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District Support Team Model as a Manifestation of Central Office Transformation: Experiences from Central Office and School Based Staff

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DISTRICT SUPPORT TEAM MODEL AS A MANIFESTATION OF CENTRAL OFFICE
TRANSFORMATION: EXPERIENCES FROM CENTRAL OFFICE AND SCHOOL BASED
STAFF

BY

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Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Education
Department of Education, Management, Leadership and Policy
Seton Hall University
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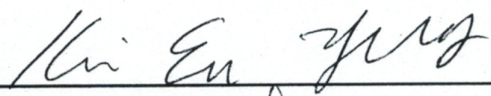
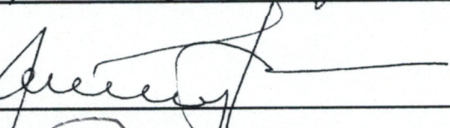

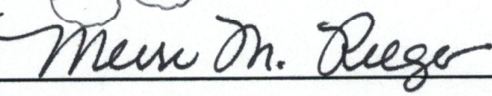
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SETON HALL UNIVERSITY
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APPROVAL FOR SUCCESSFUL DEFENSE

Doctoral Candidate, **Danielle Pfeiffer**, has successfully defended and made the required modifications to the text of the doctoral dissertation for the **Ed.D.** during this **Fall Semester 2014**.

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to examine the described experiences of 20 participants—central office executives and specialists, principals, and teacher leaders—in the district support team (DST) process, a manifestation of central office transformation as an approach to school improvement. The site of this study was the Puget Sound School District in Washington State. The district was in its third year of central office transformation employing a differentiated support service model to assist its lowest performing schools. This case study utilized qualitative data from semi-structured interviews, document review, and field observations to understand the prevalence of the six elements of assistance relationships, experiences of collaboration among participants, capacity-building that resulted from the process, and the commonalities and differences in the experiences of different participant groups. Previous research on central office transformation, professional capital, and organizational theory provided the theoretical guide for this research. The conceptual framework was assistance relationships, grounded in sociocultural learning theory. Four major themes emerged from this study: the ambiguity of the DST purpose, process, and participants' roles; the role and impact of power and trust in the collaborative process; the use of tools and resources as means to facilitate discussions and decisions; and finally, the DST process as the impetus for growing and building instructional capacity of all participants. This study found that all six elements of assistance relationships were present to varying degrees in the DST process, but that an imbalance of power and trust delayed the development of collaboration. The study also found that the DST process built the instructional and leadership capacity of all participants. While participants demonstrated varying degrees of understanding of the purpose of, and their roles and responsibilities within, the DST process, all participants agreed that they benefited from the use of tools and protocols to focus discussions

and decisions. In addition, all participants felt the pervasiveness of power and its impact on participants' receptivity to the process. Finally, participants reported that the DST process increased their social capital by expanding their networks outside of their immediate work group, giving them greater access to information and other resources.

Dedication

I would like to dedicate this work to those closest to my heart: my family, whether bound by blood (Dad, Mom, Bryan, Greg, and Kimmy) or woven into my life through shared experiences (Jacquelin G, Sharona, and DJ). Each of you has provided me gifts—from which I drew strength throughout the dissertation process. I love you—words cannot express the depth of my gratitude for your endless love, overwhelming support, and bountiful encouragement that has been ever present my life.

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I would also like to acknowledge and thank Dr. Anthony Colella, my second reader. From the moment I met Dr. Colella, via telephone, it was evident that he believed in my ability to complete the dissertation. He demonstrated that belief through encouraging words, timely feedback, and questions that developed my thinking in new ways. His excitement and encouragement around the topic helped guide the dissertation process.

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Chapter I

INTRODUCTION

Background

For three decades America's schools have been in a continual state of transformation. The publication in 1983 of *A Nation at Risk: The Imperative for Educational Reform* (National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983) and the enactment of the controversial No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB) triggered district and school reform efforts across the nation. NCLB landmark legislation, stemming from the reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), increased the scrutiny and pressure applied to schools. NCLB mandated that 100% of students meet or exceed state-defined proficiency standards as measured by high stakes testing by 2014, and further required that the identification of schools failing to make adequate yearly progress (AYP) toward the 100% target would be made public (Fuller, Gesicki, Kang, & Wright, 2006). School districts across the nation scrambled to meet NCLB requirements by attempting to close existing achievement gaps between White and racial and ethnic minority student subgroups (Mintrop & Sunderman, 2009; Shannon & Bylsma, 2004).

Despite the implementation of a variety of reform approaches, significant systemic changes in classroom practice and student achievement have yet to be realized (Elmore, 2000; Gallucci, 2008). Fully 48% of public schools failed to meet AYP targets in 2011 (Honig, 2013). As a result, the federal government granted, in 2012, an ESEA flexibility waiver that offered alternate means for satisfying the mandate that all students meet state proficiency requirements. Eligibility for the waiver required that states adopt the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) and link teacher performance evaluations to student achievement as measured by high stakes testing (e.g., Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium or Partnership for the Assessment of

Readiness for College and Career). In states granted the waiver, schools and districts are measured by less onerous annual measurable objectives (AMO) in lieu of AYP targets (Dunlap, 2011). Those states choosing not to adopt CCSS and link teacher evaluation to student achievement remain under NCLB policy that requires 100% student proficiency in reading and mathematics by the spring of 2014.

The 2014 deadline has passed, yet schools across the nation remain far from reaching 100% proficiency levels despite concerted efforts to improve. Whether under NCLB or ESEA waiver policy, schools face mounting pressure to increase student achievement and raise levels of teacher performance and accountability (Elmore, 1996; Gallucci, 2008; Honig, 2008, 2013; Leana, 2011; Togneri & Anderson, 2003). As a result, school districts must reexamine the type of support they provide for schools identified as *in improvement*.

Studies of several districts that have made significant progress in improving student achievement identified actions that made a substantial difference in promoting teaching and learning. First, successful districts established a shared vision of achievement for all students (Leithwood, 2010) and defined and communicated what highly competent teaching looked like (Elmore, 1996; Johnson & Crispeels, 2010; Marsh, 2001; McLaughlin & Talbert, 2003; Togneri & Anderson, 2003). These districts then reprioritized the work of principals to focus on improving instructional practices and provided professional development and support (Marsh, Kerr, Schuyler-Ikemoto, Darilek, Suttorp, Zimmer, & Barney, 2005; Marzano & Waters, 2009; Togneri & Anderson, 2003). The supervisors of principals refocused their efforts on building principals' instructional leadership capacities (Leithwood, 2010; Marsh et al., 2005). The successful districts also developed common standards-aligned curriculum, instructional materials, and assessments (Cawelti & Protheroe, 2001; Johnson & Crispeels, 2010; Leithwood, 2010; Marsh et al., 2005; Massell, 2000; Shannon & Bylsma, 2004; Snipes, Doolittle, & Herlihy,

2002; Togneri & Anderson, 2003), accompanied by effective, job-embedded, professional development designed to change instructional practice (David & Shields, 2001; Johnson & Crispeels, 2010; Leithwood, 2010; Marsh, 2001; Marsh et al., 2005; Massell, 2000; McLaughlin & Talbert, 2003; Shannon & Bylsma, 2004; Snipes et al., 2002; Togneri & Anderson, 2003). In addition, successful districts implemented systems to monitor and hold principals accountable for effecting changes in teaching practices (Marsh et al., 2005) and improving student achievement (Marsh, 2001; Marzano & Waters, 2009; McLaughlin & Talbert, 2003; Snipes et al., 2002). These districts used data not only to report results, but also to set goals (McLaughlin & Talbert, 2003), inform instruction (Shannon & Bylsma, 2007; Wagner et al., 2006), and assess the effectiveness of professional development (Marzano & Waters, 2009). Finally, many improving districts created structures designed to facilitate learning across the system. This included enabling principals to learn from each other by interacting around common problems of practice (Elmore, 1996; Fullan, 2006) with the support of central office staff (Burch & Spillane, 2004; Togneri & Anderson, 2003).

In addition, Honig (2013) noted that districts making efforts to impact student achievement must rethink the role of the central office to better support and serve principals and teachers.

Central offices have traditionally focused on business and compliance functions rather than on supporting schools in their efforts to help all students realize ambitious learning goals. To address this mismatch between new performance demands and long-standing central office work and capacity, district leaders must set aside old ways of working and fundamentally transform their central offices. (Honig, 2013, p. 1)

Therefore, the central office is in a unique position to enable and support reform efforts across schools within a district through reconfiguration and realignment of focus and efforts.

Historically, the role of the central office as a driver of increased student achievement has received mixed reviews, with some referring to central office administration as “the blob” (Bennett, 1987, para.10). This bloated educational bureaucracy referred to those outside the classroom, who consume scarce resources and often blockade educational reform efforts, and whose work and skills have traditionally focused on compliance and administrative functions rather than on improving teaching practices (Bennett, 1987). In addition, the power of the central office was found to have a negative impact on school climate and inhibit growth in student achievement (MacIver & Farley, 2003), reinforcing the bureaucratic perspective. It is not surprising, then, that a number of researchers in the 1990s considered school district central offices superfluous and a drain on valuable resources (Effron & Concannon, 1995; Finn, 1991; Hill, 1997; Keedy, 1994; Parsley, 1991; Scambio & Graeber, 1991). In fact, Chubb and Moe’s research (1990) found that districts with higher levels of student achievement gains were less bureaucratic and allowed schools to exercise a greater sense of independence to make improvement decisions.

However, in recent research on educational reform, the role of the central office in mid-sized to large districts emerged as a potential catalyst for supporting schools in efforts to increase student achievement and decrease achievement gaps (Honig, Lorton, & Copland, 2009). Support has grown for a stronger central office role and a realignment of services to focus on school improvement (Burch & Spillane, 2004; Firestone, 2009). Additionally, Waters and Marzano (2006) showed a statistically significant relationship between central office leadership and student achievement. Central office executives and staff must therefore redirect their attention to forming intentional and supportive partnerships with schools (Honig, 2013; Honig et al., 2009).

The formation of assistance relationships with school staff offers a promising practice for providing central office support to schools (Honig, 2008; Honig, Copland, Rainey, Lorton, &

Newton, 2010). Assistance relationships involve: peripheral participation, in which school-based novices are treated as valued partners capable of strengthening their performance; social engagement and the co-construction of knowledge around teaching and learning; and a high degree of collaboration through joint work (Honig, 2008). These assistance relationships may involve two distinct groups of central office professionals. Supervisors of principals work closely with them to build the principals' instructional leadership capacities, for example by co-conducting classroom walk-throughs and then modeling follow-up dialogue and coaching with teachers (Honig et al., 2010). In addition, mid-level central office specialists assist in building the instructional capacities of teachers by modeling best practices (Brown & Campione, 1994; Honig, 2008; Tharp & Galimore, 1991) and by providing tools to guide teaching and reflection and translate policy into practice (Burch & Spillane, 2004; Honig, 2008; Honig et al., 2010). Further, central office experts broker access to resources within and outside of the district, and spread knowledge by spanning organizational boundaries (Burch & Spillane, 2004; Honig, 2008; Honig et al., 2010; Swinnerton, 2007; Wenger, 1998).

When reorganized as high functioning support teams, central office members have the power to impact reform efforts at the school level by focusing on and investing in the practice of teaching and leading (Burch & Spillane, 2004; Honig, Copland, Rainey, Lorton, & Newton, 2010). Many organizations utilize flexible, fluid, work teams, which can be reconfigured to meet changing needs (Bolman & Deal, 2008; Keidel, 1984). At their best such teams shape their purpose in response to changing needs, translate that purpose into goals to which they hold themselves mutually accountable, are of a manageable size with the right mix of expertise, and share a common commitment to positive working relationships (Katzenbach & Smith, 1993).

Effective teams produce greater results and have higher employee morale (Cohen & Ledford, 1994; Emery & Fredendall, 2002; Wellins, 1990) than individuals working independently.

In addition to utilizing teams, organizations that recognize the needs of employees, invest in them, and empower them produce greater productivity and positive outcomes (Bolman & Deal, 2008; Cascio & Boudreau, 2008; Lawler, 1996; Lawler & Worley, 2006; Likert, 1961; Pfeffer, 1994, 1998, 2007; Waterman, 1994). Organizations such as school districts can empower employees by investing in their professional development, designing jobs to provide opportunities to use discretion and judgment, and fostering high performing, self-managed teams (Bolman & Deal, 2008; Hackman, Oldham, Janson, & Purdy, 1987; Herzberg, 1966; Ledford, 1993; Pfeffer, 1998). This same idea can be applied to the support provided to schools by the central office. Central office staff can help build the knowledge and capacity of principals and teachers by investing in their professional development and practice. However, caution must be applied. The perceived or actual power required to make the necessary changes in practice may inhibit the improvement efforts by triggering resistance (MacIver & Farley, 2003).

In any organization, including school districts, power is held not only by individuals in positions of authority, but also by those with knowledge and information, appealing personal qualities, or the ability to coerce or constrain action (French & Raven, 1959). When individuals with varying amounts and sources of power come together as a team to effect organizational change, a certain degree of negotiating and bargaining is likely to take place in an attempt to arrive at win-win solutions (Axelrod, 1980; Lax & Sebenius, 1986). In these circumstances, conflict seems to be inevitable, but when harnessed effectively by a team, it can serve as a potential source of creativity and innovation (Bolman & Deal, 2008; Kotter, 1985; Pfeffer, 1994). Wielding power can also influence the behavior of individuals and groups (Pfeffer,

1992). As part of central office transformation work, or more simply the work of reforming districts and schools, power plays a role: Its influence may be unspoken and yet felt. Without the recognition and careful calibration of its influence, power can operate as a barrier impeding progress toward improvement (MacIver & Farley, 2003).

It is becoming clear that the central office has the potential to play an important role in building the instructional and leadership capacities of teachers and principals. Changing the way the central office supports schools by deploying high-performing teams to form assistance relationships with school staff is an emerging approach to school reform. To be successful, these teams must effectively navigate the currents of power flowing between and among school and central office staff.

Statement of the Problem

Over the past several decades, districts have been working hard to close achievement gaps. Reform models have been implemented with fervor and fidelity, albeit with varying degrees of success. Researchers have identified necessary factors for school (Marzano, 2003; Shannon & Bylsma, 2007) and district reform (Marsh et al., 2005; McLaughlin & Talbert, 2003; Shannon & Bylsma, 2004; Togneri & Anderson, 2003), yet little systemic impact has been made on student achievement without strategic and targeted central office reconfiguration (Honig & Copland, 2008). However, central office reforms that lack intentional focus and consistency of implementation have failed to produce positive large-scale results (e.g., Bryk, Sebring, Kerbow, Rollow, & Easton, 1998; Chubb & Moe, 1990; Malen, Ogawa, & Kranz, 1990; Ravitch & Viteritti, 1997). Federal and state policies of past decades did not require central office involvement in school improvement efforts (Honig & Copland, 2008). However, according to Cuban and Usdan (2003), more recent federal and state policy practically mandated the

involvement of the central office to support schools in improvement efforts. As a result, some districts are making positive strides by combining research-based school improvement strategies with a reconfiguration of central office support; building instructional and leadership capacity in schools to positively impact student achievement (Copland & Knapp, 2006; Honig, 2006; Knapp, Copland, Ford, Markholt, McLaughlin, Milliken, & Talbert, 2003; Knapp, Copland, & Talbert, 2003).

Honig, Lorton, and Copland (2009) defined the reconfiguration of central office support to schools as *central office transformation*. Built upon “efforts to fundamentally shift how the entire district central office operates as an institution” (Honig & Copland, 2008, p. 1), central office transformation focuses on improving learning, teaching, and leadership efforts to impact student achievement. However, to date, there is limited research on the process of central office transformation as a lever for school improvement, and a paucity of guidance for districts seeking to support school improvement by refocusing the work of central office staff members on partnering with school leaders to improve teaching and learning (Honig & Copland, 2008). Though previous case studies of central office transformations in Atlanta Public Schools, New York City Public Schools, and Oakland Public Schools are informative, they do not illuminate the experiences of different stakeholder groups involved in, or affected by, the central office transformation. Therefore, additional research is warranted in order to gain a more comprehensive understanding of central office transformation, with particular attention paid to assistance relationships as a vehicle for school improvement.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to understand the described experiences of elementary school principals, teacher leaders, and central office executives and specialists involved with the *District*

Support Team (DST) process; one district's approach to central office transformation as a school improvement effort (Honig & Copland, 2009). More specifically, this case study explored the prevalence of the elements of assistance relationships, the feelings of collaboration among participants regarding the process, and participants' experiences of instructional and leadership capacity-building. Finally, the study identified the commonalities and differences in described experiences between four participant groups as related to the DST process.

This study was based on the assumption that collaboration between central office participants and school staff, in the form of assistance relationships, would result in the growth of the instructional and leadership capacity of principals and teachers. This study sought to shed light on the experiences of both central office and school staff with the District Support Team process as an element of a differentiated service model approach to central office transformation and to identify ways to improve the process.

Research Questions

The overarching research question that guided this study was: How do central office participants, elementary school principals, and teacher participants describe their experiences as part of the District Support Team (DST) process, a manifestation of central office transformation, to improve student achievement? More specifically, the study sought to answer the following questions about participants' experiences:

- Which elements of assistance relationships do participants identify as part of the DST process, as related to: modeling, peripheral participation, social engagement, tools, brokering/boundary spanning, and joint work?
- How do participants describe the collaborative process of the DST in working toward school improvement?

- How do participants describe the DST process as building the instructional leadership capacity of central office staff and principals?
- What are the commonalities and differences in the experiences of the DST process among participants?

Theoretical and Conceptual Frameworks

Previous research on central office transformation, professional capital, and organizational theory provided the theoretical guide for this research. The conceptual framework is assistance relationships, grounded in sociocultural learning theory (Honig, 2008). According to sociocultural learning theory, learning occurs as individuals in communities of practice progress from legitimate peripheral participation to full participation by imitating the actions of more knowledgeable others (Vygotsky, 1978) and engaging in the sociocultural practices of the community (Brown & Duguid, 1991; Lave, 1991; Lave & Wenger, 1991; Rogoff, 1994; Wenger, 1998). Another important element of learning is language, which converges with action as a tool to solve problems (Vygotsky, 1978) and make meaning of a situation through dialogue (Bakhtin, 1984; Jabri, Adrian, & Boje, 2008). These theories provided the foundation for the conceptual framework of assistance relationships and its application to central office transformation.

