

A School's Professional Culture and Its Effect on the
Formation of a Professional Development School

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Abstract

Professional Development School (PDS) sites are being established as part of the Teacher Education Redesign Initiative (TERI) to create partnerships between universities and local schools. The professional culture and leadership of a school affects the creation of a partnership. Through interviews, this study examines the school site from the teachers' and the principal's perspectives to identify the perceived impact of the PDS partnership on teachers' work, student learning, and the school's culture. Findings indicate that specific types of professional development and leadership, including teaching teams, opportunities for choice, and team leadership, helped this school become a PDS. Also, the participants noted that they thought the school and profession would be impacted positively by the partnership through increased learning for teachers, more adults in the classroom, better trained novice teachers, and increased leadership opportunities for teachers.

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Teacher education is being redesigned with the goal of improving student education by having better trained and more experienced teachers entering schools. Part of this redesign involves creating Professional Development School (PDS) sites at local schools and reformatting the student teacher experience. These partnerships at the University of Minnesota-Twin Cities are in the early stages of development. This study examined the formation of a partnership to learn how the school's professional culture affects the partnership and what teachers and the principal think will help the PDS site be successful. I conducted interviews with 4 teachers and the principal with questions designed to ask about the present and perceived future of the school and the PDS site. I was interested in finding out what types of leadership has helped the partnership be successful and how the overall professional culture of the school impacted the creation of the PDS site.

The Teacher Education Redesign Initiative (TERI) is a program in the College of Education and Human Development at the University of Minnesota-Twin Cities that is working to improve teacher education and consequently improve high school graduation rates and reduce the student achievement gap (Sato, 2010). Through the TERI program, student teaching is being reexamined and new professional development is being designed in partnership with schools to improve teacher education. Faculty from the university and staff from local schools are forming PDS sites where co-teaching will replace student teaching and professional development will be available for pre-service, novice, and veteran teachers (Heck, Bacharah, & Dahlberg, 2010). The redesigned program is accepting its first cohort of graduate students in the summer of 2011 so this research is exploring the development of one of the early PDS sites.

Nine professional development school (PDS) sites are being developed through the TERI program to improve teacher education, professional development and student learning (Ernst personal correspondence, 7-22-11). PDS sites are schools that have a partnership with a university and collaborate on professional development, teacher training, and research (Darling-Hammond, 1994). PDS sites bring pre-service teachers, veteran teachers, and university researchers into collaboration to improve student learning and the education profession.

Although the structure and execution of PDS sites vary, they have three goals in common: (1) to effectively train new teachers, (2) to offer professional development for veteran educators, and (3) to offer practice-based research opportunities for practitioners and university researchers. These goals contribute to the overall improvement of the education profession and an increase in the quality of education for students. PDS sites emphasize collaboration among teachers and universities. They also allow for continuous learning through improved professional development opportunities and mentoring programs.

PDS partnerships around the country are developed and run in a variety of ways and continually adapt their practices to improve teaching and learning. This research aims to examine the development of a PDS partnership at the University of Minnesota in order to learn which variables of a school's culture impact the formation of the program. One of the prominent functions of a PDS partnership is the training of future teachers. The practice of giving pre-service teachers classroom experience is evolving from the traditional student teaching model to the co-teaching model.

In the co-teaching model, the pre-service teacher and the cooperating (veteran) teacher collaborate in the classroom as a team of educators. Also, in the co-teaching model, the pre-service teacher is involved at the school for most of the academic year and is able to see the

progression of students during the longer field placement. Overall, PDS sites and co-teaching help to form a more collaborative environment for all the educators involved. This research aims to look at the existing culture to begin to determine how it will impact future collaboration.

The school in the study is in the process of becoming a PDS site in partnership with the University of Minnesota. The school consists of students in grades 6-10 and is a medium-size school with approximately 600 students. Uniquely, the school is a year-round school. It is also part of the International Baccalaureate (IB) Middle Years Program. Currently, the school is working with the TERI project and there are two teachers acting as TERI liaisons at the school. These teachers work with the university, in addition to their normal teaching responsibilities, to facilitate the communication between the two institutions. The school is in a small district with only one other school, an elementary school, but the school draws students from many neighboring communities. At the time of the study, the superintendent of the district had recently retired and an interim superintendent is overseeing the district. Also, earlier in the academic year, the school hired a new principal and vice principal.

Method

Development of questions

Dr. Mistilina Sato, Stacy Ernst, and I developed the interview questions. Initially we developed four categories that would shape our questions. These categories include:

1. The school from the teacher's perspective
2. Perceived impact of the program on the teacher's work
3. Students
4. Leadership

We then developed questions to guide the participants through telling us about these categories. The questions are attached in appendix A. Through the questions, we wanted to address both the present culture at the school, and what the teachers would like to see or think they will be seeing as the partnership is developed. We also tried to create questions that would ask about the formal and informal leadership in the building and how it is influencing the PDS site development.

School visits

At the beginning of the project, I visited the school three times to observe the school. On the first visit, I toured the school and met one of the TERI liaisons. The second visit was a TERI networking dinner attended by teachers from other current and potential PDS sites. At this visit, I videotaped the school's TERI liaisons presenting about the school's story of the PDS partnership development. The third visit was a full-day observation. I observed a subject area team meeting, and several classes. These visits gave me an overview of the school, but I didn't use any of the specific observations for my formal data.

Participants

The study's participants included four teachers and the principal. There was one teacher from each grade level: 6th, 7th, 8th, and 9/10th. They represented a variety of subject areas. I worked with the TERI liaison throughout the project as a contact and she recommended the participants to me. I contacted the potential participants through email and asked if they were interested in the project. I then set up dates and times for the interviews.

Interviews

I conducted interviews of the five participants for my main body of data. The interviews were either in-person or over the phone, depending on the subject's preference. A digital voice recorder was used to record the interviews. Each interview was about 20 minutes long. I started

each interview by reading the participant a consent letter and then asked for verbal consent before beginning to record. A copy of the consent letter is in appendix B. Then, I transcribed each of the interviews. These documents are included in appendices C-G. After the transcription, I coded the interviews for general responses.

Findings

Teacher's Perspective

The first group of questions addressed the current culture at the school, specifically professional development, leadership, and working culture (see Appendix A). Two main themes emerged during data analysis of the five participants' responses to the first set of questions: teaming as teachers and choice in professional opportunities.

Teaching teams. Teaching teams were discussed by different participants as part of each of the questions in this group. At this school, teachers work in grade level and content area teams that meet twice a week and work together to communicate information and work together on planning and goal setting. The teams function both as opportunities for teacher leadership, because each team is led by one of its members, and as professional development, because teachers learn from each other and work together to plan and set goals.

Due to the teaching teams, one of the teachers used the word "empowered" to describe the culture of the school's teachers:

"I would say more than other schools that I have worked at, the team based philosophy here has sort of empowered us to take more leadership roles at a local level; so at, a grade level for example. I think the teachers feel very empowered to try new things, to make the schedule work and to make class groupings work. I feel like in our classrooms we are empowered to do new things" (see Appendix F).

Through these teams, teachers take on leadership positions, are connected with other teachers, and learn new things. All of these outcomes improve the working culture at the school.

Finally, these teams impact the culture of the school in both positive and negative ways. According to some of the teachers, the combination of teams and the school's small size makes it a very tight-knit community. This has its advantages and disadvantages. The teachers are able to form relationships with the students and with each other that make the school a positive place, but the "small town feel" can also lead to rumors and strained relationships with other teams (see Appendix D).

Choice in professional opportunities. Many of the participants felt that there were opportunities in both professional development and leadership at the school. Part of the school's professional development includes an allotment of \$700 for each teacher every year for trainings about, "anything you are personally interested in" (see Appendix D). So, beyond the required staff development days, teachers are encouraged to learn about their own interests in the teaching profession.

Several of the participants also emphasized they could choose to have a role in teacher leadership, or not be involved at all. Two of the participants talked about the school having opportunities for more teachers to become leaders because of the school's small size. According to one participant, "anybody can be a teacher leader" (see Appendix D). On the other hand, another participant emphasized her choice not to be a leader. She said that "teacher leadership is there, I just choose not to do it because it is too much for me. I just couldn't handle it" (see Appendix C).

