal, School C: Either we are looking at MCA results or we are looking at MAP results . . . They know that they are really working hard so, that said, what area is the weakest? Let's focus on that. Give me three things you are going to do. Principal, School D: They are committed to anything they teach to make a difference for their kids. They will do whatever it takes. For instance, we are an art specialty school now, so we have 20 people going to an art inservice in Minneapolis.
Grade-level and cross grade-level collaboration on instructional planning, student needs, and student work support collective creativity (4/4) - Collaboration	Principal, School A: Whether it's through the collaboration time where they do talk about each student or whether it is the professional learning communities, which this year is mathematics, they are talking about, sometimes, individual student needs, not always. Principal, School B: It is a commitment of the staff to stay together, as a grade level to stay together; they share ideas about what works and what didn't work. Because they plan together they are able to get so many more ideas and try so many more things because they are not individually inventing the wheel. *(cont.)*

Topic	Quote
- Team time - Share ideas - PLC, study groups - Reflect - Includes support staff	Principal, School B: They are collaboratively working and they get an ELL teacher and a special ed. teacher to work with them because every grade has one. Principal, School D: So they (teachers) have a 25-minute duty free lunch and then they have 35 minutes of team time, we call, four days a week. They meet in their grade-level teams or cross grade-level . . . In that team time it is not prep time, planning time, it's not extra lunch time. It is very focused.
Informal teacher sharing (1/4) - Halls, morning, after school	Principal, School D: Beyond that, in all their other free times, their team times, study group time, before school, after school, during school that is their focus and they're really good at it. They find whatever time they need to say, "This isn't work. What worked for you? What could I do different? What resources do you have?"

Table D- 6.

Supportive Conditions (Based on questions #9, 10)

Topic	Quote
School schedule prioritizes reading instruction—research-based, prescribed, daily structure, includes support staff (4/4) - Reading block (guided reading, flexible group, shared reading, no pull out) - No interruptions - Based on what's best for kids	Principal, School A: Well, we really try to build the schedule around reading. We really do. So, for our kindergarten, first, second grade we plot in the 120 minutes of uninterrupted reading time and build our schedule around that as far as not making interruptions. Principal, School B: The two teachers that share the ELL teacher—one may have reading from 8:15–9:15 and then from 9:15–10:15 and then the ELL teacher goes one room to the next and then the special ed. teacher is in the other room. . . . So the schedule accommodates for the same ELL teacher to serve if they need to go into two rooms to serve two rooms and the same special ed. teacher so that they become part of the team. Principal, School D: We have a very prescribed schedule . . . these are where guided reading groups or times when students are a little more flexible and that is when all of our support staff come in. Our teachers doing guided reading. Our ESL teacher is in there. Our Title is in there. Special ed. is in there. They are all working in small groups in that piece. What we have said is that you cannot deviate, so there is a little less autonomy in that way.
Extrinsic recognition of student reading achievement (3/4) - Reading logs - Certificates, pencils, bike	Principal, School B: Giving out reading certificates. We do a home-school reading program. They have to chart their time on a calendar. If they have enough minutes and bring it back then monthly they get rewarded. They get a certificate and some kind of school related prize—pencil, eraser, etc . . . Principal, School C: Second grade and fifth grade does Reading Counts. It's like Accelerated Reader. They earn points. In order to give everybody an equal chance, for every 25 points that they earn, they get to put their name in a drawing for a bike. *(cont.)*

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Topic	Quote
Intrinsic recognition of student reading achievement (3/4)	Principal, School A: One of the things that we really try, as all probably, is for internal student recognition that I am moving along, that I am learning. . . . I just think it is that individual teacher saying, "Great job!" more than the glitzy programs.
	Principal, School C: Well, I got to tell you that the kids get really excited about their MAP scores. They know exactly what MAP is about . . . They really love it because they know that they have the ability to go way beyond. If I learn more it's going to really show. Then I can show my mom and do.
	Principal, School D: I'm not a big, I'm more I'd say intrinsic value that we do reward some but we really want kids and teachers to do it because it is what we should do.
Scheduled grade-level and cross grade-level collaboration supports collective learning and shared practice (2/4) - Common time - Collaborate - Plan - Sharing time - Staff meetings	Principal, School B: All grade-level teams except kindergarten have common planning time . . . they do their grade-level planning time after school.
	Principal, School C: Every year, except this year, all the teachers at any grade level have common prep. They use that very well. They collaborate together. They plan together. They share results that they are getting.