Applying elements of sociocultural theory, central office experts work with school staff to improve their practices and increase student achievement. These assistance relationships consist of: modeling of expert practices, treating novices as capable of strengthening their performance, providing structures to facilitate the social construction of knowledge, using tools to guide thinking and translate policy into practice, accessing resources through brokering and boundary spanning, and collaborating through joint work (Honig, 2008).

This study examined how assistance relationships between central office and school staff built the capacity of novice practitioners and increased professional capital (Hargreaves & Fullan, 2012). The concept of *professional capital* is the combination of human capital (individual knowledge and skills), social capital (relationships and the access to resources), and decisional capital (ability to navigate ambiguous situations) (Hargreaves & Fullan, 2012). In addition, organizational theory, more specifically the four-frame theory (Bolman & Deal, 2008), offers multiple lenses by which to view organizational changes. This study utilized the structural frame, human resource frame, and political frame (Bolman & Deal 2008) to analyze the impact of changes in roles, relationships, and responsibilities on participants' experiences with central office transformation as a strategy to improve school performance. Finally, the success of central office transformation, in particular assistance relationships, is dependent upon the existence of a culture of collaboration and trust, based on the findings of Burch and Spillane (2004) and Bryk and Schneider (2002). The review of literature in Chapter II provides a full discussion of the theoretical and conceptual frameworks.

Study and Design

Yin (2014) asserted that a case study should answer how and why questions about “a contemporary set of events or an event over which the researcher has little or no control” (p. 14). I selected a case study design to examine how DST members in various roles within a school district described their experiences with regard to central office transformation as an approach to school improvement. More specifically, this study examined the experiences of central office and school based staff regarding elements of assistance relationships, levels of collaboration and trust, and instructional and leadership capacity building as part of the DST process. Further, the study explored the commonalities and differences in participant experiences.

The Puget Sound School District (PSSD), located 16 miles south of Seattle, was the site for this study. The PSSD transformed its central office by developing and implementing a differentiated support model to provide varying degrees of support to schools (Purkey & Smith, 1985) depending on their needs. Beginning in 2011, a central office team identified as the District Support Team (DST) provided support to the lowest performing 10 schools in the district. Of the 41 schools in the district, these 10 received targeted support due to a failure to meet adequate yearly progress (AYP) in literacy and mathematics for 3 consecutive years.

The DST, comprised of central office personnel such as the Assistant Superintendent of Student Achievement, Director of Standards-Based Instruction, principal supervisors, and instructional specialists worked with individual schools to help identify and improve ineffective instructional practices. In an effort to promote collaboration and build capacity, the DST met with the site-based school improvement team every 6 weeks to analyze teaching and learning data. Through those analyses, participants identified priorities for instructional improvement. Central office specialists then worked with school staff to plan and deliver professional development over the course of the school year. The creation of the DST was a reform effort of the Puget Sound School District to address the needs of unsuccessful schools and to realign central office roles and responsibilities to more intentionally support schools with improvement efforts.

For this study, I collected data from semi-structured interviews, observations, and a review of documentation. In depth interviews allowed participants to reflect on the DST model and process as part of central office transformation. The review of documents—including agendas, minutes, professional development plans, methodologies, and the theory of action—provided further insight into the rationale for, and intent of, the DST process. Moreover, documents provided additional details regarding the process and design of the DST model.

Observation field notes from several DST meetings offered evidence of actual practices, discussions, and other interactions among team members. Additionally, field notes documented the nature of each individual's roles and degree of participation. I triangulated data derived from interviews, documents, and observations to answer the research questions and to deepen my understanding of the DST process as part of central office transformation.

Significance of the Study

This study contributes to the currently limited body of research that exists in the area of central office transformation as part of district reform and school improvement efforts. Understanding individuals' experiences as part of central office transformation is significant to educators, teachers, building administrators, central office administrators, and policymakers seeking to improve teaching and learning practices from a systemic perspective and approach. More specifically, this study is significant in that it unpacks and examines the experiences of individuals of varying roles within a school district, who both provide and receive support services in identified failing schools. Furthermore, this study provides insight into the role and elements of assistance relationships that are critical to the work of central office transformation. This research also assists central office professionals in the identification of potential pitfalls and success factors as they embark on central office transformation to better support schools.

Additionally, this research helps to inform next steps for PSSD central office leaders and principals as related to implementation of the DST process as part of central office transformation. This study assists in identifying ineffective practices that can be avoided with future implementations, and adjustments to make central office transformation more successful and impactful through the DST approach. Finally, information gleaned from this study can further help to inform district and state policy related to reform practices and models.

Limitations

A case study research design is, by definition, limiting in that it examines a bounded system, a single unit or entity, a unit around which there are boundaries (Smith, 1978), or a case. Even though care was taken to ensure that a thick, rich description be the cornerstone of this research, findings are difficult to generalize due to the constraints of case study research design, limiting one's ability to apply the findings to other instances. For this study, the focus on one case, the work of a specific district with its central office transformation, was a limitation.

The purposeful sampling of interview participants was also a limitation of the study. I chose participants based on their role and involvement in the DST who were able to deeply describe their experiences related to that process. Participants did not include other members of the school-based community or persons from different departments of the central office.

Details regarding case, population, participants, and other defining factors are explained and expanded upon in Chapter III.

Delimitations

This study was limited to a single, selected school district in Washington State and focused exclusively on personnel at the central office involved in the teaching and learning efforts of the district. Additionally, I only interviewed elementary principals, building-based teacher leaders, and central office staff who were involved in the district support team process at the five high-support elementary schools.

Definitions of Terms

This study uses the following definitions.

Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP). A measurement defined by the United States Department of Education, related to the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB), used to determine how schools are progressing academically based on standardized tests used in a given state. Students are categorized into student subgroups. Schools and districts not making adequate yearly progress over a 2-year time period are identified as a school or district in need of improvement.

Annual Measurable Objectives (AMO). The yearly targets in reading and mathematics for each student subgroup as part of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act Waiver (ESEA) as part of No Child Left Behind. AMO replaces the former AYP for states provided the ESEA Waiver from NCLB (Dunlap, 2011).

Central office transformation. Based on the work of Dr. Meredith Honig and Dr. Michael Copland (2009), Central Office Transformation is based on learning-focused partnerships with schools and principals to deepen their instructional leadership capacity. Furthermore, it involves changing the culture and organization of the central office to support teaching and learning efforts in schools.

Differentiated service delivery model. The system of support provided to schools in the Puget Sound School District by central office staff based on the ranked need of a school. School rank was determined by the achievement data for a 3-year period. Schools ranked the highest received the greatest amount of support, whereas schools ranked the lowest received less support. Thus, schools received differentiated levels of support.

District Support Team (DST). Within Puget Sound School District, the intervention team comprised of central office personnel from a variety of departments and identified as experts in their areas of concentration. These teams worked with schools identified as high support or enhanced based on student achievement data.

High support schools. When schools in the Puget Sound School District were ranked in order of student achievement, the 10 lowest performing schools over a 3-year period as measured by the Measurement of Student Progress were designated as high support schools.

Measurement of Student Progress (MSP). Measurement of Student Progress was Washington State's annual standardized high stakes test at the time of this study. The subject areas of reading, math, writing, and science were tested in grades 3-10 with certain grade levels testing certain content areas (Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction, 2014).

Walkthrough tool. A digital tool used in the Puget Sound School District to capture teaching and learning behaviors in the classroom for purposes of data analysis.

Organization of the Study

This research study is organized into five chapters. Chapter I presented an introduction with background information on high stakes accountability and the changing role of the central office related to district reform efforts brought on by NCLB. Next, the chapter presented the statement of the problem and the purpose of the study. Subsequently, Chapter I listed the research questions and described the theoretical and conceptual frameworks. After briefly discussing the study's design, Chapter I concluded with the significance of the study, limitations and delimitations, definitions of terms, and the organization of the study.

Chapter II presents a review of the literature, beginning with an overview of the literature review process. The chapter next discusses the sociopolitical drivers of increased accountability for districts and schools across the country, along with research on district reform efforts in response to accountability pressures. A description of the theoretical and conceptual frameworks follows, accompanied by reviews of sociocultural theory and social learning theory, central

office transformation, and more specifically assistance relationships, which are derived from sociocultural learning theory and a critical element of central office transformation. The chapter then outlines the four-frame theory by which organizations are viewed in an effort to inform leadership decisions and diagnose current or potential issues. In order to gain a deeper understanding of professional capital, a product of central office transformation, human capital theory, social capital theory and decisional capital theory are discussed. The chapter concludes by examining the link between collaboration and trust in reform efforts.

Chapter III describes the qualitative research design and methodology, providing further details about the case under study and the data collection and analysis methods.

Chapter IV provides the analysis of the data and presents the findings from this analysis.

Chapter V presents answers to the research questions and discusses possible future studies related to this research.

Chapter II

LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter begins with a review of the sociopolitical drivers of increased accountability for schools and districts, and then proceeds with a discussion of research on district and school reform efforts that have occurred in response to accountability measures. Together, these form a contextual backdrop for central office transformation, which is the focus of this study. The chapter continues with an introduction to the theoretical and conceptual frameworks that undergird this study. Next, the chapter provides an in-depth examination of the theoretical framework of sociocultural learning theory, the foundation for the conceptual framework of assistance relationships as a critical component of central office reform, which is discussed next. The chapter then explores the four-frame organizational theory as a construct to design and evaluate organization improvement initiatives, and professional capital as an intended outcome of central office transformation. The chapter concludes by examining the potential impact of collaboration and trust on school improvement efforts.

Literature Review Process

A review of the literature related to central office transformation as a product of increased accountability and district reform was conducted using a number of resources and search methods in order to locate peer-reviewed journal articles and doctoral-level dissertations regarding the topic. Additionally, reviews of the literature related to sociocultural learning theory, organizational theory, and professional capital were conducted using a number of search methods. Computerized databases used in the search included, but were not limited to: ERIC, EBSCO, Dissertations and Theses, and Academic Search Premier. Additionally, the use of web-

based repositories including Google and Google Scholar were used. The citations that appeared in the located publications offered additional sources for literature review. Further resources were found in the Seton Hall University library database, which also informed additional searches.

Search terms included, but were not limited to: central office transformation, district reform, school reform, assistance relationships, social capital, human capital, professional capital, school accountability, organizational theory, and district turnaround. In order to be considered for review, all articles, additional research studies, and dissertations had to be peer-reviewed. There was no exclusion for time period of publications related to the theoretical frameworks; however, only literature published or completed between 1995 and 2014 were used in searches for central office transformation, district reform, and accountability.

A matrix showing the connections between important ideas on separate but related topics, presented by theorists and researchers whose work was most central to this study, appears in Appendix A.

School Accountability

The current educational environment in the United States has been shaped by federal policies aimed at holding schools accountable for ensuring that all students meet rigorous content standards. In 1983, concern over the ability of the United States to compete globally gave rise to the publication of *A Nation at Risk*, which was concerned that average scores of high school students on standardized tests had declined to a level lower than before the launch of Sputnik in 1957. The study, commissioned by the Reagan Administration, warned that “the educational foundations of our society are presently being eroded by a rising tide of mediocrity that threatens

our very future as a Nation and a people” (National Commission on Excellence in Education 1983, p. 1). Poor teacher training, high teacher turnover, and low academic expectations were identified as some of the causes of declining student achievement. Garnering extensive media attention, the report ushered in the standards-based reform movement.

In the decade following *A Nation at Risk*, states began to adopt content standards. While early efforts were often vague and lacked academic rigor, standards became more clear and challenging (U.S. Department of Education, 2008). Two pieces of legislation in 1994 accelerated the standards movement in education. The Improving American Schools Act required all states to adopt educational standards and assessments, and the Goals 2000: Educate America Act provided federal funds to support standards development efforts (U.S. Department of Education, 2008).

The standards and accountability movement strengthened considerably in 2001 with the passage of the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB). States receiving targeted investment education from the federal government were required not only to adopt academic standards, but also to measure and report student performance against those standards. In an effort to close the achievement gaps between White and racial and ethnic minority students, NCLB further mandated that *all* students meet or exceed proficiency in the state-defined standards by 2014. Under NCLB, districts with schools that consistently underperformed and failed to meet adequate yearly progress (AYP) were to be publicly identified as needing improvement (Fuller, Gesicki, Kang, & Wright, 2006). This public scrutiny of student achievement data has increased the pressure on states, districts, and schools to drastically improve teaching and learning. While NCLB required that each state develop a clear plan to close achievement gaps, the legislation left the determination and development of such plans to individual states. As a result, states and

districts across the country have been scrambling to find solutions to meet the demands of NCLB (Mintrop & Sunderman, 2009).

Since the enactment of NCLB, many states and districts have adopted research-based, comprehensive school reform models. Such models address all aspects of school operations as an intervention to enable schools to close achievement gaps and achieve adequate yearly progress. Examples of comprehensive school reform models include *Accelerated Schools*, *Core Knowledge*, *Direct Instruction*, and *Success for All*, among others (Vernez, Karam, Mariano & Demartini, 2004). Other districts have developed their own homegrown solutions, choosing from a menu of strategies such as restructuring the school day, implementing new curricula and instructional frameworks, development new assessments of student achievement, raising achievement standards for students and teachers, and providing increased or improved professional development for teachers (McLaughlin & Talbert, 2003).

In 2012, 2 years before the NCLB requirement that all students meet proficiency standards was to take effect, the federal government offered relief to states by passing the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) Flexibility Act. This Act allowed states receiving federal funding to use alternate means of satisfying the NCLB mandate that all students meet proficiency standards. In exchange for that flexibility, states were required to publicly identify the lowest performing schools as *priority schools*, and the Title I schools with the greatest achievements gaps as *focus schools* (U.S. Department of Education, 2012). After the passage of the ESEA Flexibility Act, 43 states applied and were approved for ESEA waivers. However, in April of 2014, Washington State became the first state to lose its waiver. By failing to honor its commitment to making growth in student achievement a significant factor in teacher and principal evaluation, districts in Washington lost flexibility in the spending of nearly \$40 million in federal funding. In addition, Washington schools returned to the requirements of

NCLB (Duncan, 2014), which brought the distinct possibility that every Title I school in the state would be placed in improvement status.

District Reform

Despite efforts across the nation to turn around low performing schools and close achievement gaps as required by NCLB, little has been accomplished beyond generating islands of excellence (Togneri & Anderson, 2003). While an exceptional principal or inspiring group of teachers might succeed in motivating students in particular schools to excel, to date reform efforts have not produced significant, large-scale change in classroom practices or student achievement (Elmore, 2000; Gallucci, 2008; Togneri & Anderson, 2003). In fact, the number of schools failing to meet adequate yearly progress increased between 2001 and 2011 (Honig, 2013).

It is clear that improving the learning of all children is a goal that cannot be accomplished working solely school-by-school. Schools exist within the broader context of districts, whose “specific actions impact schools and their capacity to implement school change and attain higher standards” (Shannon & Bylsma, 2007, p. 13). A school district can enable positive change by striking the “right balance between tightness and looseness” about policies and practices (Fullan, 2006, p. 67). In a study of education systems around the world, Barber and Mourshed (2007) found that the U.S. education system is one of the most decentralized, with control at the state level, and loosely coupled, with schools having a great deal of autonomy. Furthermore, they found that the top 10 education systems, as determined by 2003 PISA rankings, fared well in three practices: recruiting the right people into teaching, developing their instructional capacity, and ensuring the best possible instruction for each child by decreasing pedagogical variability. Tighter coupling between districts and schools can address each of those areas and have a

significant impact on student achievement (Marzano, 2008). The accountability measures of NCLB allowed states to take over districts that failed to close achievement gaps, in effect creating a more tightly coupled policy system (Firestone, 2009). Although that possibility gave districts ample reason to engage in school improvement, progress to date has been limited.

However, researchers have identified and studied several districts that have been making measurable progress in school improvement to understand what role, if any, districts can play to broaden the application and impact of reform efforts. Several themes emerged from these research studies as key contributions that a district can make to successfully improve student learning at multiple school sites across the system. They include:

- establishing a common vision for high quality teaching and student achievement;
- recasting and supporting principals as instructional leaders;
- implementing a common curriculum and assessments aligned to standards;
- improving professional development support for teachers;
- developing accountability measures and incentives for changing practice;
- making effective use of data to monitor results and inform instructional decisions; and
- implementing organization structures to support change (Cawelti & Protheroe, 2001; David & Shields, 2001; Elmore, 1996; Honig et al., 2010; Johnson & Crispeels, 2010; Leithwood, 2010; Marsh, 2001; Marsh et al., 2005; Massell, 2000; McLaughlin & Talbert, 2003; Shannon & Bylsma, 2004; Snipes et al., 2002; Togneri & Anderson, 2003).

Vision for Quality Teaching and Student Achievement

Districts that have been successful in improving student achievement established a shared vision for quality teaching and student achievement. In some districts, a clearly acknowledged

role of central office leaders was to foster shared beliefs or philosophies about teaching and learning across the organization (Cawelti & Protheroe, 2001; Shannon & Bylsma, 2004; Togneri & Anderson, 2003). Many high-performing districts “develop a widely shared set of beliefs and a vision about student achievement...of disadvantaged and minority students in particular” (Leithwood, 2010, p. 249, 251). Beliefs guide practice, and if staff believe that some students cannot meet standards, then that belief will be actualized and achievement gaps will widen. To support student learning, instructional leaders in successful districts also defined and communicated what highly competent teaching looks like (Elmore, 1996; Johnson & Crispeels 2010; Marsh 2001; McLaughlin & Talbert, 2003; Togneri & Anderson, 2003).