Teacher's work

The second group of questions addressed the teacher's work and how that will be affected by the partnership with the university. The questions also addressed what teachers would like to see in the partnership, specifically in the areas of professional development and leadership.

Themes emerging from data analysis of responses related to the second set of questions are as follows: professional development for working with young adults, teacher leadership roles, and increased learning for teachers.

Professional development to work with university students. Many of the participants talked about getting training for working with the university. There were several concerns about learning how to work with co-teachers. One of the participants said, "I don't know how to teach a 22-year old. I didn't become a college professor" (see Appendix C). She was concerned about teaching a different age group and wanted to learn how to relate to older students than those she usually teaches (grades 6-10). Another participant wanted more information and training from the university regarding several questions such as: "What is it going to look like for me as a teacher? How do I do it? What would it entail for me?" (see Appendix C). Another participant wanted trainings on how to work with participants in a year-long program. It was also important to the participants that professional development is brought to the school to make it accessible for all teachers.

Teacher leadership roles. When asked the question about leadership roles in the partnership, some of the participants talked about what they thought their role could be and others talked more generally about what leadership could look like within the partnership. Several participants talked about the existing liaison position. They thought that was an important leadership position and should remain part of the leadership. One participant suggested

a “working advisory committee” to involve more people in the formation and continuation of the program (see Appendix F). By involving more teachers, there would be more opportunities for leadership and input. Finally, communication between the university and the school will be very important for the PDS site. With any type of leadership, it will be important to have effective communication between the two institutions.

Increased learning for teachers. One of the participants was focused, not on the process of the formation of the PDS site, but on the outcomes, specifically:

- Student achievement
- Dynamic teachers
- Content literacy
- Elimination of the achievement gap

This participant said that he didn’t know what he wanted professional learning to look like because he wanted to collaborate on what the best model would be, but these were the outcomes that he wanted for teachers and students. Other participants talked about being immersed in professional development, learning new teaching strategies from the pre-service teachers, and being exposed to different perspectives through working with the university.

One of the participants talked about how this program will improve the profession overall. A PDS site allows teachers to take on leadership roles without working towards being an administrator. This allows teachers to progress in the profession even though there are limited opportunities for teachers to become administrators. This participant thought this would keep teachers in the profession longer because they wouldn’t feel like they had “plateaued” (see Appendix F).

Students

The third group of questions asked about the impact of the PDS site and year-long co-teaching placements on the students of the school. Participants discussed the benefits of having more adults in classrooms to build better relationships with students.

More adults in the classroom. According to four of the participants, having more adults in the classroom will be a very positive thing for students. One of the participants summarized this well, “There is more adult presence. I think that it would only help to benefit them” (see Appendix D). Having another teacher in the classroom will expose students to multiple teaching strategies, communication styles, and perspectives. This will be especially helpful in larger classes and when students are working in small groups. Also, the students will be able to develop relationships with both adults and therefore will have another person to engage with, which will improve their interest in the class.

Better relationships with students. In the interviews, several of the participants compared the co-teaching PDS model to the previous student teaching model. One participant talked about how it is difficult to form relationships with the students if you aren’t part of the classroom at the beginning of the year. Student teachers who have their experience in the middle of the year don’t get to experience that important part of being a teacher. With the new year-long program, pre-service teachers would get to form much better relationships. Another participant said that the co-teaching experience would have a “more holistic and more organic development” (see Appendix F) compared to the artificiality of traditional student teaching.

Leadership

The final group of questions addressed the role leadership plays in the creation of a PDS site program. During the 2010-2011 academic year, both the school and district level leadership

had undergone significant changes, so I asked the participants how they thought those changes affected the school and the partnership. Three themes emerged in the analysis of the data: district and school leadership has stabilized, teacher leadership has been essential to maintaining the PDS partnership, and the unknown status of legislative funding for 2011-2012 continues to affect the moral in the school.

Stabilization of leadership changes. At this school, in the last year, there have been several changes in leadership and I was interested in learning about how those changes have impacted the formation of the PDS site. The participants noted that the changes were rocky at the beginning, but now they are starting to get used the changes and things are stabilizing. Instead of only a principal and vice principal, the school now has an executive team. It took time “getting used to the roles, what roles [the new administrators] play, and how to engage them in which conversations” (see Appendix F). Although several of the participants thought that the changes were now stabilizing back to a workable state, one of the participants would still like to see more of a partnership between the teachers and administration. Another participant said that the changes were a little overwhelming at first, but the relationships have become stronger and they are moving in a positive direction.

Teacher leadership. Teacher leadership has played a large role in the formation of the PDS site; it wasn't solely an administrative movement. According to one participant, “[The leadership in the partnership] is really driven by the teachers” (see Appendix E). The teachers were part of the redesign process very early, which allowed their momentum to carry the program through the changes in leadership. Strong teams of teacher leaders aided the transition.

Unknown legislature funding. Throughout the interview questions, the uncertainty of legislative funding was mentioned many times by several participants. This school is unique

because it is part of an integration district and is funded in part by integration revenue. There is uncertainty about the future of the district, and that is impacting the culture and leadership of the school. Teachers are trying to make themselves competitive so they will be ready for another job if the school has to reduce staff or close. This uncertainty is unsettling, but it seemed like teachers and staff were both preparing for changes and moving forward to make the school the best it can be in the meantime.

Discussion

The findings in this study relate to three groups of people and can help these people as they move forward with the redesign of teacher education. This study will give this school feedback on their partnership with the university, and also help the university understand what is needed as the partnership moves forward. This study will also inform the creation of new PDS sites by showing what works, and what doesn't for this school. This research can also be compared and contrasted with similar studies of different schools to further understand the creation of PDS sites. Finally, the creation of PDS sites is important for the future quality of the profession, a fact expressed by several of the interviewees in this study. I will outline a few of the ways that PDS sites are important to the improvement of the education profession.

How this study impacts this PDS site

One of the main goals of this research project was to learn about this school and PDS site to give feedback to university faculty and school staff on how to make the collaboration more successful. Professional development will be extremely important as this project progresses. Teachers must learn how to interact with and teach college students effectively. Just because they are teachers does not mean that they know how to work with this age group. Professional development about co-teaching and working collaboratively will make this a more positive

experience for both the pre-service and veteran teachers. By learning how to co-teach, the teachers in the classrooms will be more effective and will be able to form relationships and teach their students better. These professional development programs also need to be convenient for teachers; it would be extremely helpful to hold them at the school either before or after school. Overall, as the partnership moves forward, professional development will be needed for all of those involved so that everyone can learn how to work together effectively.

How the study applies to other PDS sites

This research will function to inform university and school staff about what is effective and what isn't in the formation of PDS sites. Through this study I found that it is very important for teachers to be involved in the project early. In the case of this school, early engagement by teachers in TERI allowed the program to keep its momentum and continue to exist despite changes in administrative leadership. Also, the teachers are going to be the ones doing most of the work by working with pre-service teachers in their classrooms, so it is especially important that they are excited about the project. At this PDS site, none of the participants I interviewed had a negative attitude about working with the university and they all were open to having a co-teacher in their classroom. If the partnership had been developed from the top down and was mandated by the administration, the teachers may not have been as accepting of the changes and additional work that is involved. In addition, three of the teachers were interested in leadership roles in the partnership. One of the reasons that these teachers were so involved in the project was because they were already involved in the leadership of the building in other ways. Since the school is small, teachers have many opportunities for leadership through teaching teams and special committees. This creates a culture that is open to new programs and new forms of leadership. Also, the school's small size creates an environment where more teachers can elect to

become experts and leaders in the building. This encourages teachers to take an active role in what is going on outside their classroom, which leads to more interest in new programs such as the partnership with the university. It would be interesting to study a large school that is in the process of becoming a PDS site to see if school size influences the creation of a PDS site.

How PDS sites impacts the profession

Overall, the participants expressed very positive thoughts about the formation of a PDS site at this school and several participants mentioned how these types of programs will benefit the profession of teaching and education in general. Although the future of the school is unknown, based on the future of its state funding, the teachers are committed to continuing this program because it will help their students and ultimately the profession. PDS sites will improve collaboration in the education field, between teachers and pre-service teachers, among current teachers, and between university faculty and current teachers. This will increase the flow of new ideas and best practices. There could also be opportunities to involve teachers in research at the university.