(cont.)

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Topic	Quote
Classroom teachers and support staff collaboration increases collective learning and shared practice (2/4)	Principal, School B: But the schedule also, we have a schedule arranged that we have either an ELL collaborating teacher or a special ed. teacher collaborating for reading and math. Principal, School D: If ESL is working with them (student) then we're not going to have special ed. work with them, too. It is a collaborative. They are good at it. Then they collaborate together, the support staff and the classroom staff to determine what they're to focus on. It is a very collaborative effort.
Home-school connections established (1/4) - Family Involvement	Principal, School C: In Title 1 when we have our parent involvement meetings, parents always want to come because they know they are going to get a free book . . . we will often meet at the public library and give them a tour because a lot of the parents don't have a clue where the library is or that the library card is free or what a library is.
Teachers are encouraged to observe teachers in other schools. (1/4)	Principal, School C: I have encouraged them to go and watch other teacher's instruction in the other schools, because they know what the teacher instruction is here, but they don't want to be away from their kids, so they rarely do it.

Table D- 7.

Factors Attributed to the Development of a PLC (Based on questions #11)

Topic	Quote
Collaboration and communication amongst staff that includes common planning and studying research on instructional practices (4/4) - Study group/PLC - Collaboration time - Grade-level meeting - Classroom teacher and support staff	Principal, School A: The staff is very good hearted. They all were there and all, I think the power of the professional learning communities, that they were all learning from each other. Principal, School B: Well what we have stated for the entire district is allowing teachers the common planning time, the shared lesson planning time. Principal, School C: Two, that this is a collaborative work. That when we have grade-level meetings, the ESL, Title 1, and specialist teachers are there . . . It is that collaboration and creative problem solving that I think is incredibly powerful. Principal, School D: Study groups which I would include under that, study groups, collaborative time, and not just one day only but really from a school approach and a team approach. They are determining what they want to study and how that is being done.
Schools have a reading instructional framework informed by research (3/4) - Viable - Balanced - Resources	Principal, School A: . . . do you have the curricula that is going to get those kids at their correct instructional level and at the correct pacing, the correct level of rigor that is going to push those kids? . . . So, I really believe the guided reading programs and the resources that we use support that. Then thirdly, towards having the excellent instructional practices. Principal, School C: Number one is that they use that framework. That everyone is agreeing that, yes, it is a good framework that, yes, we are going to use it and that we are going to follow-through on all of the parts of a balanced literacy curriculum.

(cont.)

Topic	Quote
	Principal, School D: I think that you have to have a viable curriculum and that the district helps us do. They give us the resources or we have written a ton of grants so we have one of the finest libraries in this district in this school because of all the money we have been able to access and equipment and resources in the classroom.
Professional development that is narrowly focused, committed, and includes diversity training (3/4)	Principal, School A: We have heavily attended diversity classes, SEED classes, I don't know if you have heard of SEED classes, but they are heavily attended at our school and we have done it ever since I have been here for 6 years, just examining some people's assumptions and prejudices.
	Principal, School B: So things I'm willing to send people to, unless it's Responsive Classroom, it needs to either be tied to professional learning communities, using data to make decisions, or maybe something with reader's workshop. But there are very few things that I will allow people to go to because we are so narrowly focused.
	Principal, School D: Then the staff development. You can't move these huge initiatives without quality staff development.
High expectations for student reading achievement and collective efficacy amongst staff (3/4) - Data driven decisions - Assessment tools - Move all students	Principal, School A: I think that the very first, I think that a really critical factor is just helping your staff see the vision and understand that they have the capacity to move all the students' reading scores to a high level.
	Principal, School B: We are committed for the teachers having time to look closely at data, whatever the data may be whether it's NWEA, or if its MCA, or building level data. That we are committed to giving them information to support their use of the data and just giving them a lot of time and support.

(cont.)

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Topic	Quote
- Teachers committed to student achievement	Principal, School C: I guess the third one is we are here for the kids. We are not here to make it easy for ourselves. We will do whatever we need to do for the child to be successful and lift them up.
Coach (1/4)	Principal, School D: The third is the coach. We would not have been able to do this and continued to increased it and continued at a high level without our coach. . . . The coach, if you have that relationship, it is not like saying everybody needs as coach because our district has coaches in other schools but it operates different here because of who our coach is and the relationships she has developed and her high quality of understanding and knowledge and experiences that have brought this team, continued to bring this team, forward.
Staff of color (1/4)	Principal, School A: Also, towards that end, I have worked very hard at getting staff of color here at our school. So, that also helps with staff prejudices of, "Oh, poor little kid of whatever background."