Elmore (1996) suggested that such norms of good teaching practice could be codified as performance standards based on the authority of professional bodies, such as the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics, or through videotapes of exemplary instruction. However, most studies of successful districts found that effective teaching was defined broadly in terms of general practices. Marzano and Waters (2009) found that high-performing districts typically did not subscribe to a single instructional model, but rather “a broad but common framework for classroom instructional design and planning that guarantees the consistent use of research-based instructional strategies in each school” (p. 7). Langer (2004) found that successful schools “teach students strategies for thinking about and using the content they study” (p. 46). Districts studied by Togneri and Anderson (2003) defined their vision for teaching as a philosophy of reflective practice, in which teachers “actively engage students in rigorous content, assess the impact of instructional methods, reflect on their practice, work with colleagues to research and share effective practice, and make appropriate adjustments to help students learn effectively” (p. 15). The use of an established framework for teaching, such as the Danielson, Marzano, or CEL

5D framework, is another means of promoting a shared vision of instructional excellence (Shannon & Bylsma, 2007). It is not enough to create a shared vision for quality teaching and learning, however. To effect change in student achievement, successful districts leveraged their visions to drive instructional improvement, expecting the vision to guide the actions of all stakeholders, including building principals (Marsh 2001; Togneri & Anderson, 2003).

Principals as Instructional Leaders

Principals have traditionally been required to perform a variety of roles, including financial and facilities management, student discipline, and various administrative tasks in addition to ensuring quality classroom instruction. In their study of five improving high-poverty districts, Togneri and Anderson (2003) found evidence of a clear reprioritization of work around instructional leadership. “In interview after interview, principals spoke about their work in terms of improving instruction, not simply managing the building” (p. 25). The need to improve the quality of instruction is particularly urgent in high-poverty schools.

Significant improvements in student achievement depend on significant improvements in the quality of classroom instruction...[particularly for] students from disadvantaged and minority backgrounds who have traditionally not been served very well by districts and schools...[and whose] success is much more sensitive to the quality of their school experiences than is the case for students from more advantaged and majority backgrounds. (Leithwood, 2010, p. 263)

Thus, monitoring the quality of teaching and improving teachers’ effectiveness must be a top priority for principals of schools with achievement gaps.

Being an instructional leader requires observing teachers daily and providing feedback and suggestions for improvement, and creating an environment where rigorous, reflective teaching is the norm (Togneri & Anderson, 2003). Not all principals have the necessary expertise to provide instructional leadership, however. Improving districts recognize that, and build principals' instructional leadership capacities by providing professional development support through structured workshops and meetings at which experiences can be shared. These meetings are often led by the supervisors of principals (Marsh et al., 2005; Marzano & Waters, 2009; Togneri & Anderson, 2003). Furthermore, the priority of these supervisors is to help principals make instructional improvements by visiting schools and providing feedback and support, and then holding principals accountable for improvement (Leithwood, 2010; Marsh et al., 2005).

Common Aligned Curriculum

Research has shown that the alignment of classroom instruction to standards-based assessments, in terms of both content and cognitive demand, is highly correlated with improved student achievement (Cohen, 1987; English & Steffy, 2001). Because of the many changes to educational standards, up to and including the recent adoption of Common Core State Standards in most states, classroom teachers often find that the curriculum guidance and resources provided to them are out of date; lacking alignment with current standards. While individual teachers might plan their own standards-aligned units and locate or create the instructional materials necessary to implement those plans, not all teachers have the ambition or the skills to do so. Moreover, broad changes in classroom practice and student achievement require a coordinated effort to ensure equitable, standards-aligned instruction across a school system. Thus, it is no

surprise that one of the common themes in districts that have made gains in student achievement is the development of common, standards-aligned curriculum, instructional frameworks, teaching materials, and assessments (Cawelti & Protheroe, 2001; Johnson & Crispeels, 2010; Leithwood, 2010; Marsh et al., 2005; Massell, 2001; Shannon & Bylsma, 2004; Snipes et al., 2002; Togneri & Anderson, 2003). Simply providing documents to teachers is not sufficient to change instructional practice, however. Implementation in classrooms increases when teachers find the resources useful in preparing students for high-stakes tests, are held accountable for implementation, and are provided with supportive professional development (Marsh et al., 2005).

Professional Development for Teachers

The true evidence of school improvement is found in the classroom, where teaching and learning occur. Raising student achievement in an era of increasingly rigorous standards requires that teachers understand the new standards and change their teaching practices to enable all students to meet them. If there is any universal action among the improving districts, it is the provision of effective professional development support to teachers. Elmore (1996) theorized that direct observations of quality teachers and trial and error in their own classrooms would be far more effective in promoting teacher learning than the traditional approach of listening to descriptions of new teaching practices. Consistent with that thinking, the improving districts typically provided embedded professional development based on best practices that was differentiated to meet teacher needs and aligned with school improvement initiatives (David & Shields, 2001; Johnson & Crispeels, 2010; Leithwood, 2010; Marsh, 2001; Marsh et al., 2005; Massell, 2000; McLaughlin & Talbert, 2003; Shannon & Bylsma, 2004; Snipes et al., 2002; Togneri & Anderson, 2003). In their meta-analysis of research studies of improving school

districts, Shannon and Bylsma (2007) found that “a growing consensus, in relation to educational reform, acknowledges continuous, on-site, job-embedded professional development as the best hope for changing instruction to improve student learning” (p. 96). Specific approaches to embedded professional development include peer coaching or mentoring (Brown, Stroh, Fouts & Baker, 2005; Schen, Rao, & Dobles, 2005), collaborative action research (Calhoun, 1994; Glickman, 1993; Marzano & Waters, 2009; Sagor, 1992), examination of student work (Langer, Colton, & Goff, 2003; McDonald, 2001), and reflective dialogue based on walkthrough data (Shannon & Bylsma, 2007).

Accountability Measures and Incentives for Changing Practice

It would be a mistake for district or building leaders to assume that simply presenting teachers with a vision of quality teaching and learning, standards-aligned curriculum guidance, and professional development would naturally result in improved teaching and learning. More support is required in the form of incentives to change practice and accountability measures for doing so. Waters and Marzano’s (2006) meta-analysis of 27 studies found that superintendents in high performing districts set specific, non-negotiable goals for student achievement and classroom instruction. As Elmore (1996) aptly stated, “teachers have to feel that there is some compelling reason for them to practice differently, with the best direct evidence being that students learn better” (p. 24). Consistent with that notion, the improving districts studied by Marsh and colleagues (2005) and Marzano and Waters (2009) demonstrated two facets of accountability. First, changes in teaching practice were documented and reinforced as look-fors in observations conducted by principals and in learning walks by district leaders (Marsh et al., 2005). In addition, student achievement outcomes, as measured by common assessments, were

reported, with principals held accountable for growth, particularly of students in the bottom quartile (Marsh, 2001; Marzano & Waters, 2009; McLaughlin & Talbert, 2003, Snipes et al., 2002). The use of data should not be limited to accountability reporting, however. The real power of data is to improve instructional practice, addressed in the next section.

Use of Data to Inform Decisions

Data of a variety of kinds are important inputs to school improvement and district reform. Student achievement data from standardized summative and formative assessments are used to set goals at all levels: for individual students, teachers, grade level teams, schools, and the central office (McLaughlin & Talbert, 2003). Disaggregating data allows goals to be set and progress to be monitored for student subgroups, as well as the general student population. Data have many uses beyond simply setting goals, however. Teachers may use formative assessment data to group students according to instructional needs and to assess the effectiveness of their teaching practices in order to make adjustments to improve student learning (Wagner, Kegan, Lahey, Lemons, Garnier, Helsing, Howell & Rasmussen, 2006). Teachers may use walk-through data to “think about practice, to encourage self-analysis and reflection, and to improve their practice. The approach is reciprocal, informal, and focuses on factors that influence higher student achievement” (Shannon & Bylsma, 2007, p. 93). Principals may use student achievement and walkthrough data to monitor student growth, assess the effectiveness of building initiatives, and identify potential development needs of teaching teams. “Any discrepancies between expected teacher behavior in classroom as articulated by agreed-upon instructional models and observed teacher behavior are taken as a call for corrective action” (Waters & Marzano, 2006, p. 13). Central office staff may use data to assess the effectiveness of professional development and to

allocate resources to schools according to need. Such actions and decisions must be based on reliable data from multiple sources, and teachers and principals must receive support in learning how to analyze and interpret data to inform decisions (David & Shields, 2001; Leithwood, 2010; Massell, 2000; Snipes et al., 2002; Togneri & Anderson, 2003).

Organization Structures to Support Change

Creating improvements in teaching and learning beyond the pockets of excellence resulting from the innovation and determination of a few self-selected reformers necessitates intentional planning and structural change. Scaling up school improvement requires providing lateral support across schools to enable leaders to learn from one another, rather than one school succeeding at the expense of others (Fullan, 2006; Hargreaves & Fink, 2006). Fullan (2006) stated that “we need clusters of schools engaged in lateral capacity building, incorporating state and local agendas” instead of acting independently (p. 96). One approach to providing lateral support is to refocus the role of mid-level central office staff to act as brokers, “cultivating the exchange of information and expertise within and across schools, between schools and third parties, and between instructional leaders working at the very top of the system and those running reforms from inside the school” (Burch & Spillane, 2004, p. 4). In other words, these staff members work side by side with principals and school staff, coaching them into better practice.

Another approach is to create structures that enable professionals, such as principals, to interact around common problems of practice (Elmore, 1996). In one district studied by Togneri and Anderson (2003), both horizontal and vertical structures were utilized. Horizontal groupings with common problems of practice among like grade levels or schools were supplemented with

vertical teams of high schools and their feeder schools working with central office staff to align practices across grade levels.

Overview of Theoretical and Conceptual Frameworks

Undergirding this study is the conceptual framework of central office transformation, which is grounded in the theoretical framework of sociocultural learning theory and informs the concept of assistance relationships. These theories provide a structure within which to examine the interactions and described experiences of central office and school staff as the means to improve practice.

According to sociocultural learning theory, learning occurs when an external activity is reconstructed between individuals in a social setting, and through that process becomes internalized (Vygotsky, 1978). This not only occurs between children in classrooms, but also among adults in communities of practice engaged in common activities with a shared set of tools and routines (Lave, 1991; Wenger, 1998). Roles of members vary according to their experiences and expertise; those with greater skill taking more responsibility. Additionally, learning occurs through transformation in roles, as new members progress from legitimate peripheral participation to full participation, mastering the work by engaging in the sociocultural practices of the community (Brown & Duguid, 1991; Lave, 1991; Lave & Wenger, 1991; Rogoff, 1994). Mastery becomes possible when the novice practitioner imitates the actions of more knowledgeable others (Vygotsky, 1978) within the school community: attending to the modeling, retaining and reproducing the behavior, and reinforcing the change (Bandura, 1971). Language is also an important element of learning, converging with action as a tool to solve problems (Vygotsky, 1978) and make meaning of a situation through dialogue (Bakhtin, 1984; Jabri, Adrian, & Boje, 2008). These theories, which are discussed in more detail in the section

that follows, provide the foundation for the conceptual framework of assistance relationships and specifically their relationship to central office transformation, a basis for this study.

Furthermore, these constructs illuminate the described experiences of central office and school staff as they work in partnership to improve student achievement.

Assistance relationships, derived from sociocultural learning theory, are the relationships that exist between experts and novices in order to build the expertise and capacity of novices within a community of practice engaged in common work activities (Honig, 2008; Lave, 1996; Lave & Wenger, 1991; Rogoff, 1994; Rogoff, Baker-Sennett, Lucas & Goldsmith, 1995; Wenger, 1998). This conceptual framework informed the design of this study in its focus on the experiences of central office staff and school staff working together to improve their practices, with the intended outcome of increasing student achievement. According to this conceptual framework, assistance relationships are characterized by the following six elements (Honig, 2008). First, expert practitioners model the practices in which novices are expected to engage. Second, experts treat novices not as terminally low performers, but rather as capable of strengthening their performance over time with appropriate support. Third, intentional structures are established to facilitate the social construction of knowledge. Next, experts provide tools to guide the thinking of novices and translate policy into practice. In addition, participants broker access to outside resources and span organizational boundaries to share knowledge and increase learning. Finally, participants in assistance relationships engage in joint work, an intense form of collaboration, to co-construct meaning of problems of practice, gather and analyze evidence, and partner in developing solutions. More details regarding research on assistance relationships are provided later in this chapter.

Central office transformation requires changes in roles, relationships, and

responsibilities. This chapter provides details about each of these elements as part of the conceptual framework of organizational theory. More specifically, the four-frame theory (Bolman & Deal, 2010) offers multiple lenses by which to view an organization in order to inform decisions that improve school performance. Further, this study unpacks the concepts of structure, human resources, and the political influences, more specifically, power, to further inform the influence and impact on transformation work.

The purpose of assistance relationships as an element of central office transformation is to build capacities of novice practitioners, rendering the construct of professional capital (Fullan & Hargreaves, 2012)—the combination of human capital, social capital and decisional capital theories—relevant to this study. A review of the literature on each of these theories informs the analysis of the extent to which central office transformation develops professional capital through assistance relationships. Briefly, human capital refers to the collective skills, knowledge, and experiences of individuals within an organization; social capital is the relationships between individuals and the access to resources, such as knowledge and influence, which those relationships provide; and decisional capital is the ability to make decisions in ambiguous situations with no clear precedent, often relying on reflection. The conceptual framework of professional capital, then, gives context to the capacity-building that is expected to occur through assistance relationships as a key element of central office transformation.

Finally, the review of the literature indicates that the success of central office transformation, in particular assistance relationships, is dependent upon the existence of a culture of collaboration and trust. Literature related to trust and collaboration provides additional context to support the conceptual and theoretical frameworks explored and explained in this study. Figure 1 summarizes the elements of the theoretical and conceptual frameworks.

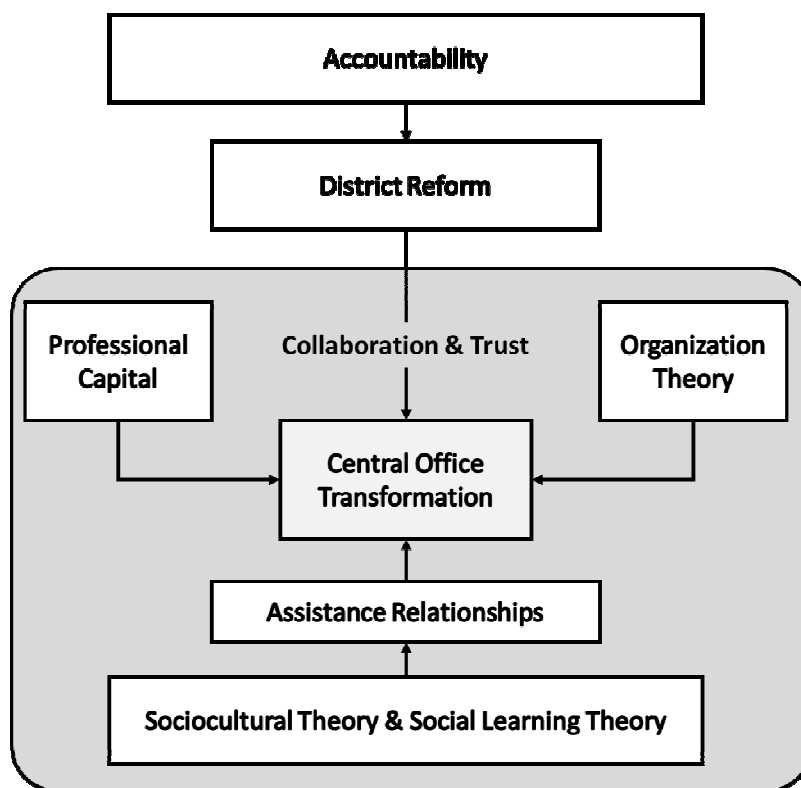


Figure 1. Theoretical and conceptual framework elements.

Discussions of each of the elements of the theoretical and conceptual framework follow, along with the backdrop of collaboration and trust.

Sociocultural Theory and Social Learning Theory

Many of the school improvement efforts targeted at increasing student achievement and closing performance gaps are grounded in sociocultural theory or social learning theory, either explicitly or implicitly (Honig, 2008). These theories, referred to in this study in combination as sociocultural learning theory, propose that all learning is social, and they describe the environment and processes for human development and learning. Learning is situated in social

contexts, manifests in changing participation in communities of practice, occurs through modeling by a more knowledgeable other, and arises as individuals make meaning through communication and dialogue (Bakhtin, 1984; Bandura, 1971; Brown & Duguid, 1991; Jabri et al., 2008; Lave, 1991; Lave & Wenger, 1991; Rogoff, 1994; Vygotsky, 1978; Wenger, 1998; Wertsch, 1991; Wertsch & Tulviste, 1992).

Learning Situated in Social Contexts

The acknowledged founder of sociocultural learning theory, Lev Vygotsky, theorized that “education in every country and in every epoch has always been social in nature...It was never the teacher or tutor who did the teaching, but the particular social environment in the school which was created for each individual instance” (Vygotsky, 1997, p. 47). According to Vygotsky, learning begins when an external activity is reconstructed and begins to occur between people in a social setting. Interpersonal process is transformed within the individual over time to become an intrapersonal process (Vygotsky, 1978; Wertsch & Tulviste, 1992). Thus, “every function in the child’s development appears twice: first, between people (interpsychological), and then inside the child (intrapsychological)” (Vygotsky, 1978, p. 57). While Vygotsky developed his ideas through work with children, others have applied and adapted his ideas to describe adult learning. Lave (1991), studying communities of Yucatec Mayan midwives and adult participants in Alcoholics Anonymous, described learning as “a social phenomenon constituted in the experienced, lived-in world” (Lave, 1991, p. 64). This view of learning moves away from the notion of learning as a “cranial process” and situates it in communities that value the knowledge being developed (Brown & Duguid, 1991, p. 48).

Changing Participation in Communities of Practice

Theorists and researchers call the social environment in which learning takes place a *community of practice*. Lave (1991) defined a community of practice as a group of people engaged in learning together in an area of common activity or interest. A community of practice requires a domain in common, for example, teaching in a high-needs elementary school. It also requires a community, with individuals interacting regularly and learning from each other. Finally, a community of practice requires a common practice or shared repertoire of tools, routines, and other resources (Wenger, 1998). Rogoff (1994) described members in a community as “working together with all serving as resources to the others, with varying roles according to their understanding of the activity at hand and differing responsibilities in the system” (p. 214). Although all members play an active role, these roles may be asymmetrical as some members take on more responsibility for leading and others may do more observing. New members of a community of practice begin participating at the periphery; this is called *legitimate peripheral participation* (Brown & Duguid, 1991; Lave & Wenger, 1991). Learning occurs through a transformation of participants’ roles: Individuals who enter the community at the periphery develop mastery of the work over time, thereby becoming full participants of the community. Thus, learning does not involve receiving or even constructing knowledge, but rather developing the ability to behave as a community member by engaging in the sociocultural practices of the community. The central issue is not learning *about* practice, but *becoming* a practitioner (Brown & Duguid, 1991; Lave, 1991; Lave & Wenger, 1991; Rogoff, 1994). Developing mastery of the work and becoming a participant in a community often involves modeling.