A PDS site gives teachers the opportunity for leadership and gives them a chance to improve the profession overall. The opportunity for promotion or improvement in the education field has traditionally been administration fields, which logistically isn't an option for all teachers. The PDS site gives teachers a new role in their career, which could help retain teachers in the profession. Also, improved teacher education will better prepare new teachers for their first year of teaching, which hopefully will increase the retention of new teachers. Ideally, the redesign will connect with school mentoring programs to offer a smooth transition from the university to the classroom. These ideas, which were expressed in the interviews, hopefully will

be the future of the PDS program and will help to improve teacher education, and ultimately student education.

References

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Appendix A

Interview questions

1. The school from the teachers' perspective
 - a. Tell me about your current opportunities for professional learning.
 - b. Tell me about your current opportunities for teacher leadership.
 - c. Tell me about the current work culture or working climate.
2. Perceived impact on teacher's work
 - a. As the school enters in to a partnership with the University of Minnesota over the next few years, what would you like your [the teachers'] professional learning opportunities to look like?
 - b. What would you like opportunities for teacher leadership to look like?
 - c. Overall, what do you think the impact the partnership with the UMN will be on your work as a teacher and the culture of your school?
3. Students
 - a. This question is about relationships among you, your students, and a teacher candidate. In the partnership with the UMN, you will have the opportunity to build a relationship with a teacher candidate in your classroom across a whole school year. Tell me how you think that will affect the relationship between you, your students, and the teacher candidate?
 - b. How do you think that the increased presence of pre-service teachers throughout the year will impact the learning of students?
4. Leadership

- a. I understand there have been quite a few changes in leadership at your school and in the district. How have the changes in administration impacted the leadership in the building and in the district?
- b. How do you think your school and district leadership will impact the development of the partnership with the UMN?

Appendix B

CONSENT INFORMATION SHEET

Portrait of a future professional development school

Thank you for agreeing to participate in a research study of how a school's professional culture affects its development as a professional development school. **Your participation is voluntary.** If you want to stop at any time, please let me know.

I am Teresa Hayes and I will be doing the interview today. The Principal Investigator for this project is Misty Sato, an assistant professor in the College of Education and Human Development at the University of Minnesota. I can give you her contact information if you like:

(if they want the information)

Misty Sato

Phone: 612-625-7793

Fax: 612-624-8277

msato@umn.edu

Purpose and Procedures

The purpose of this study is to hear from teachers and the school principal about their perceptions of your school related to its becoming a professional development school with the University of Minnesota. We will talk about 4 main topics related to your school today: the work you do as a teacher, the impact you think becoming a professional development school will have on your school and your work, the impact you think becoming a professional development school will have on your students, and about leadership in your school.

The interview should take 30-45 minutes today. I will be recording the interview so that I can transcribe it later. The audio file will get a code number and your name will be changed to a pseudonym,

so the information you provide **will not be identifiable to you specifically**. All research records will be stored securely and only researchers will have access to the records.

If you have any questions or concerns regarding this study and would like to talk to someone other than me or Misty Sato, I can provide a contact at the university for you to talk to:

(if they indicate they want to contact someone, give them this information):

Research Subjects' Advocate Line

D528 Mayo

420 Delaware St. Southeast

Minneapolis, Minnesota 55455

(612) 625-1650.

Do you still agree to participate in this interview?

List of participants who gave consent to participate:

Name	Date of Consent	Questions or concerns

Appendix C

Interview 1: Teacher.

1. The school from the teachers' perspective

a. Q: Tell me about your current opportunities for professional learning. (0:20)

A: At [the school] they do quite a few teacher development things, so they are actually required, are not a voluntary thing. You go and you learn about different things. Lately, they have been pushing really hard for the International Baccalaureate program. They are just trying to get everybody up to speed on all the requirements of that particular program. In the past I would say we've done a lot more professional development related to diversity training and just trying to get to know the teacher as a person so that they can figure out how to interact with kids who come from a very different place than you did. We haven't done that much lately, so it would be nice if we would go back to some of those trainings. You can tell that we haven't reviewed that stuff. We do have some opportunities like that. I don't think it is different than any other districts, but there are lots of opportunities for training at school. We also are allotted a certain amount of money each year to go to trainings of our choice, so whatever we find that we want to go to we can always just go and do whatever we need to do.

b. Q: Tell me about your current opportunities for teacher leadership. (2:00)

A: That is an interesting question. I kind of try to stay away from those things because the people I see going into those types of leadership positions at school always have so much stuff that just gets dumped on them. I wouldn't be able to handle it. I don't know how they do it. I know people have opportunities to be team leaders for different groups that we are in. They have trainings that allow those people to take off work time and go to professional development trainings for leadership. It [teacher leadership] is there, I just choose not to do it because it is too much for me. I just couldn't handle it.

c. Q: Tell me about the current work culture or working climate. (2:50)

A: I was anticipating a question like that. It is very interesting. It is a very interesting place to work. It kind of depends on where you are. We are put into groups. It has changed over the years, we have always been in groups, but now we are on grade level teams. It depends on which teachers are on your team, kind of the climate in that area. I don't have a lot of interaction with the other grade level teams. Sometimes I have interaction with my department team, but I don't get to talk to those other people very often. Any time you have things like that, where you are not able to interact with those other people, there gets to be some weirdness sometimes. Like, sometimes you hear from someone that this person did this, and you are like "come on, that's crazy," but you hear it and it goes in your head and whether you should believe it or not, you kind of do. Then there are just kind of weird interactions where you have heard something weird about somebody and you don't know if it is true or not, you don't know how to approach them. You don't know them well enough to ask them questions. That lends, after so many years of those same kinds of things, It's been that way where you are in your group or you are in your space and you don't necessarily interact with a lot of other people that it is hard to fight against that isolation, like my

team, we would never do that, that's just somebody else. It is, sometimes, really hard to fight against that feeling of my team versus somebody else's team, or this group versus that group. We don't see each other very often, we don't even share kids anymore because it is all grade-level [teams]. There used to be some cross-house interactions and now that has all kind of gone by the way side. It's interesting, and I think that people have gotten better at identifying that this is a problem and so any time those kinds of conversations come up you are just like, "OK, maybe that happened once, but I don't think that happens all the time." So, I do know that it has been an issue, or not really an issue, but stuff like that happens. It is not OK, but it is hard to combat, it is hard to go against that flow. Within the team, it is generally a very good working environment it is just across teams that you get different ideas, different philosophies, and they don't always mesh.

2. Perceived impact on teacher's work

- a. **Q: As the school enters in to a partnership with the University of Minnesota over the next few years, what would you like your [the teachers'] professional learning opportunities to look like? (5:45)**

A: I have never had a student teacher, it has never really been something that I have been offered. Nobody has ever really asked me, for whatever reason even though I have been there a good long time. So, I would want to know if I am working with a student, from what I understand the person will be there most of the school year, how do I work with somebody who is not 14. You're not 14, I get it, but I don't know that I know how to interact in a really good way so that you are still learning what you need to learn from me as the professional at that time, it is just a different ... Like a very good teacher friend of mine has a three year old; she doesn't know how to teach her three year old how to read or write, but she is a language arts teacher for middle school. It is just about the age difference. What is it going to look like for me as a teacher? And not just what it is going to look like, but how do I do it? I wouldn't even know how to interact with a student teacher without being weird all the time. I just feel like I get weird sometimes. What would it be like, what would it entail for me? What kind of information do they need? And I know a lot of that will become very clear once we get started with this, but that is the thing I wonder about: I don't know how to teach a 22-year old. I didn't become a college professor.

- b. **Q: What would you like opportunities for teacher leadership to look like?**

A: I wouldn't want to do it. That is not something that I would ever look at doing. I am at this level, I don't need to get into any of those extra time, extra work commitments, extra things. It takes me so long to process things. I don't even know what that one would look like. I will leave that to someone who has aspirations into that type of role.