Table D- 8.

Working Through a Dilemma to Establish a PLC (Based on questions #12)

Topic	Quote
Teachers empowered to deal with dilemma (3/4) - Worked through it together - Leadership team - Give teachers confidence (give info.) - Encourage teachers to speak up	Principal, School B: It was trying to give them the confidence that we will basically say that you can do it on your own and we will continue to support where the new teachers are through the consultant. So it was really trying to give them the confidence that we will make this and I'll still get you information because the reading specialist provided them all the information on data so I think they were really worried that they would have to start doing that on their own which they haven't. Principal, School C: I work very hard to honor their expertise and not be overly directive and work behind the scenes to encourage the creative up-to-date teachers to speak up in the staff meetings and that has worked extremely well. Principal, School D: We worked through that together. They believed that it was important and we continued to do it. It never works when they have to do it because someone told them to. It has to be, it works because it is important to their work. . . . I guess in some years, in the early time, it was some staff that weren't believers in our early initiative but my philosophy on that is that you build a strong leadership team. They are the folks that because I really take more of a secondary approach.
Principal dealt with dilemma (1/4) - Rearranged PLC groups	Principal, School A: What we did is probably, we didn't have enough time to spend on relationships, so at one time, we rearranged the groups and then it was much better. The teacher that felt that her voice wasn't being heard got put in a group where she thought it was and the teacher who thought she was a very strong still felt that she was a very strong teacher. . . .

APPENDIX E

Artifacts Collected

School A

1. Staff Bulletin
2. Parent Newsletter
3. Welcome Back Staff PowerPoint Presentation
4. Reading First Grant School Reflections
5. School Mission and Vision Statements
6. District Principals' Meeting Agenda
7. District Elementary Research Process Final Product Recommendations
8. School Student Intervention Team Referral and Intervention Forms
9. Principal Letter to Parents Regarding At-Home Math Practice
10. Add+VantageMR Assessment Schedules
11. School SMART Goals
12. Building Leadership Team Meeting Notes
13. Building Leadership Team Meeting Notes
14. Building Leadership Team Meeting Notes
15. Building Leadership Team Meeting Notes
16. Building Leadership Team Meeting Notes
17. Professional Learning Communities Agenda
18. Professional Learning Community Meeting Dates

School B

1. School Public Relations Flyer
2. School Schedule
3. Classroom Scheduling Cluster Agreement
4. Staff Meeting Agenda
5. Staff Meeting Agenda
6. Staff Meeting Agenda
7. School End-Of-Year Checklist
8. School Assessment Procedures
9. Assessment Clarification Email
10. Staff Meeting Handout
11. Staff Meeting Handout
12. Staff Meeting Schedule
13. School Parent Newsletter
14. School Parent Newsletter
15. School Parent Newsletter
16. Parent Letter From the Principal
17. District-University of Minnesota Parenting for School Success
18. School Goal Sheet to be Sent to the District Office

19. School Fine Arts Night Flyer
20. School After School Plans (programming)
21. District Human Relations PowerPoint
22. District Health Curriculum Scope and Sequence

School C

1. District Preliminary AYP Results Summary
2. School 2008 Preliminary AYP Results
3. District Assessment Calendar
4. School End of year Results Report 2007–2008
5. District Building Blocks for Teaching Students to be Successful Readers and Writers
6. Building Weekly Study Island Report
7. Winter 2009 MAP Score Comparison (District/School)
8. Winter 09 MAP Analysis
9. Student Newspaper
10. School Parent Newsletter
11. Parent-Teacher Organization Meeting Minutes
12. Blue Ribbon School Announcement
13. Local Newspaper Grant Awardee Press Release
14. Parent Information Night Flyer
15. Title 1 Department Meeting Agenda
16. Teaching Students of Color Handout
17. Teacher Survey Results

School D

1. 1.Building Leadership Meeting Minutes
2. Building Leadership Team Meeting Agenda
3. Building Leadership Team Minutes
4. TIP Sheet
5. SMART Goal Worksheet K–5 Reading
6. SMART Goal Worksheet 2–5 Math
7. District Test Calendar
8. Viewpoint Color Chart (Data)
9. District Grade Level Report Cards
10. School Meeting Calendar
11. Grade Level Student Schedules
12. District Observation Protocol
13. School Volunteer Newsletter
14. School Parent Newsletter
15. School Grant Application "Read Around the World! Increasing Student Achievement through Bilingual Reading"
16. School Grant Application "Family Math Night: Supporting Student Learning"
17. District Literacy Fundraiser Flyer