Modeling by a More Knowledgeable Other

Vygotsky (1978) posited that individuals learn by imitating actions of a more knowledgeable other within their zone of proximal development (ZPD); the space beyond their current level of expertise when working independently, but within their capabilities, when given guidance. In a community of practice, the more knowledgeable other is anyone who has a greater ability or understanding with regard to the work of the community than the learner. This can be a teacher, peer, or even a computer. With practice, the imitated process becomes internalized and, therefore, part of the individual's independent practice.

Sociocultural learning theorist Bandura (1971) described a four-step process by which a learner develops new patterns of behavior by observing the modeling of a more knowledgeable other. First, the learner gives *attention* to what the model is doing. The learner's perception of the prominence of the model and the value of the behavior influence whether he or she will observe closely or ignore the modeled activity. Second, *retention* occurs when the learner captures vivid mental images of the behavior being modeled, usually accompanied by verbal codes or labels. Mental and physical rehearsals also aid retention. Third, *reproduction* of the modeled behavior begins with rough approximations of the modeled behavior, which the learner then refines through feedback. This requires not only demonstrating the component skills, but also integrating them appropriately to produce the desired behavior. Finally, *reinforcement* of the new behavior occurs when the learner has good reason to produce the behavior. Observations of modeling do not automatically translate into changes in behavior, but positive incentives, prompts, and rewards for doing so increase the likelihood of behavior change (Bandura, 1971).

Meaning-making Through Language and Dialogue

Vygotsky (1978) postulated that speech and action make learning possible. He stated, “the most significant moment in the course of intellectual development, which gives birth to the purely human forms of practical and abstract intelligence, occurs when speech and practical activity, two previously completely independent lines of development, converge” (1978, p. 24). According to Vygotsky (1978), language serves young children first as a means of social contact, and later becomes a tool to solve complex tasks and plan solutions to challenging problems, thereby converging with actions. In addition to planning solutions, other theorists have asserted that language is essential in making meaning of a situation. Bakhtin (1984) described how participating in the construction of meaning involves having a voice. Meaning comes from the contact between words and reality; that reality is shaped and reshaped by the utterances others make. The purpose in communicating is to achieve some desired end, but according to Bakhtin (1984), the listener has interpretive rights. The creation of meaning occurs when the process of communicating, interpreting, and responding leads to both parties seeing differently. In other words, as people communicate, each side takes on aspects of the other (outsideness), creating meaning as each side illuminates the other (Jabri, Adrian & Boje, 2008). Applying that idea to the organization change process, Jabri and colleagues pointed out that the way one communicates to others “depends entirely on whether one views people as participating subjects in the process or as objects of the process” (2008, p. 681). Thus, change management should not focus on communicating a predefined product. Instead, change management should encourage dialogue to facilitate and guide the meaning-making process through social interaction (Jabri et al., 2008).

Central Office Role in School Improvement

While the findings by studies of district reform previously cited imply that the central office has a key role to play in school performance and student achievement, the status of the school district central office has been a topic of heated debate throughout the current era of increased school accountability and reform. Some researchers in the 1990s saw central offices as superfluous at best and as impediments to school performance at their worst (MacIver & Farley, 2003). Chubb and Moe (1990) linked low school bureaucracy to higher student achievement. Crowson and Boyd (1992) described central office staff as serving their own self-interests and maintaining the status quo rather than working toward attainment of student achievement goals. Peterson (1999) found that central office power had a negative effect on school climate and ultimately student achievement. As a result, some called for downsizing (Effron & Concannon, 1995; Hill, 1997; Parsley, 1991; Scambio & Graeber, 1991) or eliminating (Finn, 1991; Keedy, 1994) school district central offices.

At the same time, researchers conducting case studies of effective schools and districts found that the central office can play an essential role in school improvement (Armstrong & Anthes, 2001; Bullard & Taylor, 1993; Cawelti & Protheroe, 2001; Fitzgerald, 1993; Massell, 2000; Ragland, Asera & Johnson, 1999; Shipengrover & Conway, 1996; Skrla, Scheurich, & Johnson, 2000). Firestone (2009) suggested that districts become more tightly coupled in response to NCLB, with the central office playing a stronger role in school improvement. Refining that idea, Orton and Weick (1990) and Spillane and Burch (2003) suggested that school improvement requires deciding which elements of the system need to be tight and which need to be loose. “The challenge for districts has been to find the right balance between centralized controls and fulfilling bureaucratic functions required of large school districts and at the same time ensuring the commitment and support of teachers as professionals” (Johnson & Crispeels, 2010, p. 742). With accountability pressures mounting, more central offices have begun moving

beyond administrative functions, realigning their services to focus on school improvement, which has required significant changes in the work of central office staff members (Burch & Spillane, 2004; Honig, 2008, 2013).

Research by Johnson and Crispeels (2010) suggested that the central office can exert more control over teaching and learning, ensuring tighter coupling, through structural linkages such as curriculum guides and pacing calendars, common benchmark assessments, and data systems. Some districts have attempted to drive organizational change and school improvement in that way. But Johnson and Crispeels (2010) found that supporting organizational learning required strong “relational and ideological linkages [which] may be the best pathways for enhancing professional accountability and commitment” (p. 770). Relational linkages are characterized by trusting relationships between people within and across different divisions of the school system (Lasky, 2004). Ideological linkages include shared values, goals, and understanding of what good instruction is, and these provide the foundation for school improvement (Johnson & Crispeels, 2010). Two additional types of linkages connect central control with teacher support. This first type is resource linkages, involving technology, human capital, professional development, and external partnerships. The second type is communication linkages, including a clear, coherent, district message, two-way communication between the central office and schools, and the principal as a key communication link (Johnson & Crispeels, 2010).

Honig, Copland, Rainey, Lorton, and Newton (2010) found that in successfully transformed central offices executive level central office staff, no more than one or two levels below the superintendent, formed intense partnerships with principals to build their capacities as instructional leaders. Effective executive partners visited classrooms with principals to model what instructional elements to look for and how to ask questions regarding the teacher’s

objectives and pedagogical decisions, and to discuss what support, if any, the teacher might need. The executives used a gradual release approach to encourage the principal to become more independent in monitoring and supporting quality instruction. And, in a true partnership, the principal and executive were jointly accountable for gains in student achievement (Honig et al., 2010). This type of partnership strengthens relational linkages by building trust and resource linkages through professional development. Ideally, communication linkages would also be reinforced through two-way communication between the principal and executive partner.

Honig and colleagues (2010) also found that transformed central offices eliminated unnecessary tasks and brokered access to knowledge resources both within and outside of the district to help meet the schools' identified needs. The result is a menu of service options that were differentiated to meet the needs of each school (Honig 2013; McLaughlin & Talbert, 2003). A high performing elementary school might need only occasional coaching from a central office specialist to a few school-based teacher leaders in teaching math for conceptual understanding, for example, in order to refine instruction that is already generating positive results. A more intensive set of services provided to a struggling school might involve a central office specialist working with the principal and school-based teacher leader to co-conduct a series of workshops with classroom teachers on building conceptual math understanding through the use of manipulatives with guided lesson planning, follow-up walk-throughs, and reporting on the prevalence of manipulatives. Tailoring services to customer needs might be reinforced with a performance management system that gathers customer feedback and performance data to inform central office decisions (Honig, 2013). By realigning the work of central office departments to support teaching and learning, evaluating staff performance becomes not a question of "what did you do this year?" but rather, "what impact did you have?" Using evidence in this way to improve services is one element of the central office operating as a

learning organization. The other important element is assistance relationships with school staff to support improved teaching and learning. Like the executive partnerships, these reinforce relational, resource, and communication linkages between the central office and schools.

Assistance Relationships

Drawing on ideas from sociocultural theory, Honig (2008) delineated how central office staff members can form partnerships with schools to build instructional capacity. These assistance relationships are formed when

participants more expert at particular practices model those practices and create valued identity structures, social opportunities, and tools that reinforce those models for more novice participants. In these relationships, certain participants engage in boundary-spanning activities and focus the relationships on particular forms of joint work. (Honig, 2008, p. 634)

Honig cast central office staff in the expert roles and school-based staff in novice roles, recognizing, however, that many central office administrators might not have the skills and experiences necessary to operate in an expert capacity in assistance relationships. Embedded in the definition of assistance relationships above are six distinct elements.

Modeling

In assistance relationships expert participants help build capacity by modeling the practices in which novice participants are expected to engage (Brown & Campione, 1994; Honig, 2008; Honig et al., 2010; Tharp & Gallimore, 1991). When central office specialists partner with school-based leaders, they are often called upon to contribute to the learning of school-based

staff by modeling processes such as norm-setting within teacher teams, analysis of student learning data, or the identification of high-yield instructional practices. A critical aspect of this modeling is to make thinking visible by engaging in dialogue so the participants understand not only what to do and how to do it, but also why it is done (Collins, Brown, & Holum, 2003). In the most powerful partnerships, the modeling is reciprocal, and thus, the thinking and action of both central office and school staff are transformed (Wenger, 1998). School staff learns from the modeling of central office experts, while central office staff learn from dialogue with school staff.

Peripheral Participation

Districts working toward school improvement often rank schools by student achievement levels, categorizing them as high, medium, and low performing. Furthermore, such achievement rankings may result in rewards or sanctions: High performing schools might receive awards, while the principals of low performing schools might be in danger of losing their jobs. Such labeling of schools as low performing can become a self-fulfilling prophecy by reducing staff morale (March, 1994; Mintrop, 2003; O'Day, 2002). Central offices acting as learning communities, however, treat schools not as low performers, but rather as novice performers (Lave & Wenger, 1991). This distinction is not inconsequential. A low performing school, and by extension its leaders and staffs, may be viewed as failing, whereas a novice school may be viewed as being on a trajectory toward higher quality teaching and learning (Lave & Wenger, 1991). In assistance relationships, central office leaders and specialists treat principals and staffs in novice schools as valued partners who are capable of strengthening their performances over time and with appropriate support (Honig 2008). This is referred to as “legitimizing peripheral participation” (Lave & Wenger 1991, p. 47)—helping learners improve their practice by viewing

them as valuable members of professional communities, regardless of their level of knowledge or skill, and as on a trajectory toward improving their performance (Lave & Wenger 1991).

Social Engagement

As noted by Vygotsky (1978) and other researchers and theorists (Argyris & Schön, 1996; Lave & Wenger, 1991), individuals construct meaning through social interactions and dialogue. Central offices that are effective in partnering with school leaders and staffs by forming assistance relationships for improved practice include intentional structures for facilitating the social construction of knowledge around teaching and learning (Honig, 2008). Learning walks are one type of structure; giving central office and school staff opportunities to observe teaching and learning first-hand, gather data related to an identified problem of practice, and then share observations about what took place and what further support might be warranted (Honig, 2008; Hubbard, Meehan, & Stein, 2006). Another example of social engagement might be a facilitated analysis of student learning data to identify trends, draw conclusions, and develop action plans. Maintaining a high level of social engagement among the school improvement team is an important function of the central office staff.

Tools

Another service central office staff can provide, and another aspect of assistance relationships, is the development of tools to translate policies into practice and to guide the thinking and practice of school staff members around teaching and learning (Burch & Spillane, 2004; Honig, 2008; Honig et al., 2010). These tools can take a variety of forms. Some, such as teaching and learning frameworks, are conceptual tools that frame how people think (Grossman, Smagorinsky, & Valencia, 1999; Honig, 2008). Others, including Learning Walk tools, or data

analysis protocols, are practical and tangible tools that guide the participation of school-based staff (Burch & Spillane, 2004; Grossman et al., 1999). One element that these tools have in common is that they give structure and direction to the actions and dialogue that ultimately lead to improvements in practice.

Brokering and Boundary Spanning

Brokering occurs when participants in assistance relationships work between communities of practice to bring new learnings and understandings that enhance the participation of the communities (Honig, 2008; Wenger, 1998). Central office administrators act as brokers by giving schools access to the knowledge resources within and outside the organization that are needed to support school improvement (Burch & Spillane, 2004; Swinnerton, 2007). The purpose of brokering is not merely to build instructional capacity in schools; brokering also plays an important role in developing the capacity of the central office by helping district staff to learn from experiences in schools (Burch & Spillane, 2004). Central office administrators who “bring school people to the table to pool their expertise and then translate this collective expertise into strategies, guidelines, tools, and procedures are more likely to be successful in making district instructional reforms relevant to classroom practice” (Burch & Spillane, 2003, p. 3). Another aspect of brokering is boundary spanning (Honig 2008; Honig et al., 2010), in which an instructional specialist, for example, plays a dual role with responsibilities in the central office and in schools. Or, a central office specialist may span boundaries by working with several different schools, thereby spreading knowledge of practices and facilitating learning from each other. By linking practices between schools and with the central office, these boundary spanners facilitate organizational learning and improve consistency and coherence across the system (Burch & Spillane, 2004; Swinnerton, 2007). The most effective boundary

spanners do not simply pass information from one part of the organization to another; they translate the information into useable forms that recipients are likely to put to use (Aldrich & Herker 1977; Cobb & Bowers, 1999; Dollinger, 1984; Tushman, 1977; Tushman & Katz, 1980). Doing so requires that the boundary spanners be viewed as a trusted resource with a high degree of legitimacy (Honig, 2008; Wenger, 1998).

Joint Work

Participants in assistance relationships within districts with reformed central offices engage in joint work: reciprocal participation in work that both central office and school staff find meaningful and valuable (Honig, 2008). In contrast to the top-down manner in which some central offices offer support to schools needing improvement, joint work enhances the learning of all participants as they co-construct meaning around problems of practice, gather and analyze evidence, and develop potential solutions. Little (1990) described joint work as the strongest form of professional collaboration on a continuum that also includes scanning and storytelling, help and assistance, and sharing. While the three weaker forms of collaboration might be prerequisites, joint work is ultimately what leads to improvement as teachers plan, inquire, and explore challenging questions about practice together (Fullan & Hargreaves, 2012).

Collective Learning

The six elements of assistance relationships outline *what* central office staff members can do to operate as learning organizations while forming effective partnerships with school-based staff to improve instruction and student achievement. *How* central office staff members pursue those actions is equally important. Burch and Spillane (2004) found that to be viewed by school leaders as valuable partners in improving teaching and learning, district staff need to: engage

staff in two-way dialogues about teaching and learning; seek out opportunities to listen to principals and teachers and understand their needs; leverage the expertise and experience of school staff, not just central office specialists, regarding reforms; and be knowledgeable about teaching and learning. Doing so leads to both organizational learning and individual learning.

Gallucci (2008) explored how individual and collective learning took place in a case study of changing practice in a transforming school district. Applying the concept of the Vygotsky Space developed by Harré (1984) and Gavelek and Raphael (1996), Gallucci (2008) outlined four steps in the process of growing instructional capacity. First, the teacher appropriates new ways of thinking through her interaction with others. Next, the teacher transforms that thinking and takes ownership of it as she applies it in the context of her own work. After that, the teacher shares her new learning by talking with colleagues or through action. Finally, through those public acts, the new behaviors become incorporated into the practice of the individual, the work of others, or both. This four-step framework suggests,

learning is a social process, that individuals can take up new ideas through participation in public activities, transform those ideas in the context of their own practice, and demonstrate their learning through public talk or action... and thus demonstrates the Vygotskian notion that individual development and cultural change processes are entwined. (Gallucci, 2008, p. 569)

As described, assistance relationships form the conceptual framework that is the basis of this study of central office transformation as a lever for school improvement. In order to identify issues involved in organization design or redesign, literature regarding the four frame organizational theory was reviewed and applied to this study.

Four Frame Organizational Theory

Transforming any organization is challenging, as organizations are complex living ecosystems with an ever-changing environment. Bolman, an organizational theory scholar, and Deal, an education leadership scholar, developed the four frame theory, a model by which to better understand organizations, their functions and the leadership which exists within. Rooted in theoretical literature and research on organizational theory and leadership, the four-frame theory includes a framework to diagnosis and analyze organizational needs and to identify challenges that may be present. Bolman and Deal (2008) espoused the idea that *reframing* or using a *multi-frame* approach assists leaders in seeing the organization through different lenses, therefore allowing leaders to better analyze organizational functions and make the most informed decision and, in turn, will result in more empowered leadership and increased organizational functionality and productivity. Each of the four frames provides a distinctly different perspective or lens in the reframing process and has both strengths and challenges when appropriately or inappropriately applied. Bolman and Deal (2008) explained that a frame “is a mental model a set of ideas and assumptions that help you understand and negotiate a particular territory” (p. 11). Framing is the use of “matching mental maps to circumstances” (p. 12). The four frames are: the structural, human resource, political, and symbolic frames. Three of the four will be reviewed in the following section. While the symbolic frame is relevant to organizational theory, the emphasis on the structural, political, and human resource frames, and the implications of those frames, are much more relevant to the current study as roles and responsibilities, purpose and clarity regarding process, capacity building and the use of power are prominent throughout district reform efforts.

The Structural Frame

The structural frame is built on the premise that clearly articulated goals, well-defined, roles and responsibilities in an expressed hierarchy, with coordinated and efficient effort, are critically important to the success of an organization (Bolman & Deal, 2008). When structural foundations are absent in an organization or do not align with organizational goals, troubles and confusion often arise (Bolman & Deal, 2008). Structural theorists believe that structure influences the behavior of an organization and that through careful delineation of roles and responsibilities the ability of an organization to achieve its goals increases. This thinking emerged most evidently from the early work of Frederick Taylor on scientific management.

Frederick Taylor (1911) and his theory of scientific management were prominent during the industrial revolution. Scientific management, used with industrial workers, was built on the premise of task breakdown, delegating a certain amount of time for each motion of the task, therefore increasing efficiency and creating maximum output, resulting in increased profit. Designing the work environment to perform at a maximum level of efficiency emphasized an assembly line approach to mass production. While scientific management increased the level of efficiency and production, additional theorists enhanced and expanded upon Taylor's theory by targeting three areas: job specialization, focused on the function of jobs; span of control, focused on the number of subordinates reporting; and authority and delegation of responsibility, focused on managerial accountability (Fayol, 1949; Gulick & Urwick, 1937). Max Weber delved further into organizational structure by unpacking the bureaucracy that existed in organizations.