- c. **Q: Overall, what do you think the impact the partnership with the UMN will be on your work as a teacher and the culture of the school? (9:06)**

A: What I hope to get from this partnership is to learn from the students what are the best practices to do and what are the key things that kids need to know how to do. I have been teaching for eight years, which isn't a real long time, but I've been out and I've been stuck in my little hole in my classroom for eight years and

I don't really keep up with those things, well, I try really hard to keep up with those things, but I hope that the student teachers will give me a lot of "this is another way to do this." I did my teacher training at a different school and there was a totally different perspective there. SO there is going to be a lot of that back and forth between the [school] staff and the student teachers that are working with us. And on the culture of [the school] as a school... I don't even know, I hope it would be a good thing to have a different group of people that are there to see what everybody is doing and understand how sometimes I don't think the administration knows what anybody does in their classroom and they don't have time to just come and see. I think a lot of us are doing some really cool things with the kids and really getting a lot of hands-on really interesting things for the kids to do on a daily basis. And nobody knows. It would be nice to see compared to other places how do we do. I don't know, I have never been anywhere else. I look at it as, it would help us understand what other schools look like and how do we compare. That is what I would hope to get out of it.

3. Students

- a. **Q: This question is about relationships among you, your students, and a teacher candidate. In the partnership with the UMN, you will have the opportunity to build a relationship with a teacher candidate in your classroom across a whole school year. Tell me how you think that will affect the relationship between you, your students, and the teacher candidate? (11:40)**

A: It is only going to be a good thing. We have been doing a lot of work with co-teacher training. I have a special Ed. teacher that is dedicated to my class one period a day and last week we were just talking about ... we weren't doing anything other than she would come in and pull out some kids when it became work time, but there are a lot of other models you could use. If we would have started where she was actually a teacher in my classroom and not just a support person. And that is really what has been going on, she kind of comes in, talks to those certain kids, and doesn't really interact with anybody else. If she had had the opportunity the whole year, to know what is going on in class, and to be a teacher in the front of the classroom sometimes, the relationship with those kids would have been so different. I am looking forward to, hoping that we will still have the partnership next year so we can start right off the bat. A whole year... I just remember when I was a student teacher, I started at the beginning of the year and doing that helped and I always kind of wondered about the student teachers that come in at different points in the year, that has got to be a hard thing to do, even harder than it normally would be. So, being there from the beginning, through the process of how you start a class, how you restart a class every quarter, to me it is the year-long thing. If there is one person that is consistently there a whole year, I don't even worry about the kids, they'll just make those assumptions that Oh, yeah, that is just another teacher, and that is what they should think, that that is just another teacher in the classroom, hey cool, now I can go talk to that person too. It is the year long thing that is really ideal. I know that it is probably hard for the teacher candidates, but it is an ideal situation.

- b. **Q: How do you think that the increased presence of pre-service teachers throughout the year will impact the learning of the students at the school?**

A: (Answered during previous question)

4. Leadership

- a. **Q: I understand there have been quite a few changes in leadership at the school and in the district. How have the changes in administration impacted the leadership in the building and in the district? (14:38)**

A: I think I was talking about that earlier, where it just seems like decisions that are being made about who does what and who teaches where, which impacts the climate of the building. We can't tell where those decisions are coming from. We don't have any idea...like, you're going to go teach over here now, its like I don't like teaching that. Like going from earth science or life science to teaching physical science is very difficult, but you are going to go do this know because you are a science teacher. You need to ask questions first, you need to educate yourself as an administrator before you are going to be an actual leader. You can be an administrator, you can be paid more than me, you can be my boss, but if you don't know what I do on a daily basis? You aren't really my leader, you are just this guy who gets paid a lot of money. It has been interesting to watch, who are the teachers that float to the surface, who are the ones who are pushing certain aspects of things we have done in the past. We finally convinced the administration that homeroom is a good thing, our kids need homeroom and we want homeroom. And how that all has fallen out. It has taken three quarters to get to a place where the teachers have that say again, to be like this is what needs to happen in our building and you need to change this, and you need to let us have this change. We have always been at [this school], there is no leader per say, in any of the departments, we have always been very low key about who is in charge here and we rotate it around and we everyone gets an opportunity to be the team leader for the eighth grade team, or whatever, and that has kind of gone away again. They are looking for us to have, like, well who's your point person for this, but we don't do that. That has never been how we have done it. It is just kind of interesting to see how that new administration has changed their idea of what leadership means and it is not meshing with our idea of what leadership means. And who has kind of come to be our leaders. It is interesting to watch. My dad was laughing at me, I was like, I don't even go in the office, I don't want anybody to see me, I just want to go in my classroom, because there are so many changes, I can't even handle some of what is going on. I don't even want to know, just don't even tell me. It is interesting to have pre-service teachers coming into a place where there have been a lot of changes. I know it would work from the teacher point of view. If there was someone who was working with me we would be fine. Sometimes I get concerned with what the administration, we don't know where they are going, or what they want to do. And the federal money, we don't even know how long we are going to be around, it just gets crazy. Changes have a great impact on everything. There, I said it.

- b. **Q: How do you think your school and district leadership will impact the development of the partnership with the UMN?**

A: I know the teacher leadership is excited about it. The teacher leadership is looking forward to being, you know, it is just a great opportunity to really work with some candidates who will spend that year with us. That is the key, that year long partnership. Again, I don't know about the administration. It is so hard to say. It is so hard to say. I don't know them yet. We don't have a superintendent yet. We would make it work, because that is what we have always done. As teachers we have always, whatever made sense for us is what we have done and in the past that has been ok and that is what our administration wanted, is whatever you guys think is best, we are going to run with that, and we are going to go with that and that is what we have done so far. That is not necessarily the way the leadership is now. We are still going to do it. There are more of us. And the leadership is fine. Our administration, whatever, they are administrators. They do their job. I would like to see more partnership between the administration and the teachers in the building. It is a different model, they are working under a different model, and it is not what they are used to. It makes it hard. When you have worked so long with one model and then you change it, it takes a while. And they are good; we'll get it worked out. It just takes some time.

Appendix D

Interview 2:Teacher.

1. The school from the teachers' perspective

a. **Q: Tell me about your current opportunities for professional learning.**

A: (0:18) Depending on the time and length you have been at [the school] there are plenty of professional development opportunities. When you start you get a \$700 stipend. You can apply that towards any type of professional development that you want throughout the year. You get the \$700 every year you are at [the school]. So, anything that you are personally interested in, you can use that money for. It doesn't have to be towards the district goals, or any of that. Then, also, right away when you start at [the school], you can apply for best practice grants. Those need to be aligned with the district goals but there is money up to, the figures of course change with the budget, something up to about \$3000 a quarter for teachers to do professional development that is aligned with the goals. I, personally, have done both of those. There is also a mentoring program. I coordinate that at [the school], and so once you start at [the school], there is a two-year, and you can opt for a third year through the mentoring program. Two years are required with a mentor and then the third year is optional. [The school] also has quite a bit of professional learning throughout the year. We have, I think, three non-student-contact days that are for professional development, and then there are two more at the beginning of the year, so five throughout the year. And those are, again, aligned with the district mission, vision, and goals. I think that is about it, that I can think of right now.

b. **Q: Tell me about your current opportunities for teacher leadership.**

A: (2:00) That's a good question. Anybody can be a teacher leader at [the school] since we are such a small community. I would say most people take that opportunity after tenure, so after about three years. And again, anybody can take these opportunities, you don't have to be tenured, it is just usually that is about the time your life settles in. We have a leadership committee, so those are teachers around the building that come to meetings and professional developments in order to spread it out to the staff so that it spreads faster and easier. So that is a teacher leadership team. There are also subject area team leads so they go and get all the information and give it to the subject areas and they also do subject area professional development. Previous to this year we have had quite a few committees that you could join just as a teacher leader to have the ear of the administration, and we still have those, but they have been condensed, which is really nice so they only meet like once a month. I am on the mentor steering committee with the curriculum developer so that helps develop curriculum for the mentors and mentees, and things like that. There is an executive board you can be part of, you can be part of the parent council, you can be part of the site council, I'm sorry, not the site council, that is the parent council, but the board meetings, and anything you want to get involved in, you can. Also, if you are in an administrative license program, this school is nice because it is year-round so there are opportunities over the breaks during intersession to do internships and really get the ear of the administration and be there right on the spot so it is nice.

c. Q: Tell me about the current working culture or working climate.