18. Math Parent Night Agenda
19. Literacy Night Flyer
20. Reading Night Flyer
21. Track & Field Day Volunteer Letter
22. School Volunteer Newsletter
23. Spring Music Concert Program
24. School Enrichment Scheduling Documents
25. Specialty School Agenda
26. Family Survey Results
27. Arts Facts . . . Improved Academic Performance Document
28. In-Service Email
29. SEED Email
30. District Staff Development Day Schedule
31. District New Teacher Training
32. School SIOP In-Service Handouts
33. School SEED Syllabus
34. District Summer Institute Schedule
35. District Performance Appraisal System
36. District Reading In-Service Handouts
37. School Staff Bulletin
38. School Staff Bulletin
39. School Whole Group Meeting Agenda
40. School Showcase Memo

Evidence of Categories from Artifacts & Observations

Table F- 1.

Shared Leadership

Topic	School A	School B	School C	School D
Teacher input in curriculum, instruction, and assessment (4/4)	**Obs 2, p. 3,4** **Obs 6, p. 2**	**Obs 1, p. 3** **Obs 4, p. 1,2** **Obs 9, p. 1** **Artifact 12, 20**	**Obs 1, p. 1,2,3,4** **Obs 3, p. 2,3,4,5** **Obs 4, p. 2,3,8** **Obs 5, p. 2,5,6,7** **Obs 6, p. 3** **Artifact 8, 17**	**Obs 1, p. 1,2** **Obs 2, p. 6** **Obs 3, p. 3** **Obs 5, p. 1,2** **Obs 6, p. 1,2** **Obs 8, p. 1,2,3** **Artifact 4, 9, 24**
Decision making is grounded in best practice (4/4) - Assessments/data - Research-based	**Obs 1, p. 1,4** **Obs 2, p. 1,2,3** **Obs 3, p. 2** **Obs 4, p. 2,3,4** **Obs 5, p. 1,2** **Obs 6, p. 1** **Artifact 3, 4, 5, 6, 8, 11, 13, 15**	**Obs 2, p. 2** **Obs 4, p. 1** **Obs 5, p. 3** **Obs 6, p. 2,3,4** **Obs 8, p. 1** **Artifact 1, 12**	**Obs 1, p. 1,2,3** **Obs 2, p. 2,7** **Obs 3, p. 1,2,3** **Obs 4, p. 1** **Obs7, p. 2** **Obs 8, p. 1,5** **Artifact 1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8**	**Obs 1, p. 2** **Obs 2, p. 1,3,4,6,7,8** **Obs 7, p. 1,2** **Artifact 4, 5, 8, 27, 31, 32, 37**

(cont.)

Topic	School A	School B	School C	School D
Building level decision making & information dispersion (4/4) - Leadership team - Reading committee - Reform effort - Staff meeting - Responsive classroom committee - Student intervention team	**Obs 2, p. 1,2,3** **Artifact 4, 8, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16**	**Obs 1, p. 1,2,3,4** **Obs 5, p. 1** **Obs 8, p. 3,4,5** **Obs 9, p. 1,2,3,4,5,6** **Artifact 4, 6, 10, 11, 12**	**Obs 2, p. 1,2,3,4,5,6, 7** **Obs 8, p. 2,3** **Artifact 1, 2, 4**	**Obs 1, p. 1,2,3** **Obs 2, p. 3** **Obs 5, p. 3** **Obs 6, p. 1,2** **Obs 7, p. 2** **Artifact 1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 25**
The role of a teacher leader in shared leadership (2/4) - ILA rep - Curriculum leader - Coach	Obs 3, p. 1,3 Obs 4, p. 2,3 Obs 6, p. 1 Artifact 4	Obs 8, p. 1 Artifact 22	Artifact 5	**Obs 1, p. 1,2,3** **Obs 5, p. 2,4** **Obs 7, p. 1,2** **Obs 8, p. 3,4** **Artifact 2, 3, 5, 6, 28, 32**
Grade-level teams have discussion and decision making (1/4)	Artifact 3, 4, 13, 14, 15, 17, 18			**Artifact 5, 6, 24, 39** *(cont.)*

Topic	School A	School B	School C	School D
Teaming supports shared leadership decision making (1/4) - Classroom teacher - ELL - Special education	Obs 1, p. 1 Artifact 14	Obs 6, p. 1,4 Artifact 1, 2, 3	Obs 3, p. 1,2,3,4,5,6 Obs 5, p. 1,2,3,4,5,6,7	**Obs 1, p. 3** **Obs 2, p. 2,4,5**

*Bold the documentation of the schools that had the response

Table F- 2.