Max Weber (1947), a contributor to the thinking on organizational structure, defined a "monocratic bureaucracy" as an ideal, rationale alternative to the patriarchal organizations that had been the norm. Fixed divisions of labor, as related to the allocation of work, performance standards articulated as rules, a hierarchy of offices, and defined qualifications of workers were

components of Weber's bureaucratic model (Bolman & Deal, 2008). Weber also explored the relationship between the technical skill of workers, the level of productivity, and the enforcement of rules based on authority and positional power. Further research that contributed to the bureaucratic model examined the effects of structure on productivity, relationships, morale, and rationale for organizational structures (Blau & Scott, 1962; Hall, 1963; Lawrence & Lorsch, 1967; Perrow, 1986; Thompson, 1967). Emerging from the work of Weber and other theorists and analysts, Mintzberg (1979) and Helgeson (1995) considered the rationale for organizational structures and investigated the configuration of workers in an effort to maximize productivity and communication, recognizing that the grouping of people in an organization might vary based on the organizations' needs.

Mintzberg's (1979) key contribution was the examination of the grouping of people within an organization. He suggested that organizations consider classifying workers by knowledge or skill, by time and shift, by product, by customers, by geography, or by process. From these grouping consideration emerged Mintzberg's Five Models, each model emphasizing a different structural configuration based on the organization's needs. Mintzberg defined organizational structure as "the sum total of the ways in which it divides its labor into distinct tasks and then achieves coordination among them" (Mintzberg, 1979, p. 2). The structural configuration of each of these five varies in image, but responds to the mission of the organization and the challenges that may be present. Configurations include the simple structure, the machine bureaucracy, the professional bureaucracy, the divisionalized form, and adhocracy. Taking Mintzberg's traditional approach to organizational configuration a step further, Helgeson (1995) observed the actions of women during work and developed the web of inclusion as an alternate configuration.

The *web of inclusion*, constructed by Sally Helgeson (1995), is a blueprint that is more circular and interactive than hierarchical in nature; building from the center out rather than from the top down, and is therefore more progressive in its configuration. Helgeson believed that teamwork is what builds an inclusive structure and that staff voice and vision played a strong role in this configuration. She noted that “women tended to put themselves at the center of their organizations rather than the top thus emphasizing both accessibility and equality, and that they labored constantly to include people in their decision making” (Helgeson, 1995, p. 10).

As equally important as the structure of an organization is the collection of employees operating as a team. The most successful teams are those that have the ability to reconfigure based on the need of the organization and their ultimate goals. The key ingredient of a top-notch team is an appropriate blueprint of roles and relationships set in motion to attain common goals (Bolman & Deal, 2008). Keidel (1984) affirmed this assertion by positing that structural profiles of successful teams at work depend on what a team is trying to accomplish. Furthermore, a focused, cohesive structure is a fundamental underpinning for high performing teams. Katzenbach and Smith’s (1993) research highlighted six distinguishing characteristics of high quality teams. High functioning teams shape purpose in response to a demand; translate common purpose into specific, measurable, performance goals; are of manageable size; develop the right mix of expertise; develop a common commitment to working relationships; and hold themselves collectively accountable (Katzenbach & Smith, 1993). Cohen and Ledford (1994), Emery and Fredendall (2002), and Wellins and colleagues (1990) captured evidence to reinforce Katzenbach and Smith’s (1993) research, affirming that high quality teams produce higher results and have higher morale. This assertion reinforces Helgeson’s (1995) web of inclusion, wherein individuals working in a network configuration have a stronger voice than groups

operating under more traditional, top down management structures that resemble Mintzberg's five (1979).

The Human Resource Frame

The human resource frame is rooted in the relationship between people and organizations, as touted by Bolman and Deal (2008), "organizations need people for their talent, energy and effort and people need organizations" (p. 137). This frame was built on the idea that when individual needs are taken care of and valued, the organization will be successful. The human resource frame is characterized by four tenets: (a) organizations exist to serve human needs, rather than humans exist to serve the organization's needs; (b) people and organizations need each other—organizations need ideas, talent, and energy, and people need jobs, salaries, and opportunities; (c) when the fit between the individual and the organization is poor, both suffer and become victims, whereas a good fit benefits both; and (d) when individuals find meaning and contentedness in their work, organizations succeed and progress (Bolman & Deal, 2008). Pioneering the work of the human resource frame and creating the foundation for the core assumptions in which the frame is rooted are theorists Mary Parker Follett (1918) and Elton Mayo (1933, 1945), who believed that workers in organizations should be valued and that employees' attitudes, levels of commitment, energy, and skills make an organization succeed or fail.

Abraham Maslow (1954) was the first to explore and establish a theoretical framework based on human needs: Maslow's hierarchy of needs. He posited that the needs of individuals are hierarchical in nature and that the lowest level of human need must be satisfied in order to elevate to the next stage of development. This widely accepted theory has prompted a great deal

management research and theorizing. Over the years several theorists have posited similar theories and made attempts to reinforce Maslow's hierarchical framework, often with mixed outcomes (Alderfer, 1972; Latham & Pinder, 2005; Lawler & Suttle, 1972; Schneider & Alderfer, 1973; Wahba & Bridwell, 1976; Waterman, 1994). However, Maslow's theory is still valued and applied to managerial practice and leadership in an effort to more fully understand employee needs.

Douglas McGregor (1960) established theory X and theory Y; expanding on the notion of a connection between a manager's assumptions about employees and the ways the employees viewed themselves. McGregor (as cited in Bolman & Deal, 2008) asserted that assumptions about people tend to become self-fulfilling prophecies, and "argued that most managers harbor 'Theory X' assumptions, believing that subordinates are passive and lazy..." (p. 125). These managers further believe that employees need to be controlled and enjoy being directed. McGregor (as cited in Bolman & Deal, 2008) theorized that that if managers approach their employees in such a manner, it will become a self-fulfilling prophecy manifesting those behaviors in the workplace. In contrast, Maslow's work built on McGregor's theory Y; the belief that humans are productive and creative and, when provided the right environment, will strive to seek responsibility and contribute to the life of the organization. "The essential task of management is to arrange conditions so that people can achieve their own goals best by directing efforts toward organizational rewards" (McGregor, 1960, p. 61).

Chris Argyris (1957, 1964), consistent with that theory, observed that individuals have self-actualization trends, and often there exist times when conflict arises between management and personality. This conflict is especially observable when the managerial approach is based on McGregor's theory X, a traditional perspective on people and their value to organizations

(Bolman & Deal, 2008). Furthermore, others (Cascio & Boudreau, 2008; Lawler, 1996; Lawler & Worley, 2006; Pfeffer, 1994, 1998, 2007; Waterman, 1994) have agreed that recognizing the needs of employees and investing in them creates a more productive, empowered, and skilled workforce. This empowerment and investment is strategic, yielding an advantage when attempting to reach organizational goals and objectives (Bolman & Deal, 2008). Echoing and reinforcing the importance of employee motivation and investment in the workplace were the research contributions of Rensis Likert (1961). The analysis derived from the data extracted from a survey tool illustrated that “employee centered supervisors who focused more on people and relationships typically managed higher producing units than job centered supervisors who ignored human issues, made decisions themselves, and dictated to subordinates” (Bolman & Deal, 2008, p. 163).

When examined closely, successful organizations not only reinforce McGregor’s theory Y approach to management, but also have clearly articulated human resource strategies. Most human resource strategies have common themes. These themes include: investing in employees, empowering employees, creating a democratic workplace, and fostering self-managing teams (Bolman & Deal, 2008). Robert Owen, a progressive manager for his time, was one of the first capitalists to apply the human resource strategy of investing in employees. During a time period when working conditions were generally abhorrent, Owen provided workers clean living conditions and an education, and he stopped the corporal punishment of his employees. Despite the resistance he received from other capitalists in the late 1700s, Owen understood and demonstrated that investing in employees through education yielded a more skilled and positive workforce, which resulted in an increase in organizational productivity and effectiveness. This same strategy has been proven effective countless times in more recent research (Applebaum,

Bailey, Berg, & Kalleberg, 2000; Cascio & Boudreau, 2008; Collins & Porras, 1994; Deal & Jenkins, 1994; Farkas & De Backer, 1996; Kotter & Heskett, 1992; Lawler, 1996; Lawler & Worley, 2006; Levering & Moskowitz, 1993; Pfeffer, 1994, 1998, 2007; Waterman, 1994).

Empowerment of employees is a byproduct of investing in them, and it yields high productivity, an increase in morale, and quality results (Applebaum, Bailey, Berg, & Kalleberg, 2000). According to Bolman and Deal (2008) and supported by additional research (Hackman, Oldham, Janson & Purdy, 1987; Herzberg, 1966; Ledford, 1993; Pfeffer, 1998; Rice, 1953; Trist & Bamforth, 1951) redesigning work and fostering self-managing teams amidst other elements are central components of employee empowerment. Hackman and colleagues (1987) built on Herzberg (1966) and identified critical factors for empowerment through job redesign. They shared that employees must see their work as meaningful and worthwhile, must have the ability to use discretion and judgment so they can feel personally accountable for results, and must receive feedback about their efforts so they can improve. In that same vein, and in direct alignment with Helgeson (1995), Katzenbach and Smith (1993) and Likert (1961) found that interconnected teams--high functioning teams that are connected to and learn from one another (Pfeffer, 1998)—are highly productive. They work collectively toward a common goal with shared responsibility and accountability.

The Political Frame

Organizations that are viewed through the lens of the political frame are often compared metaphorically to jungles (Bolman & Deal, 2008). There are five basic assumptions about organizations when viewed through the political frame: (a) organizations are coalitions composed of a variety of interest groups and individuals; (b) all coalition members have

enduring differences; (c) the competition of scarce resources exist; (d) conflict for those resources and generated by enduring differences is inevitable; and (e) coalition members engage in negotiations generated by interest in order to attain established goals or acquire resources (e.g., Bolman & Deal, 2008; Cyert & March, 1963; Pfeffer, 1994).

Conflict is a natural occurrence in organizations where there is an inherent struggle for scarce resources. In the political frame, however, conflict is not viewed as negative. In fact, it is viewed as common, nearly unavoidable, and more beneficial than a hindrance; often helping to create solutions through innovation (Bolman & Deal, 2008; Pfeffer, 1994). Conflict generally presents itself when separate groups or coalitions, each possessing a different position based on competing values and beliefs, must come together. Kotter (1985) contended that harnessing the energy of conflict can actually help to propel innovation and creativity, allow an organization to become more effective, and make an organization and the people within it come alive. Knowing how to handle conflict and manage it to advance the organization is critically important.

Within every organization exist authorities and partisans that affect the political and social landscape of the organization (Gamson, 1968). Authorities and partisans play different roles and offer different political power. Authorities have positional power, exert top-down pressure, and influence subordinates through decision making power, whereas partisans influence and initiate by employing bottom-up pressure. “Authorities are the recipients or targets of influence and the agents or initiators of social control. Potential partisans have the opposite roles—as agents or initiators of influence, and targets or recipients of social control” (Gamson, 1968, p. 76).

Additionally, the focus of the political frame is not on resolution of conflict, but on strategy and tactics, often through the use of power. “Power in organizations is basically the

capacity to make things happen” according to Bolman and Deal (2008, p. 196); and Pfeffer (1992) defined power as “the potential ability to influence behavior, to change the course of events to overcome resistance, and to get people to do things they would not otherwise do” (p. 30). In other words, it is the ability to select and mobilize different sources and types of power. In much of organizational life, individuals and groups are interdependent: They need things from one another and power relationships are multidirectional. From the view of the political frame, power is a “daily mechanism of our social existence” (Crozier & Friedberg, 1977, p. 32).

In the political frame, power is viewed in multiple ways and is much more than authoritarian (Bolman & Deal, 2008). Power produces reality (Foucault, 1977) and, in fact, power "reaches into the very grain of individuals, touches their bodies and inserts itself into their actions and attitudes, their discourses, learning processes and everyday lives" (Foucault 1980, p. 30). Moreover, although not widely exposed as a source of power, knowledge is a substantial base for power as it is reciprocal in nature: knowledge is power, but knowledge can also be gained from power through observation, and, as a result, new knowledge is produced and therefore more power.

Knowledge linked to power not only assumes the authority of “the truth” but has the power to make itself true. All knowledge, once applied in the real world, has effects, and in that sense at least, “becomes true.” Knowledge, once used to regulate the conduct of others, entails constraint, regulation and the disciplining of practice. Thus, there is no power relation without the correlative constitution of a field of knowledge, nor any knowledge that does not presuppose and constitute at the same time, power relations. (Foucault, 1977, p. 27)

Several other social scientists, such as Baldrige (1971), French and Raven (1959), Kanter (1977), Pfeffer (1981, 1992), and Russ (1994) identified additional sources of power that are often observed and utilized in organizations. French and Raven (1959) investigated the importance of power in their research, recognizing that those who are not in positions of authority still have multiple sources of power. These are legitimate power, reward power, coercive power, expert power, and referent power. Table 1 provides a summary of the various sources of power within organizations as described by the aforementioned theorists and researchers.

Table 1

Sources of Power Observed in Use in Organizational Life

Type or Source of Power	Definition	Supporting Researcher or Theorist
Position Power/Legitimate (Authority)	positions confer certain levels of legitimate authority	Pfeffer, 1992 French & Raven, 1959
Reward	the ability to deliver jobs, money, political support, or other rewards brings power	Mihalopoulos & Kimberly, 2006 Rubin, 2007 French & Raven, 1959
Coercive	the ability to constrain, block, interfere, or punish	French & Raven, 1959
Information and Expertise	power flows to those with the information and know-how to solve important problems	French & Raven, 1959
Reputation	opportunities and influence flow to	Bolman & Deal, 2008

	people with strong reputations; track records based on prior accomplishments	
Referent	individuals who are attractive and socially adept	French & Raven, 1959
Knowledge	Knowledge linked to power, not only assumes the authority of 'the truth' but has the power to make itself true. All knowledge, once applied in the real world, has effects, and in that sense at least, 'becomes true.'	Foucault, 1977
Alliances and Networks	found that a key difference between more or less successful managers was attentiveness to building and cultivating ties with friends and allies	Kotter, 1982
Access and Control of Agendas	a by-product of networks and alliances is access to decision arenas	Lukes, 1974 Brown, 1986
Framing	control of meaning and symbols; elites and opinion leaders often have substantial ability to shape meaning and articulate myths that express identity, beliefs and values	Pfeffer, 1992

When viewed through the political frame, power and conflict are important to the strategic and tactical control of an organization, adding value in negotiating and bargaining to effect change, make a decision, or move an agenda forward (Bolman & Deal 2008). Several researchers in this area contended that in order to reach any decision, negotiating and bargaining play a role, yet the question often raised is what tactic and strategy will best yield the results needed to make a decision or a change. Both Axelrod (1980) and Lax and Sebenius (1986) contended that win-win situations are possible through the creation of a collaborative process with conditional openness, while creating value during this process (Fisher & Ury, 1981). Both believed that through the collaborative process, individuals feel more valued and thus decisions are arrived at more quickly. Building on the idea of value, collaboration, and a more positive approach, Block (1987) and Burns (1978) suggested that the more individuals understand and are empowered the better the results. "If leaders are to be effective in helping to mobilize and elevate their constituencies, leaders must be whole persons, persons with full functioning

capabilities for thinking and feeling...to extend awareness of human needs and the means of gratifying them” (Burns, 1978, p. 448-449). To promote the understanding and empowerment of individuals in the interest of the organization, effective leaders develop professional capital: the talents, social networks, and decision-making capacity of the workforce.

Professional Capital

Teaching has traditionally been viewed as an individual endeavor that takes place in individual classrooms with outcomes determined largely by each teacher’s qualifications and efforts (Warren, 1975). However, at least 40% of teachers in the US are “disheartened” with their job (Yarrow, 2009), and 50% leave the teaching profession after only 3 to 5 years (Smith & Ingersoll, 2004). In contrast, top performing educational systems, as measured by the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development’s (OECD’s) PISA tests of student achievement, view teaching not as an individual effort but as a nation-building process. These systems, including Finland, Singapore, and Canada, attract more of their best and brightest college graduates into teaching, provide better working conditions, and invest more time and money in continuing learning opportunities on the job (Barber & Mourshed, 2007; Hargreaves & Fullan, 2012). In essence, the top-performing systems invest in *professional capital*, which is defined as the product and integration of human capital (an individual’s cumulative skills and knowledge), social capital (interpersonal relationships and access to resources through those relationships), and decisional capital (ability to use judgment to make decisions) (Fullan & Hargreaves, 2012). In these systems, “professional capital is being generated, circulated, and reinvested all the time because it is endemic to the culture and profession and is embedded in the daily work of teachers” (Hargreaves & Fullan, 2012, p. 87). Investing in professional capital involves intentionally and systematically developing human capital, social capital, and decisional

capital, and integrating them for continuously improving and sustained performance. In order to better understand the theory and application of professional capital, each of the three component theories will be expanded upon, followed by brief descriptions of the supporting elements of trust and collaborative culture.

Human Capital

Adam Smith reportedly was the first to recognize human capital--defined as the cumulative knowledge and talents of individuals acquired through study or experience--as a valuable asset to the individual, the employer, and the society to which he belongs (Smith, 1776). In this view, providing training and education to develop new skills is a capital investment that brings an economic return. Since the 1960s, human capital has been widely accepted as an asset of organizations and as a driver of individual, team, and organizational performance (Argote, 1999; Becker, 1964; Coff, 1999; Wellman & Frank, 2001). "Human capital is created by changes in persons that bring about skills and capabilities that enable them to act in new ways" (Coleman, 1988, p. S100). Human capital offers direct benefits in the form of greater productivity, but also leads to accelerated improvement as the most knowledgeable workers find it easier to develop even more knowledge (Becker, 1964; Wright, Dunford, & Snell, 2001). Not all knowledge and experience are equally valuable, however. Human capital in the form of task-specific knowledge or gained through applicable on-the job-experience has a greater value and impact on performance than general knowledge of the organization or level of education (Gibbons & Waldman, 2004; Levinthal & Fichman, 1988). Human capital as a knowledge asset can be held by individual employees or collectively by work groups. Evidence suggests that collective knowledge not only enhances team performance, but also benefits individual members

of high-performing teams (Argote, 1999; Coff, 1999; Day et al., 2005; Faraj & Sproull, 2000; Moreland, Argote, & Krishnan, 1996; Smith, Collins, & Clark, 2005; Wellman & Frank, 2001).