A: (4:05) [The school] is a very unique environment because it is so small. It has a small town feel. Of course that has its pros and its cons. The pros are that you work on a teaching team and you work really closely with about five other adults. That is really good for the kids. We know all of the kids in the building. You may not know them all by name, but you see them all. There are only 600 students in the building. So that provides a really good community for teachers to interact with each other. It is very small, we see close to everybody on a daily basis. And then again, like I said, the team of five or six teachers works with each other every single day. So that is a really good thing for kids. Some of the cons are similar to a small town. Everybody knows everybody's business. There is no escape. You have to be who you are and put all your stuff out there because it is a small community that can breed some of that rumor mill type stuff, nothing really severe. You know, another pro and con is that everybody has a say in everything. So that is awesome because you can get your voice heard and you don't feel like you are some number off in the middle of nowhere. It is also challenging when everybody wants to have their voice heard and you want to get something done, you just want to have something created and put in place, because you have sixty staff to go through in order to get something to work. So, both a positive and a negative.

2. Perceived impact on teacher's work

a. Q: As [the school] enters in to a partnership with the University of Minnesota over the next few years, what would you like your [the teachers'] professional learning opportunities to look like?

A: I would say either stay the same amount of professional development for regular staff or new opportunities for staff that might not have had the time before. So if the TERI program is ready to bring people in to [the school] to do professional development, I think some of the younger, newer teachers wouldn't seem so overwhelmed. Maybe it is a morning before they teach so that they don't have to get a substitute or something like that. I could see that being really beneficial, or after school, so that they can have more access to professional development. I would appreciate, with the undergraduate mentees coming in that those types of professional development opportunities would be offered to new teachers, also. Some of those nitty-gritty, nuts and bolts type professional development that the district doesn't feel all teachers need so they don't fund it or they don't bring it in. Often time mentees, new teachers, have to seek that out themselves, and that can be a little overwhelming. So, I think that is what I see with the partnership and professional development.

b. Q: What would you like opportunities for teacher leadership to look like?

A: I don't know, that's a question. I guess the one thing I can think of off the top of my head is just openings for opportunities for teachers to explore administration. I know that when I started my administrative program, I had to seek it out myself and find it. With TERI maybe it would be a better opportunity to partner with the group so that you can see where you best fit and work on some of those graduate type programs.

- c. **Q: Overall, what do you think the impact of the partnership with the UMN will be on your work as a teacher and the culture of [the school]?**

A: I am hoping it expands the mentoring program and I am hoping that the undergraduates will meld right into the mentoring program. I think it will be a fabulous fit. I always say to people, and I mean it, if you can teach at [this school], you can teach anywhere because we are such a unique environment with such a unique mix of kids. So I really hope that the undergraduate mentees fit right in and join the mentoring program and take that on almost like a new teacher would. And those are the same opportunities for my professional growth is to learn from the new teachers and they learn from us and things like that. So that is what I am hoping for.

3. Students

- a. **Q: This question is about relationships among you, your students, and a teacher candidate. In the partnership with the UMN, you will have the opportunity to build a relationship with a teacher candidate in your classroom across a whole school year. Tell me how you think that will affect the relationship between you, your students, and the teacher candidate?**

A: That is an interesting question because often times when you have a student teacher you kind of back out and you bow out so that that person can develop the relationships with the students. Obviously if I am teaching with that person for an entire year, that is not going to happen. So I see it more like a co-teaching environment where both people are teaching and maybe that teacher is taking more of a lead on certain projects and I am taking a lead on certain projects and we are teaching together. So I really see it as, with co-teaching, the kids are really going to develop the same relationship with that person as they are going to develop with me. Because that is the only way to help the kids is to build a relationship with them. So I see it more as a co-teaching type opportunity.

- b. **Q: How do you think that the increased presence of pre-service teachers throughout the year will impact the learning of the students at [the school]?**

A: Hopefully only in a positive way. More adult to student ratio is always. If you have a good candidate that is willing to put the effort in, and try, I think the more adults available for a kid is always going to be a better thing. Now, if there is an ineffective relationship hopefully there is something we can work on really quickly to turn that around or to move the placements around for a better fit because that could negatively impact the kids. Overall, any adult in the classroom I have ever had has always been a plus to students because that is more people that they can bounce ideas off of and it breaks up lit circles and things like that. There is more adult presence. I think that it would only help to benefit them.

4. Leadership

- a. **Q: I understand there have been quite a few changes in leadership at [the school] and in the district. How have the changes in administration impacted the leadership in the building and in the district?**

A: I would say, definitely new, fresh ideas. The biggest difference I have seen so far is like an executive team. We literally used to have just a principal and a vice principal. The vice principal dealt mostly with discipline, students, and special education and the principal dealt mostly with the adults. So it was a very tiny,

tiny, tiny community. Now we have an executive team. We have a curriculum director, a special ed supervisor, a principal, actually we have a couple curriculum directors, people that float in between the two buildings. So I feel like we are more of a district. That definitely has been a benefit. We also have what I would call some younger blood in there. Our principal is very young, under forty, and has some really innovative ideas. That's great. It is nice to get a new flavor in there and get going on some probably more current or modern teacher initiatives and things like that. Of course, any change comes with its aches and pains. Since we had so much change so quickly it has been a lot of work for folks. It has been a little overwhelming that way. I would say right about now we are finally settling in and that is most people's end of the school year. Thankfully, we have a whole quarter left. I think it is just growing pains. I think you get used to the way one person is and you know how to interact with a person and then you have a whole new team of people that you kind of have to figure out and they have to figure out you. So, it takes a while. I think with the TERI program, though, they will be on board. I feel that they will have really good ideas for new teachers. That is one of the strengths of our new principal is really getting in there and wanting good, new teachers. He does push though. I am hoping that the new teachers and the undergraduate teachers are ready for some of that feed back that's, it's good and it's helpful, but maybe critical. But, I think the younger and the more often you get that, the thicker your skin gets and the better you get faster, which in this day and age is obviously pretty necessary for schools. I guess if that answers your question.

b. Q: How do you think your school and district leadership will impact the development of the partnership with the UMN?

A: Through all the things that I have seen, I think it will be a really good partnership and it will show other schools, really, not only the need for this type of undergraduate experience. I think it is phenomenal that not only will teachers get an entire year, I think that is really necessary, but I hope it will also lead districts to develop programs for their first, second, and third year teachers. I think oftentimes schools just get new teachers in and they just let them go. It is a little too much, too fast. I think we will retain more teachers and keep better teachers teaching our kids with a program like this, so I hope that this can be a really good model for our district and other districts.

Appendix E

Interview 3: Teacher.

1. The school from the teacher's perspective

a. **Q: Tell me about your current opportunities for professional learning.**

A: We have typically four to five staff development days during the school year. We start with two of them at the beginning and they are usually to review the cultural climate of our school and to give us opportunities to expand on what we have done in the past, but also to invite new staff in and get them ready for the school year. We also have about three more throughout the school year that give us opportunities for learning anything from IB that we have at our school to developmental design to different areas of professional learning that teachers can use to succeed and improve on their own teaching habits. We also have our meetings once a week, every Wednesday morning, and some of those are more focused on what we are doing at the school at the time, and some can also be opportunities that could help us in different areas and also help with the items that help teachers get their clock hours in different areas, like reading strategies, math, special Ed. opportunities, things like that.

b. **Q: Tell me about your current opportunities for teacher leadership.**

A: We have two teams that have teacher leadership right now. One is for grade level, and one is for department. Each grade level meets twice a week and there is one person who is their team lead and goes to meetings once a week to be able to bring information to the meeting and also bring information from the meeting to bring back to the grade levels. The same thing happens with the curriculum department areas. So, there are different opportunities where teachers can become leaders of their area and have that opportunity to be able to guide their area with any different items that we have to cover, reviewing of student work, and things like that.

c. **Q: Tell me about the current work culture or working climate.**

A: (2:50) I think our work culture is really good. It varies every year. This year is a little more difficult because last year at the end of the year not only did our superintendent retire, but both the principal and vice principal retired so we had a big shift in our culture at our school and it is now turning into something that we are improving with. But it was really hard at the beginning of the year with teachers. That really shook the boat in that area and it had teachers kind of out of their comfort zone because we are a tight knit community of teachers and a lot of teachers have been here for five years or more years and are used to working together. So, each grade level has a certain tower that has a group of teachers that work together and in that area we are really close and we share ideas and talk about our students to help them improve and things like that and so, we build upon that and so at the end of this year our culture is getting stronger and stronger that it has been in the past. At the beginning of this year it was a little shaky just because of all of the new changes. You know, as a teacher, as an adult, people can kind of close in on their own and kind of shelter themselves, so we had to really work on our culture to really be able to open up and deal with the changes and expect them and move on with them and improve with them. This is my fifth year

at this school and this is the first year that I thought this is ...and we are back to where everyone is really professional, works really well together, shares ideas, builds on each other, and does a really nice job with that and it is all geared towards student support and student learning and helping the students out.