Shared Values & Vision

Topic	School A	School B	School C	School D
Schools have an established reading instructional framework (3/4) - Reader's workshop - Research/best practice	**Obs 1, p. 4** **Obs 3, p. 2** **Artifact 4, 5**	**Obs 5, p. 1,4** **Obs 6, p. 1,2,3,4** **Obs 9, p. 2** **Artifact 1, 2**	**Obs 1, p. 1** **Obs 3, p. 2** **Artifact 5**	Obs 2, p. 3 Obs 7, p. 1,2 Obs 8, p. 5 Artifact 10, 31
Grade-level and cross grade-level collaboration support shared values and vision (3/4) - PLC - Study groups - Cross grade articulation - Team	**Obs 1, p. 1,2,3** **Artifact 3, 4, 13, 14, 15, 17, 18**	Obs 6, p. 1,4	**Obs 3, p. 1,2,3,4,5,6** **Obs 5, p. 1,2,3,4,5,6,7**	**Obs 1, p. 1,2,3** **Obs 2, p. 2,4,5,6** **Obs 3, p. 2** **Obs 8, p. 2,3,5,6** **Artifact 5, 6, 10, 24, 39**
Student reading achievement is a shared value (2/4) - Reading is central - All students can be successful - Assessment/data driven	Obs 1, p. 1,4 Obs 2, p. 1,2,3 Obs 4, p. 2,3,4 Obs 5, p. 1,2 Obs 6, p. 1	Obs 3, p. 1,2 Obs 5, p. 1 Obs 6, p. 2,3,4 Obs 8, p. 1 Artifact 1	**Obs 1, p. 1,2,4** **Obs 2, p. 2,7** **Obs 3, p. 1,3,4** **Obs 4, p. 1,6,8** **Obs 5, p. 1** **Obs 7, p. 2** **Obs 8, p. 2,3,5**	**Obs 1, p. 1,2,3** **Obs 2, p. 2,4,6,7,8** **Obs 3, p. 2** **Obs 5, p. 1,2,4** **Obs 7, p. 1,2** *(cont.)*

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Topic	School A	School B	School C	School D
- Reflection on instruction	Artifact 2, 3, 4, 8, 11, 13, 14, 15, 16		**Artifact 1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 12, 15, 17**	**Artifact 3, 5, 8, 15, 27, 31, 37, 38**
Role of the principal in shared values and vision (2/4)	**Obs 1, p. 1,2,3,4** **Obs 2, p. 1,2** **Obs 3, p. 3,4** **Obs 4, p. 1,2,3,4** **Obs 5, p. 1** Obs 6, p. 1,2,3,4,5 **Artifact 2, 3, 6, 9, 13, 14, 15, 16**	Obs 5, p. 4 Obs 6, p. 3,5 Obs 8, p. 1,2 Artifact 2, 6, 13, 14, 15	**Obs 1, p. 2,3,4** **Obs 2, p. 2,7** **Obs 3, p. 1,2,3,4,5** **Obs 4, p. 1,2,5,6,7,8** **Obs 5, p. 2,5,7,8** **Obs 6, p. 1,3** **Obs 7, p. 2** **Obs 8, p. 1,2,3,4,5** **Artifact 2, 4, 10, 11, 12, 13, 15, 16, 17**	Obs 1, p. 1,2,3 Obs 2, p. 1,2,4,5,6,8 Obs 4, p. 1 Obs 8, p. 1,3,4,6 Artifact 2, 10, 33, 37, 38
Professional development supports shared values and vision (2/4) - Workshops - Staff development - Consultant - SEED	Obs 3, p. 1,2 Obs 4, p. 1 Artifact 4, 6, 15	**Obs 5, p. 1,2** **Obs 7, p. 1** **Artifact 4, 6, 10, 11, 12**	Obs 1, p. 1,2,3 Obs 2, p. 2 Obs 3, p. 5 Obs 5, p. 7 Artifact 5, 8	**Obs 2, p. 1,2,3** **Obs 4, p. 1,2,3,4** **Obs 6, p. 1,2** **Obs 8 p. 2,4** **Artifact 1, 5, 6, 15, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 36**

(cont.)