When applied to teaching, human capital refers to the talent of individual teachers: their knowledge of content and pedagogy, their emotional capacity to work with children, their commitment to helping all students learn, and their dedication to continuously improving their practice (Fullan & Hargreaves, 2012). Teachers increase their human capital and competency in the classroom through both formal education and on-the-job experience (Becker, 1964; McLaughlin & Talbert, 2001; Nonaka, 1994). While pedagogical content knowledge is developed primarily through formal study, situated learner-focused knowledge is more typically developed through reflective classroom practice (Grimmet & MacKinnon, 1992; Shulman, 1987). Assumptions that increasing investments in human capital will drive improved performance have led to reform efforts focused on improving individual teacher quality, for example, by requiring teacher candidates to pass content knowledge tests, by providing increased professional development, by revamping teacher training programs, and by rewarding individual teachers for students' performances on standardized tests (Finn, 2002; Hill, Campbell & Harvey, 2000; Ravitch, 2000; Schneider & Keesler, 2007). However, in a study of more than 1,000 teachers in 138 schools, Leana (2011) found that although human capital does contribute to positive student achievement outcomes, social capital contributes even more.

Social Capital

The Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (2001) defined social capital as “networks together with shared norms, values and understandings that facilitate cooperation within and among groups” (p. 42). Social capital can be a difficult concept to

define. Although the body of literature is substantial, theorists represent four very different perspectives: anthropological (social interaction as a natural human instinct), sociological (the development and influence of social norms), economic (human motivations for investing time in social interaction), and political (role of institutions and social norms in shaping behavior).

The term *social capital* was first defined by Hanifan (1916) as “those tangible assets that count for most in the daily lives of people: namely goodwill, fellowship, sympathy, and social intercourse among the individuals and families who make up a social unit” (p. 130). Loury (1977) recognized that social capital, as an asset that produces economic gain, is unequally distributed across socioeconomic classes: “The social context within which individual maturation occurs strongly conditions what otherwise equally competent individuals can achieve. This implies that absolute equality of opportunity...is an ideal that cannot be achieved” (p. 176). Bourdieu (1986) focused on motives for establishing interpersonal relationships and saw social networks as driven solely by the pursuit of economic gain, asserting, “the profits which accrue from memberships in a group are the basis of the solidarity which makes them possible” (Bourdieu, 1986, p. 249). For Coleman (1988), social capital was productive in that social bonds are formed with a clear purpose in achieving some objective that would be difficult to achieve independently. Coleman also defined the concept of closure, wherein dense ties between individuals in a social network lead to strong group norms of reciprocity and trust, thereby increasing social capital (Coleman, 1988). Like Coleman, Putnam (1993, 1996) identified trust and interpersonal bonding as key elements of social capital, but applied the concept to populations in the aggregate rather than to work groups.

The creation of social capital occurs through changes in relationships among individuals (Baker, 1990; Coleman, 1988). These relationships or social ties may be horizontal--with

coworkers in similar jobs or at a similar level--or vertical, between individuals at different hierarchical levels. The strength of these ties can be described by the number and frequency of an individual's interactions with others that affect his or her access to useful resources, such as knowledge, information, influence, and opportunity Hargreaves & Fullan, 2012; (Leana, 2011; Pil & Leana, 2009).

Social capital in education can be either internal or external. Internal social capital encompasses horizontal social ties between teachers and vertical ties between teachers and administrators. There is ample and growing evidence that horizontal relationships among teachers, and the collaboration and trust that result from those relationships, are strong predictors of student achievement (Bryk & Schneider, 2002; Leana & Pil, 2006). In addition, grade level teams can have horizontal social ties with other teams, as well as vertical ties with administrators, with horizontal ties having the most positive effect on student achievement (Pil & Leana, 2009). Nahapiet and Ghoshal (1998) identified three aspects of internal social capital: structural (interactions with others), cognitive (shared language and knowledge), and relational (trusting relations), and they described how the interactions of these aspects created new intellectual capital or collective knowledge. In schools, each of these aspects plays a role in improving the quality of instruction and increasing student achievement (Leana & Pil, 2006).

External social capital includes the relationships that individual teachers and teams have with more knowledgeable others external to the school community, such as central office specialists or outside consultants. Leana (2011) found that the most effective principals were those who focused on developing internal and external social capital, focused on teamwork among teachers, and gave them access to the resources they needed to enhance teaching and learning. By fostering a culture of collaboration, principals enable their teams to "accumulate

and circulate knowledge and ideas, as well as assistance and support, that help teachers become more effective, increase their confidence, and encourage them to be more open to and actively engaged in improvement and change” (Hargreaves & Fullan, 2012, p. 114).

Social Capital and Human Capital

School reform measures in the US have historically focused far more on developing teachers’ human capital than their social capital. Policymakers and strategists often overlook the fact that social capital and human capital co-evolve (Pil & Leana, 2009). Breaking away from the traditional view of teaching as an individual activity, more and more schools are encouraging teachers to work together to share ideas and knowledge to improve teaching practices, as well as providing common planning time and professional development in a team setting. This has resulted in increased student achievement (Bryk & Schneider, 2002; McLaughlin & Talbert, 2001; Smylie & Hart, 1999). Research supports this new approach of developing human capital through social capital: “...educational scholars are changing their normative models about best practices regarding how schools should be organized and how the work of teaching should be performed” (Leana & Pil, 2006).

In fact, the degree and value of exchanges among teachers are major factors in improving school performance (Bryk & Schneider, 2002; Hargreaves, 2003; McLaughlin & Talbert, 2001; Spillane et al., 2001). Thus, increasing social capital actually increases human capital by fostering teacher relationships and networks that give teachers access to others’ knowledge and abilities: Capital has to be circulated and shared. “Groups, teams, and communities are far more powerful than individuals when it comes to developing human capital” (Hargreaves & Fullan, 2012, p. 3). Furthermore, it is becoming clear that of the two forms of capital, social capital is

the better lever for school improvement. Leana (2011) found that teachers with high social capital yet low human capital produced greater gains in student achievement than teachers with low social capital and high human capital. Therefore, while having both high levels of human capital and social capital is ideal, social capital has a greater impact on student achievement than human capital and contributes to greater human capital in the long term.

Decisional Capital

Decisional capital, or the ability to make decisions in ambiguous situations where there is not a clear precedent for action, is foundational to the judicial system via case law and the medical profession through the use of medical rounds (Hargreaves & Fullan, 2012). However, decisional capital is still emerging in the field of education. Borrowing practices from law and medicine, educators might participate in learning walks or instructional rounds (City, Elmore, Fiarman & Teitel, 2009) to develop decisional capital. Through observation, reflection, and discussion, participants hone their instructional practices and abilities to make professional judgments. Hargreaves and Fullan (2012) defined decisional capital as,

the capital that professionals acquire and accumulate through structured and unstructured experience, practice, and reflection—capital that enables them to make wise judgments in circumstances where there is no fixed rule or piece of incontrovertible evidence to guide them. Decisional capital is enhanced by drawing on the insights and experiences of colleagues in forming judgments over many occasions. (pp. 93-94)

Reflection is a key element in the development of decisional capital: “while experience is the basis for learning, learning cannot take place without reflection” (Osterman & Kottkamp, 1993,

p. 3). Reflection involves thinking about one's experience to gain new insights with which to make changes to perceptions of oneself and one's practice (Boud, Keogh, & Walker, 1985; Boyd & Fales, 1983; Mezirow, 1981). Dewey (1933) was the first to see the importance of reflection as a particular form of thinking that arises in situations of uncertainty: when faced with unfamiliar circumstances, the practitioner formulates hypotheses and tests them out, resulting in learning by doing. He noted that "reflective thinking is closely related to critical thinking; it is the turning over of a subject in mind and giving it serious and consecutive consideration" (Dewey, 1933, p. 3). Furthermore, he considered individual reflection to be holistic, involving both the intellectual and emotional aspects of a person (as cited in Ruth-Sahd, 2003).

Reflective practice--which includes but is not synonymous with reflection--has been recognized by researchers and theorists as a critical aspect of building and improving practice (Boud, Keough, & Walker, 1985; Brookfield, 1987, 1995; Dewey, 1933; Habermas, 1970, 1971; King & Kitchener, 1994; Kolb, 1984; Langer, 1989, 1997; Larrivee, (2000); Mezirow, 1990; Schön, 1983, 1987; van Manen, 1977;). Extending Dewey's ideas, Schön (1983) made major contributions to contemporary thought about reflective practice in his seminal work, *The Reflective Practitioner*. In his view, "technical rationality," or the idea that decisions in professional practice can be based solely on scientific theory and evidence, is useful for problems of technical interest yet relative unimportance. The most important issues to society lie in the "swampy lowlands" and are unsolvable with technical solutions, requiring instead that practitioners depart from theory and apply their own intuition and reflective judgment (Schön, 1983, 1987, 1992). Schön defined two types of reflective practice: reflecting *in* action and reflecting *on* action. Reflecting in action refers to thinking in the moment about actions, and using ones' own experience to adjust practice as needed to accomplish one's objectives. Novice

practitioners have far less experience and knowledge to draw on so are more likely to stick to rules, procedures, and policies than are experts (Finlay, 2008). Through experience over time, practitioners develop the tacit knowledge, or “knowing-in-action”, on which to base decisions so that in-the-moment adjustments to practice become automatic and almost unconscious (Schön, 1983, 1992).

Reflecting on action, according to Schön (1983), takes place after the fact: The practitioner thinks back on his objectives, what he expected to happen, and what assumptions those expectations were based on, considers what actually happened, and what assumptions may have been inaccurate. The practitioner then plans adjustments to his practice for similar situations and may also make changes to his assumptions and theory of action. Hargreaves and Fullan (2012) asserted that the latter type of change is more likely to happen when reflecting with colleagues. Reflective practice is most successful as a collaborative dialogue (Habermas, 1970, 1971; Osterman & Kottkamp, 1993); enabling novice practitioners to find areas of consonance between their own practice and that of expert practitioners (Schön, 1987). This kind of collective reflection (social capital) builds knowledge (human capital) and the ability to make judgments (decisional capital). Finally, reflecting on action makes it easier and more natural to reflect in action. “Get the reflection *on* action right and it enables you to start reflecting *in* action more effectively too” (Hargreaves & Fullan, 2012, p. 98).

Several models, developed by other theorists, give structure to the reflective process (e.g., Boud et al., 1985; Gibbs, 1988; Johns, 1994; Kolb & Fry, 1975). Quinn (2000) asserted that all of these models have the following elements in common: retrospection, or thinking back on experience; self-evaluation, or analyzing one’s actions and feelings; and reorientation, planning changes to future practice. Integral to reflective practice are single loop and double loop

learning; developed by Argyris and Schön (1974, 1978). Single loop learning occurs when corrections to practice or procedures are made without addressing the causes of the problem, as underlying assumptions are never examined. Double loop learning is when the underlying assumptions are reexamined in response to problems that arise, and changes are made to both the espoused theories (what we believe we do) and theories in use (what we actually do). In their research, Argyris and Schön (1974, 1978) found great discrepancies between individuals' espoused theories and theories in use. The hope is that reflective practice in the form of double loop learning will surface and eliminate such discrepancies, improving alignment and increasing decisional capital.

Power and Reflection

It is likely that an individual's willingness to engage in reflective practice, particularly in collaborative dialogue with others, is a function of his or her perceptions of how power operates within the organization. Some researchers and theorists differentiate between reflective practice and critical reflection (Fook, 2010), which involves a more intense questioning of established presuppositions (Mezirow, 1991) and a focus on power (Brookfield, 1995). Power in organizations traditionally resides in hierarchical structure and social networks and in accepted ideologies, all of which must be recognized as inhibitors of reflective practice (Boud & Walker, 1998; Fook & Askeland, 2006; Foucault, 2001; Reynolds, 1998; Vince, 2001a, 2001b). Because problems must first be surfaced before finding solutions, reflective practice entails personal risk and vulnerability for the practitioner. Habermas (1971, 1984) pointed out that the practitioner's professional self-interest influences the topics that will be reflected upon in light of the power relations and degree of openness within the group. Truly open reflective practice will only take

place in an organization in which power is not wielded in a punitive manner (Finlay, 2008).

Administrators who exercise power over their teachers, or coercive power, will silence them and inhibit improvements in practice. In contrast, principals who engage in power with teachers spur the growth and creativity that results in improved teaching and learning (Blasé & Blasé, 2002; Follett, 1918). Power in the form of top-down directives also inhibits reflective practice.

Excessive prescription of instructional practices from above does not lead to improvement because it does not develop teachers' capacities to reflect on and create new practices themselves (Hargreaves & Fullan, 2012).

While hierarchical or positional power is easy to identify, a less obvious, though equally influential, source of power is the accepted ideology or theory of practice of the work group or organization. Fook (2010) noted that the assumptions that govern action within an organization can be socially restrictive, placing boundaries on possibilities under consideration when solving problems of practice. "Once individuals become aware of the hidden power of ideas they have absorbed unwittingly from their social contexts, they are then freed to make choices on their own terms" (Fook, 2010, p. 40). Interestingly, critical reflection to overcome the restrictive effects of the established order of things (Foucault, 2002) itself exerts power, since "if critique were not powerful, it could not bring about change" (Messner & Jordan, n.d., p. 7). Therefore, structures and procedures to encourage reflective practice as a means of increasing decisional capital must acknowledge these issues of power and establish a safe environment for teachers' experimentation and learning by doing. This can only be accomplished by developing a high degree of trust and a culture of collaboration.

Trust and Collaboration

Bryk and Schneider's (2002) seminal work, *Trust in Schools*, points to the critical importance of trust when implementing changes in practice. In fact, a culture of trust is directly linked to improvements in student achievement (Bryk & Schneider, 2002; Kochanek, 2005; Lein, Johnson & Ragland, 1997; Louis, 2007; Meier, 1995; 2002; Wolf, Borko, Elliott, & McIver, 2000). For example, in a study of 50 high poverty schools Lein, Johnson, and Ragland (1997) found a strong link between high performance among students and reported high levels of trust within the school. Improving achievement for all students, particularly in high poverty schools, is a difficult feat. To accomplish such a challenging objective, teachers need to both work interdependently and adopt new instructional practices. Trust is a necessary condition for the development of cooperative relationships (Baier, 1994; Goldring & Rallis, 1993; Louis, Kruse & Associates, 1995), and it provides the support teachers need to take on the risks inherent in changing practices and professional growth (Bryk & Schneider, 2002; Moolenaar, Karsten, Slegers, & Zijlstra, 2010). Trust allows the community comfort amidst disruption to routine, practices, and dialogue. Trust moves the school culture away from the lone individual operating for school improvement in isolation toward embracing the power of the collective.

So essential is trust that, if it is non-existent in a school culture, reform efforts stand little chance of succeeding: A lack of trust not only stifles positive momentum towards school improvement, but it can also erode progress that has already been made (Bryk & Schneider, 2002). In a statistical analyses of large numbers of schools, Tschannen-Moran (2001) found that when trust is lacking, it was difficult to get teachers to work together. "When teachers in a school do not trust one another, they are likely to be guarded in their interactions. Energy is diverted from common goals and channeled into self-protection. Collaboration deteriorates" (Tschannen-Moran, 2001, p. 316). In the absence of trust, stakeholders are likely to retreat into familiar and comforting patterns of the status quo and retain isolation as a mode of operation

(Baier, 1986; Kochanek, 2005). The hierarchical structures found in school systems make the cultivation of trust difficult because those at higher levels have the ability to control, reward, and punish those at lower levels (Tschannen-Moran, 2014), but those that cultivate trust benefit from increased innovation and adaptability (Mishra, 1996; Moolenaar & Slegers, 2010).

Trust has been defined as one's willingness to rely on and be vulnerable to another (Baier, 1994; Bigley & Pearce, 1998), and the confidence one has when undertaking the risk of relying on another's actions (Rousseau, Sitkin, Burt, & Camerer, 1998). Bryk and Schneider (2002) offered a comprehensive definition of relational trust as including respect, integrity, personal regard, and competency. Respect is displayed when individuals value the ideas and roles of others; integrity is demonstrated in the moral or ethical reasons behind an individual's actions; personal regard develops when individuals are viewed as going beyond what is required to work toward a common goal; and competence is the successful performance of the responsibilities of each stakeholder's given role (Bryk & Schneider, 2002). The omission of any of these four criteria can have a significant impact upon the development of trust in the community and culture and can erode any trust that had previously developed. After surveying the literature on trust, Tschannen-Moran and Hoy (1998) defined trust as involving five common elements: benevolence, honesty, openness, reliability, and competence. An individual displays benevolence by protecting one's well-being and doing no harm (Baier, 1994; Zand, 1997); honesty by being truthful and keeping one's word (Dasgupta, 1988), displaying consistency in words and deeds (Simons, 1999), and taking responsibility for one's actions (Tschannen-Moran, 2014); openness by sharing information and control over decisions (Bryk & Schneider, 2002; Handford & Leithwood, 2013); reliability by consistently doing his or her part and behaving predictably (Handford & Leithwood, 2013); and competence by doing one's job well (Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 1998).

Creating a culture of trust requires concerted effort by all members of the school community. Trust does not just occur naturally and spontaneously; rather, it “must be cultivated through speech, conversation, commitments, and action” (Solomon & Flores, 2001, p. 87). An empirical study of 86 middle schools found that school leaders contributed to the development of trust by establishing a professional climate, but it was ultimately the actions of teachers toward each other that built trust (Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 1998). One of the payoffs of high levels of trust is a collective feeling that teachers can make a difference, or efficacy (Tschannen-Moran, 2001, 2014). The collective sense of teacher efficacy within a school is linked to student achievement, even after accounting for student socioeconomic status (Bandura, 1993; Goddard, Tschannen-Moran, & Hoy, 2001; Tschannen-Moran & Barr, 2004).