2. Perceived impact on teacher's work

a. Q: As [the school] enters in to a partnership with the University of Minnesota over the next few years, what would you like your professional learning opportunities to look like?

A: The first thing I would like is to be able to have some training in working with the U of M. Like this week, I am going to the "train the trainer" to be able to help me more with being able to help a U of M student coming in and work close in the classroom. It will be different with having student from the start to the beginning instead of just a certain section of the year. I think it is a great opportunity for not only the teacher, but the students to be able to have someone that will be learning with them throughout the year. I guess maybe trainings that could help with the mentoring and how to help them get where they need to be at the end of the year, making sure that the U of M students are being successful and getting the help and support that they need. I am not really sure if that is what you are looking for or if that was the question or if that is what you were looking for.

b. Q: What would you like opportunities for teacher leadership to look like?

A: Personally, I wouldn't mind being a leader in this. I am new with the TERI project. I have heard a lot about it. I think it is an excellent opportunity and I would love to have a student in my classroom. Being as I am currently the math team lead and I will be next year and am a grade level team lead, I would like to be in a position to be able to help be a team lead in this area also and be able to help with TERI, with the students and other teachers and guide them with this. I guess, being that I have never had a student teacher, I would not be the strongest in that area, but I think with being a lead already and being part of the school climate and culture and helping with that, I would find it a wonderful opportunity to be a lead in this kind of area also.

c. Q: Overall, what do you think the impact the partnership with the UMN will be on your work as a teacher and the culture of [the school] as a school?

A: I think it will have a really strong impact in a positive way. I think that having a student from the U of M in a classroom throughout the year will not only help the climate in the classroom, because it is so hard sometimes for a student teacher to come in and to build that relationship with the student and be able to have that success with the short amount of time, I think it will be nice to have someone from start to end. It is really important with student relationships with any adult in the classroom and for not only the students to have the opportunity to build that, but also for the student from the U of M to have that will help with their success and really be able to learn what it is like to be in a classroom, all the difficulty that comes with it but also the rewards that come with it. I think with me as a teacher, I think it will be great to have someone to work with, to mentor, to get ideas from, because I am a teacher of graduating six years ago and have great ideas, but teachers that are coming out now, their ideas just keep getting broader and broader, so if they had someone to share that with and to be able to help someone

in that area because it is always difficult that first year in the classroom so for them to be able to have that experience already of a whole year, I think will be a great opportunity, for not only the U of M student, and the students in the class, but also the teachers that are working with them.

3. Students

- a. **Q: This question is about relationships among you, your students, and a teacher candidate. In the partnership with the UMN, you will have the opportunity to build a relationship with a teacher candidate in your classroom across a whole school year. Tell me how you think that will affect the relationship between you, your students, and the teacher candidate?**

A: I think that it won't have a negative effect at all, I am a teacher that really likes to build strong relationships right away with my students, especially in the area of math because, it is one of the most difficult areas in a student's day and if you are not a strong student in math, you can really despise the class. I like to have a relationship with them so that I can make math enjoyable. So, I think that having a U of M student come in and build that relationship with them right away also will help all the areas. I think that it will make it a really strong classroom. Having two different adults in that relationship with students and really making sure that they understand, but I also want my students to enjoy my class and leave with some understanding and not just come in with a bad mood and leave with a bad mood.

- b. **Q: How do you think that the increased presence of pre-service teachers throughout the year will impact the learning of the students at [the school]?**

A: I think it will help. I have found that having additional adults in a classroom especially ones that can be higher numbers has helped because you have two adults that are helping the students, two adults that can walk around and make sure that they are fully understanding it, two ideas and approaches to the learning. I think it will be really good for the students to be able to experience the different U of M students in all the classes and seeing all the different ideas and the teaching styles and getting adapted to that. I think it will be a strong impact. I really think this will be a good thing to have in our school for our students.

4. Leadership

- a. **Q: I understand there have been quite a few changes in leadership at [the school] and in the district. How have the changes in administration impacted the leadership in the building and in the district?**

A: I think that now, like I said earlier, it was a little rocky at the beginning, and it was something we had to adapt to and to build on and I think now it has become really strong and we have really strong leadership teams of teachers that our administration look to get information and help with. It is now I guess I could say a stronger bond with the leadership teams they look to teachers that are the leaders that go to our principal and administration and work together on decisions and different things like that. As I said at the beginning, it was difficult, it was a struggle to have all of those changes at once but now it has improved and we worked and adapted to it and we have a stronger leadership team than I think we have had in the past so I think that that is a good thing, but it has come to that

point where the changes have been accepted and we are moving with them to improve on everything in our school.

b. Q: How do you think your school and district leadership will impact the development of the partnership with the UMN?

A: I think that this project will make a stronger bond with our school district and the U of M. I am not sure how to answer this question. I think that it [the leadership in the partnership] is a combination of the two [teachers and administration]. It is really driven by the teachers, and the administration is accepting of it and wants us to do this but I know that a lot of the leadership is from the teachers who are involved in the partnership already and with the help in starting it off and getting it ready to go. So, it is a lot of teacher involvement in it. I am really excited about it. I have heard really good things about it and I think this will be a great opportunity for our school and the U of M so I am excited to move on with it and be able to have that experience next year.

Appendix F

Interview 4: Teacher.

1. The teachers' perspective

a. **Q: Tell me about your current opportunities for professional learning.**

A: (0:21) We have a variety of different ways we do professional learning here. It starts with the mentorship program, that is one major aspect. This is available to all new staff members, including teachers who are new to the profession, just being inducted into the school, or teachers who are just new to the building who have already been tenured at their old school. The professional mentorship program then pairs up untenured teachers with tenured teachers and is available for one or two, or sometimes even three years before tenure happens. It is meant to be kind of a peer coaching, a pretty informal program in some aspects in that it allows mentors and mentees to work together on the needs of the mentees, but it also involves some other formal things like goal setting, observations that aren't related to tenure but are just meant to support new teachers. I think it is beneficial to new teachers and mentors who are tenured in the building or who have been in the building for a long time because it brings new learning to the table. Another thing that really works for us with professional learning is that we work a lot in teams. We work a lot in teams both at the grade level, so I work with an interdisciplinary team of teachers in my grade level. We do a lot of learning and goal setting as a group to work with our set of students across content areas. We also do a lot of team work in our content areas which allows us to plan vertically from sixth grade through tenth grade. So that helps us a lot to articulate within our content area and within our grade level what our professional goals are, what our professional practices are, where we are and where we are going. I think the mentorship program and the teaming at the school are the biggest things we do for professional learning in addition to that we also have more formal traditional professional development opportunities at the beginning of the year and throughout the year.

b. **Q: Tell me about your current opportunities for teacher leadership.**

A: (2:32) Teacher leadership involves the same kind of teams. In one way it is teams at the grade level or content area. So some of the teams that we are involved in we take turns rotating through as team leaders at the grade level and at our content area. But I would say for other opportunities, because we are such a small district, we only have two schools in our district, we have some of the leadership opportunities because we take on more roles as teachers than a teacher in an average large district. We are involved in district committees. For a while, I served on the benefits committee. That allowed me to be a leader in my building and in the district within that area. For example, a technology committee, or a professional development committee or a reading committee, whatever it is across the district. There are not very many teachers in our building so having these opportunities to be kind of an expert or seen as a leader I think are unique to our district.

c. **Q: Tell me about the current work culture or working climate.**

A: (3:50) It has been different over the years. I would say that the staff who are currently here have been here quite a long time. In a lot of ways, a lot of people who have come have sort of stayed so there is kind of a bank of expertise of teachers that

have been there a long time. We do have a few new teachers every year to the building. I think, for a large part, teachers are very comfortable with one another. The biggest changes that have happened over the last couple of years have been administration changes so that has influenced our culture in some proactive ways, but in some reactive ways. You know, reacting as a staff to things that are happening at a district level and things that are happening at the building level. And so that is something that has been different this year. I would say more than other schools that I have worked at, the team based philosophy here has sort of empowered us to take more leadership roles at a local level, so at a grade level for example. I think the teachers feel very empowered to try new things, to make the schedule work and to make class groupings work. I feel like in our classrooms we are empowered to do new things. I guess I don't know what else to say specifically about that. Again I don't want to make it too specific, but I don't want to make it too general.