Topic	School A	School B	School C	School D
Shared values and vision established at the building level (2/4) - Leadership team - Reading committee - Student intervention team - Staff meeting	**Obs 2, p. 1,2,3** **Obs 3, p. 3** **Artifact 3, 4, 5, 8, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17**	Obs 1, p. 1,3,4 Obs 4, p. 1,2 Obs 8, p. 3,4,5 Obs 9, p. 1,2,3,4,5,6 Artifact 4, 5, 6, 10, 11, 12	Artifact 1, 2, 4	**Obs 1, p. 1,2,3** **Obs 2, p. 2,3,4,5,6** **Obs 4, p. 3** **Obs 5, p. 3** **Obs 7, p. 2** **Artifact 1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 25, 39**

*Bold the documentation of the schools that had the response

Table F- 3.

Deprivatized Practice

Topic	School A	School B	School C	School D
Instructional practice is share during grade-level and cross grade-level collaboration (4/4) - PLC - Study groups - Reflection on practice and data - Share video, student work - Team time - Staff meeting	**Obs 1, p. 1,2** **Artifact 3, 4, 13, 14, 15, 17, 18**	**Obs 1, p. 1,2,3,4** **Obs 4, p. 1,2** **Obs 8, p. 3,4,5** **Artifact 4, 12**	**Obs 1, p. 2** **Obs 2, p. 2** **Obs 3, p. 1,2,3,4,5,6** **Obs 5, p. 1,2,3,4,5,6,7**	**Obs 1, p. 1,2,3** **Obs 2, p. 2,4,5,6** **Obs 3, p. 2** **Obs 8, p. 2,3,5,6** **Artifact 5, 6, 39**
Teaching peers provide instructional support (3/4) - Mentoring - Observation - Team teach	**Obs 5, p. 2** **Artifact 14**	**Obs 5, p. 1** **Obs 6, p. 1,2,3,4** **Artifact 1, 2, 3**		**Obs 1, p. 3** **Obs 6, p. 2** **Obs 8, p. 5,6** **Artifact 5, 6, 32**

(cont.)

Topic	School A	School B	School C	School D
Individual teachers share informally (1/4) - Share materials - Hallway			*	

*Bold the documentation of the schools that had the response

Table F- 4.

Collective Creativity

Topic	School A	School B	School C	School D
High commitment to quality instruction and achievement elicits collective creativity (4/4) - Data/assessment driven - Research - Internet search - Inservice	**Obs 1, p. 1,4** **Obs 2, p. 1,2,3** **Obs 4, p. 2,3,4** **Obs 5, p. 1,2** **Obs 6, p. 1** **Artifact 2, 3, 4, 8, 11, 13, 14, 15, 16**	**Obs 3, p. 1,2** **Obs 5, p. 1** **Obs 6, p. 2,3,4** **Obs 8, p. 1** **Artifact 1**	**Obs 1, p. 1,2** **Obs 2, p. 2,7** **Obs 3, p. 3** **Obs 4, p. 5** **Obs 5, p. 2,3,7** **Obs 6, p. 3** **Artifact 1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 12, 15, 17**	**Obs 1, p. 1,2,3** **Obs 2, p. 1,2,3,4,6,7,8** **Obs 3, p. 2** **Obs 4, p. 1,2,3,4** **Obs 5, p. 1,2,4** **Obs 6, p. 1,2** **Obs 7, p. 1,2** **Obs 8, p. 2,4** **Artifact 3, 5, 8, 15, 27, 31, 37, 38**
Grade-level and cross grade-level collaboration (4/4) - Collaboration - Team time - Share ideas, student work - PLC, study groups - Reflect - Includes support staff	**Obs 1, p. 1,2,3** **Artifact 3, 4, 13, 14, 15, 17, 18**	**Obs 1, p. 1,2,3,4** **Obs 4, p. 1,2** **Obs 6, p. 1,4** **Obs 8, p. 3,4,5** **Artifact 4**	**Obs 1, p. 1,2,3** **Obs 2, p. 7** **Obs 3, p. 1,2,3,4,5,6** **Obs 5, p. 1,2,3,4,5,6,7**	**Obs 1, p. 1,2,3** **Obs 2, p. 2,4,5,6** **Obs 8, p. 2,3,5,6** **Artifact 5, 6, 24, 39**

(cont.)