Finally, in a study of the relationships between trust and collaboration, Tschannen-Moran (2001) found a significant link between the two. More specifically, the researcher found that trust and collaboration reinforced one another. The more individuals work together, the more likely they are to develop mutual trust and, as a result, the greater the trust between individuals the more likely they are to collaborate (Brewster & Railsback, 2003). With increased emphasis on developing professional capital through collaborative reflective practice and the elimination of the isolation that was the previous norm for school operations, it is imperative that the building culture become one in which trust is cultivated, nurtured, and sustained.

Just as the complexities of education make leadership more effective, efficient, and powerful when shared or distributed, the work of the stakeholders in a school are more effective in improving student achievement when there exists a culture of collaboration (DuFour, Eaker, & DuFour, 2006). As the demands of the profession have grown in scope and complexity, classroom teachers can no longer work effectively in isolation from their peers. Research indicates that it is increasingly clear that teachers cannot do the work alone, but benefit

significantly by working as a part of a cohesive, collaborative team (DuFour, DuFour, Eaker, & Many, 2006; Fullan, 2001; Pfeffer & Sutton, 2000). For example, in a study of 78 elementary schools, Rosenholtz (1991) found that in schools classified as *stuck* in terms of student achievement, teachers worked individually and independently, while teachers worked collaboratively in *moving* schools showing gains in achievement. “The single most important factor for successful school restructuring and the first order of business for those interested in increasing the capacity of their schools is building a collaborative internal environment” (Eastwood & Louis, 1992, p. 215).

Pfeffer and Sutton (2000) explained that innovation comes from the collective mind or joint action. Conversely, isolation is a barrier to innovation and improving student achievement. In isolation, teacher accountability is limited, leading to the possibility of lowered quality of instruction (Schmoker, 2006). Only when working in conjunction with teammates can dialogue occur to foster the growth and development of skills and strategies for increased efficacy as a teacher, team, and school. “If schools want to enhance their organizational capacity to boost student learning, they should work on building a professional community that is characterized by shared purpose, collaborative activity, and collective responsibility among school staff” (Newmann & Wehlage, 1995, p. 37). Creating a culture of collaboration is particularly important in high-poverty schools.

High-performing, high-poverty schools build deep teacher collaboration that focuses on student learning into the culture of the school. Structures and systems are set up to ensure teachers work together rather than in isolation, and the point of their collaboration is to improve instruction and ensure all students learn. (Chenoweth, 2009, p. 17)

Through collaboration, teachers acquire and circulate knowledge to improve both their confidence and their practice, thus creating the professional capital necessary for improvement and change (Hargreaves & Fullan, 2012).

While it is essential to the success of school reform that collaboration amongst teachers be fostered, reinforcement of the importance of collaboration is necessary at all levels in the system. Setting an expectation and climate conducive to collaboration is crucial at the district level (Anderson, 2003). In districts with truly collaborative cultures we find “...many strong and capable teachers working passionately together, under visionary leadership, so all of their students succeed. And not just in a few schools, but in all schools across the system” (Hargreaves & Fullan, 2012, p. 21). The role of the district in collaboration extends beyond merely supporting the work to actively engaging in the process. The Connecticut State Board of Education stated a strong position on the importance of district participation in collaboration, “District leaders must establish and support effective leadership structures that include all members of the school district team. The new leadership paradigm must move districts and schools toward becoming a collaborative learning community, focused on student learning” (as cited in Marzano & Waters, 2009, p. 72). It is clear, however, that while much research exists supporting the importance of collaboration within the schoolhouse, research addressing the modes and effects of collaboration between a school district central office and individual schools is still emerging.

Summary

This chapter began with a review of the sociopolitical drivers of increased accountability for schools and districts and then proceeded with a discussion of research on district and school reform efforts that have occurred in response to accountability measures. The chapter continued

with an introduction to the theoretical and conceptual frameworks that undergird this study and their relationship to one another. The chapter then provided an in-depth examination of the theoretical framework of sociocultural learning theory and the foundation for the conceptual framework of assistance relationships, a critical component of central office reform. Central office transformation was then discussed. Moreover, the chapter explored professional capital, and unpacked the critical components of social capital, human capital, and decisional capital as key levers in its creation, as an intended outcome of central office transformation. Finally, four frame organizational theory was explored as a construct to design and evaluate organization improvement initiatives. The chapter concluded by examining the potential impact of collaboration and trust on reform efforts.

Chapter III describes the methods by which these elements will be explored as related to the district support team process as a byproduct of central office transformation.

Chapter III

METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this study was to examine the described experiences of central office executives and specialists, elementary principals, and teacher-leaders as part of the District Support Team (DST) process. The District Support Team is the product of the Puget Sound School District's differentiated support service model; a manifestation of central office transformation (Honig, Lorton, & Copland, 2009). More specifically, this case study explored the prevalence of the elements of assistance relationships, the feelings of collaboration among participants regarding the process, and the participants' experiences of instructional and leadership capacity building. Finally, I identified the commonalities and differences in the described experiences related to the DST process that were described in the four participant groups.

This case study was guided by the following overarching research question: How do central office participants, elementary school principals and teacher participants describe their experiences as part of the District Support Team (DST) process, a manifestation of central office transformation, to improve student achievement? Specifically, this study sought to answer:

- Which elements of assistance relationships do participants identify as part of the DST process, as related to: modeling, peripheral participation, social engagement, tools, brokering/boundary spanning, and joint work?
- How do participants describe the collaborative process of the DST in working toward school improvement?
- How do participants describe the DST process as building instructional leadership capacity of central office staff and principals?

- What are the commonalities and differences in the experiences of DST among participants?

This study utilized a qualitative case study approach. “A case study is an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon (the ‘case’) in depth and within its real-world context” (Yin, 2014, p. 16). The product of a case study is “an in-depth description and analysis of a bounded system” (Merriam, 2009, p. 40). Yin (2014) described three types of case studies: exploratory case studies, that attempt to “identify the research questions or procedures to be used in a subsequent research study”; explanatory case studies, that seek to explain “how or why some condition came to be”, and descriptive case studies, that aim to describe a phenomenon (the “case”) in its real-world context (p. 238). For this study, I utilized elements from each of these types of case study designs to investigate the described experiences of participants as related to the DST process, a bounded system.

Yin (2014) identified five elements of case study design: study questions, which tend to begin with “how” or “why”; study propositions, that help define relevant information to collect; a unit of analysis or “case,” which can be bounded spatially, temporally, or socially; clear logic, that links data analysis to the propositions; and criteria for interpreting the data and drawing conclusions, including the anticipation of rival explanations of the findings (pp. 29-36). Study propositions, founded on the conceptual and theoretical frameworks discussed in Chapter II, included: the elements of assistance relationships are essential to the success of the DST process; assistance relationships depend on high levels of collaboration between central office and school-based staff; the DST process increased instructional leadership capacity of principals and central office participants; and participants at different levels in the organization experienced the DST

process in different manners. This study focused on a single case: the DST process as applied to high support elementary schools in the Puget Sound School District.

Guba and Lincoln (1981) identified the advantages of case studies as providing thick descriptions and holistic, lifelike, views of a situation; surfacing tacit knowledge; and simplifying data for the reader. In addition, case study research can “pass along to readers some of their personal meanings of events and relationships—andknow that the reader too, will add and subtract, invent and shape—reconstructing the knowledge in ways that leave it...more likely to be personally useful” (Stake, 2005, p. 455). Case studies are particularly suited to applied fields of study, especially education, where findings can “bring about understanding that in turn can affect and perhaps even improve practice” (Merriam, 2009, p. 51).

However, case studies also have limitations. One limitation is that case study research has the potential to consume a great deal of time and results in extensive documentation (Yin, 2014). Additionally, findings from case studies can be difficult to generalize and apply beyond the original context: “The case study has basically been faulted for its lack of representativeness” (Hamel, 1993, p. 23).

In order to provide rich description, this study included in-depth interviews of central office and school-based staff who were involved in the District Support Team, enabling participants to both reflect on the process and share their experience. Documentation reviews and field observations provided further insight into the rationale and design of the district support team process as compared to its implementation.

Case Selection

Central office transformation, a research-based framework for transforming teaching and learning (Honig & Copland, 2009), has recently emerged across the country in response to the

increased accountability driven by NCLB and the ESEA flexibility waiver and the necessity to improve school performance and student achievement. Most recently, the loss of the ESEA flexibility waiver in Washington State accelerated interest in central office transformation. The University of Washington, a leader in central office transformation research, is located in Seattle, just northeast of the Puget Sound School District. The Puget Sound School District, by adapting and applying elements of central office transformation in the form of a differentiated support service model, presented a unique opportunity for a case study that would add a first-hand experiential component to the body of work.

The Puget Sound School District began central office transformation in an effort to support failing schools that demonstrated lack of progress in classified student subgroups as assessed by the Measurement of Student Progress (MSP), Washington's high stakes annual assessment. The school district established a differentiated service model of support comprised of a district support team to improve performance in the district's lowest performing schools.

The district support team model began operation in the fall of 2011. As part of the selection process for receiving support from the district support team, central office executives ranked schools by performance based upon 3 years of student achievement data in literacy and mathematics. The lowest performing schools, designated as *high support*, received the greatest degree of district support and intervention. While this study focused on the described experiences of DST participants involved with high support elementary schools, the district also identified and supported low performing middle and high schools that received similar high support services, due to underperformance.

The district support team was based on the premise that schools identified as high support due to underperformance would be provided additional assistance in several areas that would

result in improved student achievement. High support assistance included professional development for teachers to improve instructional practice in the areas of literacy and mathematics, analysis of teaching and learning data, technical assistance regarding the use of time in master schedules, and student intervention planning.

The district support team was comprised of two levels: the district support team leads and the school specialist team: all were members of the central office. District support team leads were central office executives who oversaw the work taking place at identified high support schools. The role of the DST leads was to: prioritize and identify school needs based on an analysis of school performance data in collaboration with the principal and members of the school improvement team; validate major strategies and direction for the school specialist team; approve the plan and schedule; and to conduct onsite implementation visits with the principal and school improvement team members to build leadership capacity and ensure accountability.

School specialist teams consisted of individuals with expertise in the areas of reading, mathematics, special education, English language development, and data analysis. The role of the school specialist team was to assist with facilitation of data analysis based on formative and summative assessments; deliver professional development and technical assistance based on the identified areas; conduct walkthroughs with the principal, analyzing classroom practices; and review and refine interventions as appropriate. Figure 2 depicts the organizational structure of the district support team.

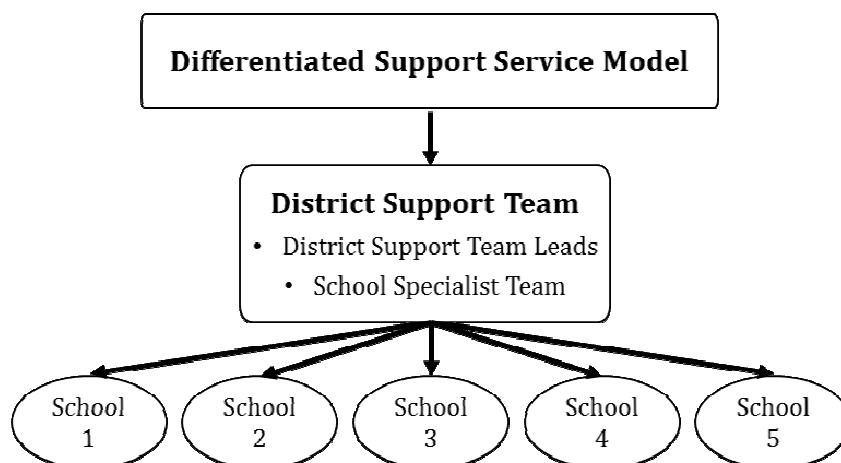


Figure 2. Organizational structure of DST process

While each team had a different level of oversight and responsibility, the teams operated together as part of a differentiated support service delivery model to assist schools with improvement efforts.

Research Site

The Puget Sound School District is located approximately 20 miles southeast of Seattle, Washington and encompasses nearly 71 square miles. The Puget Sound Valley is home to a smattering of leaders in the aerospace and retail industries. Puget Sound School District is the third largest employer in the Puget Sound Valley, with nearly 4,600 employees that comprise several employee groups. These employee groups include central office administration and professionals, school based administration, certificated teachers, paraeducators, office professionals, teamsters, food and nutrition specialists, school security, and maintenance and custodial staff. Within the district, there are 28 elementary schools (K-6), six middle schools (7-8), four comprehensive high schools (9-12), and three non-traditional schools: two alternative high schools and one alternate grade level configuration campus serving grades 3-12. The

graduation rate in the Puget Sound School District is 80.5%, with 68.7% of graduates headed to college or university. Overall, the district has a strong and positive reputation for providing high quality education, with an award winning school board and superintendent. Furthermore, the district is recognized for excellence in technology integration at both the national and international levels.

Over the course of the last decade, the demographic make-up of the school district has shifted both in terms of size, and its racial, ethnic, and socio-economic configurations. In 2014 at the conclusion of this study, Puget Sound School District had a student enrollment of 27,539, with 51.5% of the students comprising racial and ethnic minorities. Of that student population, 52.5% qualified for and received free and reduced meal service, 16.8% were English language learners, with 137 languages spoken, and 11.6% received special education services.

This growing degree of socio-economic and racial and ethnic diversity was particularly prevalent in the schools receiving district support team services. All high support elementary schools were similar in student population and demographic make-up. All high support elementary schools were State designated Title 1 schools, with an average of 76% of student qualifying for free and reduced lunches and 26% of students identified as English language learners. Additionally, four out of the five elementary schools were categorized by Washington State as either a *focus* or *emerging* school. Focus schools were among the lowest 10 percent of the Title 1 schools and had consistently low and underperforming student ethnic, racial, and program subgroups in literacy and mathematics as measured by the Measurement of Student Progress (MSP) over a 3-year time period. Emerging schools are the next 5% of lowest performing schools for all students and the next 10 percent of schools above focus schools for subgroup performance (Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction, 2013).

Sampling of Informants

This study utilized purposeful sampling to provide the information necessary to answer the research questions (Patton, 2002, p. 46). Strauss and Corbin (1990) suggested that purposeful sampling is a method of selecting individuals that can provide detail regarding the experience under study. Furthermore, Patton (2002) shared that “the logic and power of purposeful sampling lies in selecting *information-rich* cases for study in depth...from which one can learn a great deal about issues of central importance to the purpose of the inquiry” (p. 230). The criteria for participating in this study included: (a) employment at the central office or a high support elementary school, (b) 1 or more years of experience and active participation with the district support team, and (c) an understanding of the process itself. This purposeful sampling provided for a greater level of detail as related to the study.

This study included four distinct groups, each at a different hierarchical level within the school district, for a total of 20 participants. The levels included: the executive level of central office, the specialist level of the central office, elementary school principals, and teacher leaders, who were also members of the school improvement team. Ten total members of the central office participated in this study: five participants at the executive level and five at the coordinator or teacher content specialist level. All participants at the central office level were members of the Department of Academics. Ten staff members from high support elementary schools were also selected for interviews. This group contained two subgroups: five elementary school principals and five teacher leaders who were also members of the school improvement team. Figure 3 provides a visual representation of participant groups involved in this study.

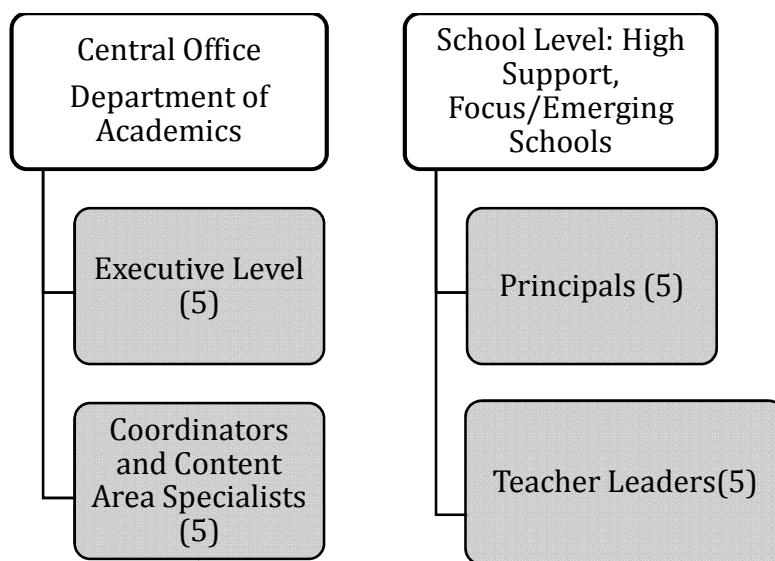


Figure 3. Visual of participant groups

For the purpose of this study, each participant group was treated as a separate unit of analysis within this single case study, as each provided a unique perspective on the district support team process.

Central office staff members working in the Department of Academics were largely responsible for the construction, implementation, and facilitation of the district support team model, work, and process. In addition, The Department of Academics is responsible for teaching, learning, student achievement, and school improvement in each of the 41 schools in the Puget Sound School District. Although the Department of Academics is comprised of multiple departments—including standards based instruction, professional leadership, professional development, inclusive education, career and technology education, and multi-lingual education—participants were recruited and selected from the departments of standards-based instruction and school improvement based on their roles and levels of involvement in the DST process and their position in the organizational hierarchy.

Participants from each elementary school included the principal and one teacher leader who was also a member of the school improvement team. Each had knowledge of, and was involved in, the district support team process. The school principal was responsible for the teaching, learning, achievement, and improvement efforts at the school, with the highest priorities being supervision of staff and students, student achievement, and safety. Teacher leaders, also members of the school improvement team, helped to monitor the implementation of the school improvement plan, deliver professional development, analyze student achievement data, and provide voice and direction regarding school improvement efforts.

All participants provided different levels of expertise and insight, based on their specific roles, levels of responsibility, and degrees of involvement with the district support team and each school. The central office executives provided insight into purpose, facilitation, implementation, coordination, and application of the district support team model, as well as how their roles and responsibilities changed in supporting schools. Central office specialists provided insight into the day-to-day provision of support to schools. Finally, principals and teacher leaders provided different perspectives regarding the district support team process as the recipients of the service and support provided by the DST.