2. Perceived impact on teachers' work

a. Q: As the school enters into a partnership with the University of Minnesota over the next few years, what would you like your [the teachers'] professional learning opportunities to look like?

A: (6:00) One of the things I am really looking forward to is an increase in the amount of professional development and support that we would get from the U. One could be in relationship to our mentorship program that already exists. I know some of those conversations have already started about what mentorship and induction look like at other schools and districts to make sure that the program we are offering here is going to be both competitive and stronger than it is now. I think another impact is going to be the possibility of being involved in some of the U's research. If there are initiatives happening that we can be involved in piloting or trying something like that. For example, I know that the co-teaching model is looking at student teachers as co-teachers. That shift will allow us to have more training around co-teaching practices for the staff, so the impact on the school for that would be a more effective use of co-teaching, for student teachers, but also within our teams we would be able to use those same strategies. So, some of that is that I am looking forward to the training that is coming from the U, the opportunities for training, but also the idea that if there is somebody at the school that is really passionate about a project and somebody at the U was doing research on that subject we could pair those up to make sure that we are doing the best work we can be.

b. Q: What would you like opportunities for teacher leadership to look like?

A: (8:03) I would continue to want to be [a leader]. As you know this year we have had a lot of involvement, both this year and last year, with teachers about the redesign process, by having a liaison. I would continue to see that as very important. I am looking forward to having more teachers involved and having, not a panel, but a working advisory committee as the redesign moved forward. I guess leadership would be some kind of liaison between the university and the school or between the university and the district, but then secondarily, an advisory panel to engage more teachers and have more opportunities for leadership and input into the process and changes as it evolves.

c. Q: Overall, what do you think the impact the partnership with the UMN will be on your work as a teacher and the culture of the school?

A: (8:59) I think giving teachers the opportunity to benefit the profession is good for the profession. So having new teachers or tenured teachers, or wherever they are in the process, mentoring someone who is new, or working together with somebody, or collaborating with somebody either in the same content area and across grade levels or in the same grade level and across content areas, I think just opens up more opportunities for better teaching strategies, a more unified vocabulary or language for students, just new ideas, people to bounce ideas off and try new things, people to take you outside of your comfort zone. So, the more opportunities we as professionals have to do that the better the profession will be. I feel like that is specific to the school, but also beyond the school. The more opportunities we have to have teachers that are new to the profession who are student teachers or are just being inducted into the school, the more opportunities we have to work with people who have different ideas, the better, the more diverse the teacher population, the better.

3. Students

- a. **Q: This question is about relationships among you, your students, and a teacher candidate. In the partnership with the UMN, you will have the opportunity to build a relationship with a teacher candidate in your classroom across a whole school year. Tell me how you think that will affect the relationship between you, your students, and the teacher candidate?**

A: (10:37) I think a lot of student teaching experiences traditionally have been happening in the spring, they might be a 9-week or 12-week, or even in the fall a 9-week or 12-week experience, I think becomes a little bit like a practicum, a little bit artificial. You can have a really good student teaching experience in a short time, but if you have it longer, over the entire school year, the pre-service teacher is able to be more invested in the program, the teachers at the school are able to be more invested in the candidate and there is more of a seamless transition across the year for students and how they view that pre-service teacher or how they view that student teacher. So, I think the relationships will just be more long term because the investment will be up for everybody, that includes the benefits of those relationships. I know a lot of my students, specifically, thrive on relationship building and so for a student teacher or a teacher candidate to come into a school and have to assume a quick relationship with kids is artificial and it is not going to really give them an opportunity to understand what teaching is really like. So having a longer term placement at a school will allow it to be more holistic and a more organic development of what it is like to be a teacher. I think ultimately it will make them more able to start their own classrooms when the year is over.

- b. **Q: How do you think that the increased presence of pre-service teachers throughout the year will impact the learning of the students?**

A: (12:38) Once relationships are developed, I think, students are more able to connect with a pre-service teacher. With that said, looking at all the co-teaching research that has been done recently at St. Cloud and at the U, I think the benefits of having a second teacher or teacher candidate in the classroom all year are pretty much undeniable. Having multiple strategies, multiple communication styles, having different perspectives addressed, the fact of having two teachers in the classroom to address questions, to meet the needs of students through differentiation, intervention or extension, you know, breaking things down for kids or helping extend things for

kids. Also, the collaboration of two teachers working together to deliver things, you have somebody else in the room to bounce ideas off of. They may be willing to try new things that you aren't normally going to do and vice versa. So kind of like the benefit of working as teacher teams for professional learning, I think it is going to make stronger teaching overall. So, if it makes stronger teaching, it is going to benefit the students. They are going to have a more interactive, more energetic, more creative, and just better overall experience.

4. Leadership

a. Q: I understand there have been quite a few changes in leadership at the school and in the district. How have the changes in administration impacted the leadership in the building and in the district?

A: (14:21) It is a little tricky because we are still in transition, so I am going to answer based on what has already happened because we are still in the midst of some of that transition. So, a year ago we had a different principal, a different superintendent, and a different assistant principal, but the principal that was here before wanted to engage teachers in the redesign project and redesign process really early. What that allowed, was through the transition, even though last year we had one principal and this year we have a new principal, the process and move towards being a professional development site is still able to keep its momentum because it wasn't solely an administrative movement, it was teacher driven as well. So that has allowed us to weather the bumps a little bit better as far as the TERI project and the project with the U. Some of the other shifts have been in just getting used to new styles, getting used to a new vision for the district, getting used to new communication, and I would also add getting used to which roles exist, so whereas last year we had a principal and an assistant principal, this year we just have a principal. Before we had a superintendent, now we have several other district level positions, while we have an interim superintendent. So getting used to the roles, what roles they play and how to engage them in which conversations, has been probably the largest learning curve for staff members.

b. Q: How do you think your school and district leadership will impact the development of the partnership with the UMN?

A: (16:15) Again, because there have been teachers involved in the process from the very beginning, I think it will weather it OK. It is hard to really know because now we have an interim superintendent and we are about to be starting the superintendent search is my understanding, we are also waiting for legislative changes to all kind of finalize in the state, so it is a little bit of an unknown. With that said I do feel like there are people who are in the district office who have been here before or are new this year, who very much understand the process and understand the benefits and can see how the partnership could work. With the details of the partnership that are always going to be evolving no matter if every single person who is here right now is here in six months. So, the details are always going to be evolving, but I feel like the overall impetus is in the custody of the profession, not just of the school, not just of the U. I feel like there has always been, there is kind of a traditional way that a lot of teachers move beyond the classroom within the profession of education and that involves becoming a principal or becoming an administrator, becoming a superintendent, and that is not necessarily a realistic expectation for all teachers that

want to move on in the profession or that want to shift within the profession out of the classroom. And so I feel like the more opportunities we have for teachers to grow in the profession or to take on different leadership roles in the profession, the longer teachers will stay in education and not feel like they are stuck or “plateaued.” Giving teachers different or additional opportunities to be leaders in education without becoming an administrator I feel like is a need and that is one of the things I kind of hope this whole process evolves into.

Appendix G

Interview 5: Principal.