Topic	School A	School B	School C	School D
Informal teacher sharing (1/4)				*
- Halls, morning, after school				

*Bold the documentation of the schools that had the response

Table F- 5.

Supportive Conditions

Topic	School A	School B	School C	School D
School schedule prioritizes reading instruction (4/4) - Prescribed reading block (guided reading, flexible group, shared reading, no pull out) - Daily structure - No interruptions - Based on research - Based on what's best for kids - Includes support staff during reading block	**Obs 2, p. 2** **Artifact 14**	**Obs 5, p. 2,4** **Obs 6, p. 1,2,3,4** **Obs 9, p. 1,2** **Artifact 2, 3, 20**	**Obs 3, p. 3,4** **Obs 4, p. 5** **Artifact 5**	**Obs 7, p. 2** **Obs 8, p. 5** **Artifact 11**
Extrinsic recognition of student reading achievement (3/4) - Reading logs - Certificates, pencils, bike	*	**Obs 4, p. 3**	Obs 5, p. 2,3 Artifact 12	**Artifact 9**

(cont.)

Topic	School A	School B	School C	School D
Intrinsic recognition of student reading achievement (3/4)	**Obs 4, p. 4** **Obs 5, p. 1** **Artifact 3**		*	*
Scheduled grade-level and cross grade-level collaboration supports collective learning and shared practice (2/4) - Common time - Collaborate - Plan - Sharing time - Staff meetings	Obs 1, p. 2,3,4 Artifact 3, 4, 13, 14, 15, 17, 18	**Obs 1, p. 1,2,3,4** **Obs 4, p. 1,2** **Obs 6, p. 1, 4** **Obs 8, p. 3,4,5** **Artifact 4**	**Obs 2, p. 7** **Obs 3, p. 1,2,3,4,5,6** **Obs 5, p. 1,2,3,4,5,6,7**	Obs 1, p. 1,2,3 Obs 2, p. 2,4,5,6 Obs 3, p. 2 Obs 8, p. 2,3,5,6 Artifact 5, 6, 10, 39
Classroom teachers and support staff collaboration increases collective learning and shared practice (2/4)	Obs 1, p. 1 Obs 2, p. 2,3 Obs 4, p. 2,3 Obs 5, p. 2 Obs 6, p. 1 Artifact 10, 14, 18	**Obs 5, p. 1** **Obs 6, p. 1,2,3,4** **Artifact 1, 2, 3**	Obs 1, p. 2 Obs 3 p. 4 Obs 6, p. 1 Artifact 4, 8	**Obs 1, p. 3** **Obs 3, p. 2** **Artifact 32**
Home-school connections established (1/4) - Family involvement	Obs 1, p. 3 Obs 4, p. 1,2,3,4 Obs 5, p. 1 Obs 6, p. 2,3,4	Obs 1, p. 2 Obs 8, p. 3,4,5	**Obs 1, p. 2,3** **Obs 5, p. 1,2,3,4,5,7** **Obs 6, p. 5**	Obs 2, p. 1 Obs 3, p. 3 Obs 4, p. 2 Obs 5, p. 3,4

(cont.)

Topic	School A	School B	School C	School D
	Artifact 2, 3, 5, 9, 12, 14, 16	Artifact 1, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19	**Obs 7, p. 1** **Obs 8, p. 2,4,5** **Artifact 5, 10, 11, 14, 15, 17**	Artifact 9, 13, 14, 15, 16, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 26
Teachers are encouraged to observe teachers in other schools. (1/4)			**Obs 3, p. 1,2**	

*Bold the documentation of the schools that had the response

Table F- 6.