1. The school from the teacher's perspective

a. **Q: Tell me about your current opportunities for professional learning.**

A: So, there are several pathways that teachers receive professional development or professional learning experiences. One formal structure that is provided as a structure for all teachers is that there is a PLC for each grade level team, so there is the interdisciplinary grade level team. The second team, or active collaboration structure is the subject area team within each of their subject disciplines and that is provided during the day. We require staff to meet two times [a week] with their grade level PLC and two times a week with their subject area teams. And there are specific pieces around curriculum design with that. The next pathway is that we provide teachers with dollars each year for them to have continuing education training. They get to choose any workshop that aligns with the school improvement plan and school improvement goals and their professional development goals for the year. I think that is somewhere between \$400 and \$700. The last opportunity for them is with a best practice grant where they, with their team—either their subject area or grade level team, sign up to attend, they would request, fill out an application to attend a workshop that would expand on something that they are working on within their curriculum. And so those are kind of three primary pathways. And then in addition to that because we are an IB Middle Years program world school we also need to make sure that we are providing ongoing professional development for the IB middle years program and so we actually have, I believe, nine of our staff heading on Monday and Tuesday to IB training in Minneapolis to receive level two or category two training for their specific subject area

b. **Q: Tell me about your current opportunities for teacher leadership.**

A: Teacher leadership exists with on two primary levels, one, we designate teacher leaders for the grade level, and we call those grade level team leaders. We also have subject area team leaders and then we also have mentors that actually are paid a stipend for mentoring first year and the second and third year are... No, first and second year, I think are required, and the third year is an option to have the mentor as a probationary teacher. And, so, that is a teacher leadership role as well, the role of the mentor. And then beyond that, there are a couple positions outside the classroom where we have an IB Middle Years Program coordinator. We also have an intersession coordinator that coordinates our after school activities and our intersession programming throughout our breaks in between the quarters, since we are a year round school.

c. **Q: Tell me about the current work culture or working climate.**

A: Well, I think, absolutely what is happening at the legislature, in terms of the integration revenue, which is a significant part of the funding that we receive to operate the two schools here in [this district] is absolutely on their minds. So, putting that aside, because I think that is absolutely impacting the lens through which you say, what are we focused on in terms of improving in our school and is this something that is going to continue to develop me in a way that makes me

competitive if I have to go and look for another job. And so I think folks are finding themselves wanting to equip themselves and expand their resume so that they become a very competitive candidate if they were to have to apply to another school if the two schools were reshaped or reconstituted or something different were to happen as a result of the integration revenue. So, I think that is a reality, it is an elephant in the room at all times that may or may not go acknowledged.

2. Perceived impact on teacher's work

a. **Q: As the school enters in to a partnership with the University of Minnesota over the next few years, what would you like your [the teachers'] professional learning opportunities to look like?**

A: Maybe not so much what they would look like, because I am committed to co-creating and collaborating on what the best model would look like, so I can really speak towards the outcomes and for the outcomes I would want to see that teachers would become more dynamic in the teaching and learning that happens in their classroom and that we would absolutely be able to see student achievement both of the kids that we are teaching here at [the school] and also the student teachers that are being placed with our host teachers or cooperating teachers that there is exponential growth as a result of the experience for both. Here are two focus areas for me: How do we simplistically implement and sustain basic content literacy strategies across each grade level, as well as math. And being able to focus on, we know from our data what the specific areas are within literacy that our kids struggle: vocabulary, main idea, inference and comprehension. We know every year those pieces around literacy. So what then are the bank of strategies that research is saying is best practice at truly eliminating the achievement gap. I don't want to close it, I want to eliminate the achievement gap. And so those are some of the pieces that I want to see occur within the professional development as a focus, as to how we are really differentiating those strategies for the range of learners that we have in our classes. Because that is not something that is exclusive for [this school], that is a nation-wide feat. It doesn't matter where they go and interview for a job, do they understand how to teach the literacy of their subject area and can they differentiate it for all learners and can they demonstrate growth for every learner in their classroom at least a grade level.

b. **Q: What would you like opportunities for teacher leadership to look like?**

A: I think initially some flexibility with working with the university and partnering in terms of with our scheduling to make sure we can support each other, what our capacity is on our side as well as your capacity on your side in terms of placing teachers. We're not the largest staff, so I think there is some flexibility and negotiability; there are some of those pieces that we are going to have to have some really good communication between each side. So I think having a liaison, which we have in place now, and continuing to have that role be supported through the grant or through the dollars that the university has set aside for this absolutely will be a great thing for us moving forward. Beyond that, leadership from my perspective, I think, is strictly about, what I would want support with is taking a look at the data systems that we have in place and how can we stream line and simplify what data systems we are using to create reports

that are impactful for teaching and learning. And so that is something that I would love to work with professors from the university who could support myself as well as the grade level leaders because that is where we have smart goals identified, where each grade level is designating what MCA strands from reading and math that they want to, as a grade level, teach across their eight subject areas and so that is something that I would love to have in the partnership with the university in our back to school workshops that we have this fall, where we have who that come in and help us launch a data retreat where we talk about looking at meaningful data from our assessments, both internal and external and how do we really use that to drive how we plan for a differentiated instruction, or a differentiated instruction oriented classroom.

c. Q: Overall, what do you think the impact the partnership with the UMN will be on your work as a teacher and the culture of the school as a school?

A: I think it will absolutely enhance our understanding of... Lab school I think is used in a lot of different contexts so I know different people interpret it differently, but I really truly see a professional learning community ever evolving, like a continuous cycle of immersion into PD, but it is practically applied. So we are teaching and learning in ways that are both we are the teacher as a teacher and we are the student as a teacher so we serve in both roles or that we participate in both roles, we participate as a teacher and we participate as a student. I am sorry I am not being articulate this morning.

d. Q: What sort of role or relationship to you see yourself having with the teacher candidates?

A: Hopefully, it is an empowering relationship where they feel like the school is really set up for adult and student success and so whatever that needs to look like in order to support them, there is flexibility, support, encouragement, and that they can expect, if they are interested, an observation from me as well, and feedback as well, I would hope that they would want me to immerse them into the feedback that I would provide all teachers in the building, and include them in our staff meetings and really have them be a welcomed part of our school environment.

3. Students

a. Q: This question is about relationships among you, your students, and a teacher candidate. In the partnership with the UMN, you will have the opportunity to build a relationship with a teacher candidate in your classroom across a whole school year. Tell me how you think that will affect the relationship between you, your students, and the teacher candidate? How do you think that the increased presence of pre-service teachers throughout the year will impact the learning of the students at The school?

A: What I understand about that relationship is that we are all learners in the process: as a host teacher, you are learning how to strategically transition and rev up the student teacher into the teacher in the classroom and then kind of shift back down and back out. Like you are sliding them in and sliding them out across the year and really exploring all the different roles and aspects of the teacher. And then students are going to be in a great situation to give feedback. I think it turns both the teacher and the student teacher into a learner from the standpoint of OK,

how do we use the data that kids are giving us on how to improve instruction and improve our strategies for accelerating student achievement so I really see it being... I think it is really going to provide interesting growth for those folks who sign up and are committed to it, in ways they don't even imagine. Like, they probably don't even...like until you actually experience it, I mean because you can hypothesize that we are going to do student teaching and then it is that you actually are in it, and how are you really using that feedback from kids and then as a host teacher, how are you providing meaningful feedback for your student teacher. I mean, all those roles become even more clearly defined and I think that part of some of the ongoing PD for both the student teachers and the teachers of those student teachers and the project that there should be a lot of reflection, a lot of structured reflection for them to have to conduct.

4. Leadership

- a. **Q: I understand there have been quite a few changes in leadership at the school and in the district. How have the changes in administration impacted the leadership in the building and in the district?**

A: I think the element of uncertainty now is more about what will the future look like for [this district] and that is that elephant about what is going to happen with the integration revenue and how will that truly impact the districts that support and commit to the programs that we offer currently and so I think that probably is a bigger piece than how much change in leadership has occurred because I think if you look at the two buildings, I think we are moving in a direction that is strong and positive as if we were going to continue to be able to exist for the long term. So it is more about the uncertainty about what is happening outside with funding than it is what is happening inside of our district. Obviously we want to have a permanent superintendent, we want to know permanently what the future is and some of that planning is difficult if you don't know what the resources are that are going to be able to make that happen. You can dream a great picture, and certainly we are dreaming and doing strategic planning and having these great ideas about what we want to see this district become, and then there is the reality of it, can we prioritize and will the resources allow us to build and construct. That, at the end of the day will be the challenge.

- b. **Q: How do you think your school and district leadership will impact the development of the partnership with the UMN?**

A: I think, honestly, it will be the difference between it being a program that...I don't know, I think time will tell, I really do, I think. I mean, of the folks who have heard about the TERI project people are very excited about the potential that this program has to increase the quality of teacher candidates that are coming into the field. I think everybody, for the most part, really supports that. So I think time will tell. Leadership is going to enhance it as it becomes more stable, to what extent, we will see. I think until we really get into it, it is going to be hard to measure some of these pieces. I am hopeful. I am optimistic.