Factors Attributed to the Development of a PLC

Topic	School A	School B	School C	School D
Collaboration and communication amongst staff (4/4) - Study group/PLC - Collaboration time - Grade-level meeting - Common planning - Classroom teacher and support staff	**Obs 1, p. 1,2,3,4** **Obs 2, p. 2** **Artifact 3, 4, 13, 14, 15, 17, 18**	**Obs 1, p. 1,2,3,4** **Obs 4, p. 1,2** **Obs 6, p. 1,4** **Obs 8, p. 3,4,5** **Artifact 4**	**Obs 2, p. 7** **Obs 4, p. 7** **Obs 5, p. 1,2,3,4,5,6,7**	**Obs 1, p. 1,2,3** **Obs 2, p. 2,4,5,6** **Obs 8, p. 2,3,5,6** **Obs 3, p. 2** **Artifact 5, 6, 10, 24, 39**
Professional development (3/4) - Committed - Narrow focus - SEED (diversity) training	**Obs 3, p. 3** **Obs 4, p. 1** **Artifact 4, 6, 15**	**Obs 5, p. 1,2** **Obs 7, p. 1** **Artifact 4, 6, 10, 11, 12**	Obs 1, p. 1,2,3 Artifact 5, 8	**Obs 2, p. 1,2,3** **Obs 4, p. 1,2,3,4** **Obs 6, p. 1,2** **Obs 8, p. 2,4** **Artifact 1, 5, 6, 15, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 36**

(cont.)

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Topic	School A	School B	School C	School D
High expectations for student achievement (3/4) - Data driven decisions - Assessment tools - Move all students - Teachers committed to student achievement	**Obs 1, p. 1,4** **Obs 2, p. 1,2,3** **Obs 4, p. 2,3,4** **Obs 5, p. 1,2** **Obs 6, p. 1** **Artifact 2, 3, 4, 8, 11, 13, 14, 15, 16**	**Obs 3, p. 1,2** **Obs 5, p. 1** **Obs 6, p. 2,3,4** **Obs 8, p. 1** **Artifact 1**	**Obs 1, p. 1,2,7** **Obs 3, p. 1,3,4** **Obs 7, p. 2** **Artifact 1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 12, 15, 17**	Obs 1, p. 1,2,3 Obs 2, p. 1,2,3,4,6,7,8 Obs 3, p. 2 Obs 4, p. 1,2,3,4 Obs 5, p. 1,2,4 Obs 6, p. 1,2 Obs 7, p. 1,2 Obs 8, p. 2,4 Artifact 3, 5, 8, 15, 27, 31, 37, 38
Schools have an established reading instructional framework (3/4) - Viable - Balanced - Resources	**Obs 1, p. 4** **Obs 3, p. 2** **Artifact 4, 5**	Obs 5, p. 1,4 Obs 6, p. 1,2,3,4 Obs 9, p. 2 Artifact 1, 2	**Obs 1, p. 1** **Obs 3, p. 2** **Artifact 5**	**Obs 2, p. 3** **Obs 7, p. 1,2** **Obs 8, p. 5** **Artifact 10, 31**
Coach (1/4)	Obs 3, p. 1,3 Obs 4, p. 2,3 Artifact 3, 4, 17	Obs 5, p. 1,2 Obs 8, p. 1 Artifact 1		**Obs 1, p. 1,2,3** **Obs 2, p. 3,4,5,6,7** **Obs 5, p. 1,2,3,4** **Obs 6, p. 2** **Obs 7, p. 1,2** **Obs 8, p. 4,5,6**

(cont.)

Topic	School A	School B	School C	School D
				Artifact 2, 5, 6, 28, 32
Staff of color (1/4)	*			

*Bold the documentation of the schools that had the response

Table F- 7.

Evidence of Working Through Dilemmas

Topic	School A	School B	School C	School D
Teachers empowered to deal with dilemma (3/4) - Worked through it together - Leadership team - Give teachers confidence (give info.) - Encourage teachers to speak up	Obs 1, p. 2,3 Obs 2, p. 1,2,3 Artifact 4, 8, 13 (behavior), 15 (lyceum)	**Obs 1, p. 2,3** **Obs 5, p. 1** **Obs 8, p. 4,5** **Obs 9, p. 4,5**	**Obs 1, p. 2,3** **Obs 3, p. 3** **Obs 6, p. 6** **Obs 8, p. 2,3** **Artifact 8**	**Obs 1, p. 1,2,3** **Obs 2, p. 1,2,4,5,6,7,8** **Obs 4, p. 3** **Obs 5, p. 1** **Obs 7, p. 2** **Obs 8, p. 3,4** **Artifact 4 (goals), 5 (goals), 6 (goals), 15**
Principal dealt with dilemma (1/4) - Rearranged PLC groups	**Obs 4, p. 4 (behavior)** **Obs 5, p. 2 (behavior)** **Obs 6, p. 2,4,5 (behavior)**	Obs 3, p. 1,2 Obs 6, p. 2	Obs 3, p. 6 Obs 4, p. 3	Obs 8, p. 2

*Bold the documentation of the schools that had the response