I recruited participants through a hand-delivered letter of solicitation in hard copy form. All recruited participants agreed to, and voluntarily participated in, the study. Additionally, I provided each participant with two copies of an informed consent form and asked each to read the consent form in its entirety. Participants signed each copy, retained one for their personal records, and returned one copy to me. Table 2 provides an example of the generalized participant demographic information.

Table 2

Summary of DST Participant Experience

DST Participant Group	Number of Years in:		
	Position	Education	DST
Central Office Executives			
CO Participant 1	5	20+	3
CO Participant 2	5	20+	3
CO Participant 3	3	15	3
CO Participant 4	5	20+	3
CO Participant 5	5	20+	3
Central Office Coordinator/Specialists			
COC/S Participant 1	5	20+	3
COC/S Participant 2	3	15	3
COC/S Participant 3	4	7	3
COC/S Participant 4	1	20	3
COC/S Participant 5	5	20	1
Elementary Principals			
EP Participant 1	8	17	3
EP Participant 2	15	20+	3
EP Participant 3	2	20+	2
EP Participant 4	2	15	1
EP Participant 5	1	15	2
Elementary Teacher Leaders			
ETL Participant 1	15	15	3
ETL Participant 2	10	10	1
ETL Participant 3	3	20	3
ETL Participant 4	3	7	2
ETL Participant 5	2	7	2

To protect the privacy of each of participant, I maintained the anonymity of individuals and changed the name of the school district and the participating schools and departments. Due to the sensitive nature of the topic, I grouped participants by level of hierarchy within the school district: central office executives, central office coordinators/specialists, elementary school principals, and school based teacher leaders. Furthermore, participants were not identified by either title or pseudonym, in order to prevent easy identification.

Data Collection

This study examined the described experiences of central office executives and specialists, elementary principals, and teacher-leaders who were part of the District Support Team (DST) process, a manifestation of central office transformation. Permission to conduct the study was obtained from the Institutional Review Board of Seton Hall University on May 28, 2014. The study utilized three main methods for data collection: semi-structured interviews, field observations, and documentation review. Dey (1993) suggested that “collecting data always involves selecting data, and the techniques of data collection...will affect what finally constitutes ‘data’ for the purpose of research” (p.15). Further, Merriam (2009) stated that the “data collection techniques used, as well as the specific information considered to be ‘data’ in a study, are determined by the researcher’s orientation, by the problem and purpose of the study, and by the sample selected” (p. 86). All three methods of data collection provided evidence related to the research questions and supported the construction of “rich, thick description” that provided me with context and allowed for triangulation in an effort to “substantiate the emerging themes” (Merriam, 2009, p. 229). Each method of data collection is described below.

Interviews

Kvale and Brinkmann (2009) posited that an interview “is a conversation that has a structure and a purpose. It goes beyond the spontaneous exchange of views in everyday conversation, and becomes a questioning and listening approach with purpose of obtaining thoroughly tested knowledge” (p. 3). Additionally, Merriam (2009) suggested that interviewing is particularly well suited to intensive case studies. Seidman (2006) reinforced this, explaining that interviewing allows researchers to understand the lived experience of others and gives researchers access to the meaning they make: “Interviewing provides access to the context of people’s behavior and thereby provides a way for researchers to understand the meaning of that behavior” (p. 10). Since this study examined the described experiences of individuals involved in the district support team process, semi-structured interviews were an appropriate data collection method. Semi-structured interviews are fitting for use when the researcher has a good understanding of the questions that should be asked relative to the study, but cannot pre-determine what the responses will be (Morse & Field, 1995). Semi-structured interviews, according to Burgess (1984), “employ a set of themes and topics to form questions in the course of conversation” (p. 83) and allow for flexibility in questioning and order of questions, but seek to extract specific information from interviewees (Merriam, 2009).

The interviews in this study allowed me to ask participants to describe their experiences and understandings of the district support team process, the level of collaboration that existed during the process, and whether they believed their instructional capacities grew as part of the experience. Therefore, the interviews assisted me to make meaning from respondents’ participation in the DST process.

An extensive review of the literature related to the theoretical framework of sociocultural theory, social learning theory, the conceptual framework of central office transformation, and the elements of assistance relationships guided the creation of the interview protocol. Additionally, literature and research regarding collaboration, instructional leadership, and professional capital provided a framework for the interview questions that were constructed. Appendix B includes a matrix showing the relationships between the research questions, literature, and data collection methodologies, including specific interview questions. An excerpt from the matrix appears in Table 3.

Table 3

Excerpt from Alignment Matrix

Research Question	Rationale and Theorists	Data Collection	Sample Interview Questions
Which elements of assistance relationships do participants identify as part of the DST process, as related to: modeling, peripheral participation, social engagement, tools, brokering/boundary spanning, and joint work?	<p>Rationale: Assistance relationships are a key element of the conceptual framework for central office transformation.</p> <p>Theorists/Researchers: Honig Vygotsky Bandura Bhaktin Lave & Wenger</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Interviews of DST participants Field notes from observations of DST meetings. Review of documents produced as inputs to the DST process or as artifacts of DST meetings. 	<p><i>Tools:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> How were templates and tools utilized in the DST process? How did the templates and tools contribute to the school improvement process? <p><i>Joint Work:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> How were priorities and plans for school improvement selected? How were you involved in understanding the meaning of challenges and co-constructing potential solutions in the school improvement process?

In order to ensure alignment with the research questions of the study, dissertation committee members reviewed the interview questions. Moreover, in order to ascertain feelings, experiences, knowledge, and opinions as related to the district support team process, Patton's

(2002) six types of questions to include in an interview were used for guidance. Open-ended, predetermined questions guided the interview process. This approach assisted in narrowing and maintaining focus throughout the interview. Additionally, my position as a former principal of a high support elementary school that received district support team assistance, and my subsequent position as a central office executive, considered a lead on the district support team, also afforded additional insight into construction of the interview questions.

Central office staff members as well as building-based staff described their experiences with, and understanding of, the district support team process. Each participant received the same interview questions and did not receive them in advance. During the interview, participants described their feelings and experiences as related to collaboration and instructional capacity building. Furthermore, participants shared whether they believed the process impeded or accelerated student achievement and school improvement. Lastly, participants described the elements of assistance relationships and were asked about their experiences related to modeling, peripheral participation, social engagement, brokering and boundary spanning, and joint work. In addition, I asked probing question when necessary to evoke a more detailed response from the participant. Probes included the phrases: Tell me more about that?; Can you explain further?; What do you mean?; and Could you provide an example?

Each interview was conducted between June 30th and July 6th, 2014 at a time and location that was comfortable and chosen by the participant. With the permission of each participant, the interviews were digitally recorded using a Sony ICD-UX533 digital voice recorder. Each interview lasted approximately 60 minutes and adequate time was allowed for participants to answer interview questions. Throughout the interview process, I noted possible probing questions and follow-up questions for the participant, noted any observable behaviors made by

the participants during the interview, and kept track of possible considerations for document review and field observations. I did not need to schedule follow-up interviews, as the primary interviews provided substantial data. Therefore, each participant took part in only one interview. Interviews were transcribed verbatim for analysis.

Field Observations

Marshall and Rossman (1989) defined observation as "the systematic description of events, behaviors, and artifacts in the social setting chosen for study" (p.79). This study utilized field observations as part of the data collection process. Throughout the course of this study, I attended DST meetings at several school sites as well as the central office to observe participants' actions and reactions within the DST process. The approach to observation that I used followed the definition of participant observation set forth by Schensul, Schensul, and LeCompte (1999) as "the process of learning through exposure to or involvement in the day-to-day or routine activities of participants in the researcher setting" (p. 91). Particular advantages of observation, as noted by Patton (1990), are that the researcher gains: an understanding of the context within which people interact; first-hand observational experience of the phenomena, that may not be discovered otherwise; and other important details that may not present themselves in an interview.

As part of this observational process I took the role of complete participant. Gold (1958) discussed four possible stances one can take when observing: complete participant, participant as observer, observer as participant, and complete observer. Taking on the role of complete participant, I was able to be a member of the group and participate in the process (by the nature

of the position I held at the time of the observations), all while allowing the DST meetings to unfold naturally in the manner in which they typically occur.

Merriam (2009) shared that, “Observation is a major means of collecting data in qualitative research. It offers a firsthand account of the situation under study and, when combined with interviewing and document analysis, allows for a holistic interpretation of the phenomenon being investigated” (p. 136). While participating in the DST meeting, I took field notes on the overall structure of the meeting, its process, the actions and interactions of participants, and the nature of the discussions and resulting decisions. Similar to the analysis of the interviews, the field notes were coded, categorized, and themed. The analysis of the observational data is discussed in further detail in the section titled Data Analysis.

Document Review

In addition to collecting interview data and conducting field observations, I used document review as a third method of data collection. Documents may be “broadly defined to include public records, personal papers, popular culture documents, visual documents, and physical material and artifacts” (Merriam, 2009, p. 163). I collected a variety of documents, including: purpose statement, methodology reports, agendas from district support team meetings at both the central office level and school level, professional development plans, leadership team meeting agendas, presentations, and feedback notes between district support team staff members. This collection and analysis of these documents assisted in identifying the themes that emerged.

As Merriam (2009) stated that “using documentary material as data is not much different from using interviews or observation” (p. 150), these documents provided an additional point of reference that was used to validate the information gathered from interviews. Yin (2014)

supported Merriam, stating that “the use of documents is to corroborate and augment evidence from other sources” (p. 107). This aided in the data analysis process by providing evidence to either corroborate or contradict interview findings. Lastly, utilizing documents as a source of evidence for data analysis offered a series of advantages. Documents are:

- Stable—can be reviewed repeatedly
- Unobtrusive—not created as a result of the case study
- Specific—can contain the exact names, references, and details of an event
- Broad—can cover a long span of time, many events, and many settings. (Yin, 2014, p. 106)

A thorough analysis of the documentation occurred and the details of this analysis are included within this study.

Data Analysis

The overarching research question, as well as the four supporting research questions—which collectively aimed to gain a thorough understanding of the experiences and feelings of four groups of participants around the district support team process—provided a structure for data analysis. Although the analysis began with a start list of codes informed by the theoretical and conceptual framework derived from the literature (see Chapter II), a constant comparative method (Glaser & Strauss, 1967), which compared “one segment of data with another to determine similarities and differences” (Merriam, 2009, p. 30), supported and guided the data analysis. While predominantly used to establish grounded theory, the constant comparative method is both inductive and comparative and assisted in the determination of emerging themes and propositions. The step-by-step process utilized for data analysis follows.

My first step in analyzing the data was to carefully and thoroughly read each of the interview transcripts, the observation field notes, and the supporting documents. Throughout the interviews, observations, and document analysis processes I wrote field note memos about potential questions and thoughts regarding codes. Merriam (2009) suggested that researchers analyze data during the collection process: “Without ongoing analysis, the data can be unfocused, repetitious and overwhelming in the sheer volume of material that needs to be processed. Data that have been analyzed while being collected are both parsimonious and illuminating” (p. 171). Bogdan and Biklen’s (2007) suggestions for data analysis included: fine tuning interview questions, planning leads to pursue in the next interview session based on a review of field notes, and writing memos to prompt critical thinking and to begin formulating codes and eventually themes.

Saldaña (2013) defined a code as “a researcher-generated construct that symbolizes and thus attributes interpreted meaning to each individual datum for later purposes of pattern detection, categorization, theory-building, and other analytic processes” (p. 4). Furthermore, according to Charmaz (2001), coding links data to its interpreted meaning. This idea reinforces the thinking of Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña’s (2014) who noted that, “coding is analysis...deep reflection about and, thus, deep analysis and interpretation of the data’s meanings” (p. 72). Saldaña (2013) identified two stages of coding: first, cycle coding is a straightforward labeling of data; and second, cycle coding is a more complex analytical process involving skills such as prioritizing, integrating, and synthesizing the first cycle codes. A breakdown of the data analysis process follows, depicting the steps involved in the analysis of the interviews, field notes from observations, and document review.

First Cycle Coding

As previously mentioned, first cycle coding is the straightforward labeling of data (Saldaña, 2013). I began this process by developing a start list of codes deductively based on the literature review, conceptual framework, and research questions (Miles, Huberman, & Saldaña, 2014). Some examples of the codes on the start list included:

- Purpose (PUR),
- Process (PRO),
- Challenges (CH),
- Roles (RO),
- Tools (TO),
- Modeling (MO)
- Brokering (BK),
- Joint Work (JW), and
- Capacity Building (CB).

In the next step, I sorted the data by source (Creswell, 2013) and then read the interview transcripts, field notes, and documents in their entirety, while making notes in the margin of recurring ideas in the data that seemed “interesting, potentially relevant, or important” (Merriam, 2009, p. 178) to answering the research questions. This process of reading and annotating led to the inductive identification of additional codes as well as sub-codes for each of the codes on the start list (Saldaña, 2013). The code list incorporated several different types of codes, including:

- Attribute codes, capturing essential characteristics of data sources;
- Causation codes, reflecting participants’ views of the causes of specific behaviors;
- Descriptive codes, capturing the basic topic of a statement or document;

- Evaluative codes, reflecting participants' judgment of the value of a process; and
- In Vivo codes utilizing the participants' own words (Miles, Huberman, & Saldaña, 2014).

I compiled the start list of codes into a codebook (Boyatzis, 1998) to ensure consistency in the application of the codes through the initial coding process. A codebook serves as a “frame or boundary that the analyst constructs in order to systematically map the informational terrain of the text... [and] always reflects the analyst's implicit or explicit research questions” (MacQueen, McLellan, Kay & Milstein, 1998, p. 33). Although the use of a codebook is often applied to team coding in qualitative analysis, it can also be applied to serve as a guide to frame the thinking of a researcher during the first cycle of coding large volumes of data. The codebook included a description for each code and sub-code, along with criteria for inclusion and exclusion. The codebook excerpt in Table 4 illustrates the relationship between a code and its sub-codes and the criteria for inclusion and exclusion. This example also shows the use of different types of sub-codes, both descriptive and evaluative.

Table 4

Excerpt from Codebook

Label	TOOL
Definition	Template or process that translate policies into practice and guide thinking and action around teaching and learning (Honig, 2008; Honig et al., 2010; Burch and Spillane, 2004; Grossman et al., 1999).
General description	Processes that are implemented and replicated across multiple schools often include the use of tools for both efficiency and consistency. Tools might be used for decision support, planning, communication, record-keeping, and evaluation.

Label	TOOL
Criteria for inclusion and exclusion	<p>Inclusion: Data will be included when participants make reference to specific tools or templates used in the district support team process, or describe how the tools helped or hindered school improvement efforts.</p> <p>Exclusion: Data will be excluded when participants either speak in generalities or refer to the use of tools outside the District Support Team process.</p>
Examples of inclusion and exclusion	<p><u>Included</u>: “I participated in using the walkthrough tool by going in the classrooms, but I also was a teacher who instructed and had people come in with the walkthrough tool. It had a list of instructional look-fors with explanations.”</p> <p><u>Included</u>: “...the tools we used focused on data. And so what we were wanting those tools to do is exactly what they did do, which is get teachers and staff focused on the results the kids were having and the growth the students were able to achieve.”</p> <p><u>Excluded</u>: “Every single meeting that I had at a building wide level, we were using protocols, we were using templates, we were using tools.”</p>
Selected Sub-codes	<p>TOOL: WALK THROUGH—Any reference to the classroom walkthrough data collection tool.</p> <p>TOOL: PD PLANNING TEMPLATE—References to the Professional Development Planning tool (also known as the 8-week planning tool).</p> <p>TOOL: DATA ANALYSIS PROTOCOL—Any reference to a process or protocol for analyzing student achievement or classroom walkthrough data.</p> <p>+TOOLS: FOCUSED—Any reference to the tools being helpful in bringing focus to the team’s or staff’s efforts.</p> <p>+TOOLS: OBJECTIVE—References to tools being helpful in bringing objectivity to decisions.</p> <p>-TOOLS: RESTRICTIVE—Any references to tools impeding progress by restricting dialogue or actions.</p>

Second Cycle Coding

After the development of a start list, the construction of a codebook, and the first cycle coding, I used Microsoft Excel to reassemble the codes into a matrix that I used to search for patterns in the data. A thorough study of the matrix, along with a constant comparative analysis of the data to identify similarities and differences (Merriam, 2009), enabled me to identify

common threads among the codes and to group them into pattern codes, such as the ones shown in Table 5.

Table 5

Development of Pattern Codes for Primary Code Role (RO)

Sub-codes	Pattern Code
Allocate resources (RO-AR) Lead meetings (RO-LM) Champion process (RO-CH) Gather feedback (RO-GF) Monitor progress (RO-MP)	Leader (RO-L)
Provide coaching (RO-CO) Deliver training (RO-PD) Share info/expertise (RO-SI)	Expert (RO-E)
Collect data (RO-CD) Analyze data (RO-AD) Develop plans (RO-DP) Implement plans (RO-IP)	Doer (RO-D)
Communicate with staff (RO-CS) Communicate with peers (RO-CP)	Communicator (RO-C)

Pattern codes may reflect commonalities according to categories of information, causes or explanations, interpersonal relationships, or emerging theories (Miles, Huberman, & Saldaña, 2014). For example, in this study I grouped individual participant data based on level of hierarchy within the organization, such as: central office executives, central office content specialists, elementary school principals, and elementary school teacher-leaders.

Pattern coding as a second-cycle process allows the researcher to condense a large number of codes into fewer meta-codes for analysis while also developing schema for better understanding the topic under study (Miles, Huberman & Saldaña, 2014). Following Merriam's (2009) recommendation for category construction, I made certain that the categories were

aligned with the purpose of the research, exhaustive, mutually exclusive, sensitive, and conceptually congruent. From the categories, themes began to emerge that enabled the development of theories about the district support team process as experienced by participants as a whole group or as a sub-unit—including the identification of both congruencies and incongruences to inform future practice.

Multiple Units of Analysis

Within this single case study of the district support team process as the approach of one school district to central office transformation, I was interested in both understanding how participants experienced the process and in surfacing differences between participant groups. To that end, I defined four subunits of analysis by participant role: central office executives, central office content specialists, elementary school principals, and elementary school teacher-leaders. The analysis of data focused both on drawing broad conclusions that resulted in emergent themes about the process as experienced by participants as a whole and also on understanding variations by participant group; resulting in an embedded, single-case design with an analysis of four subunits (Yin, 2014). As dominant trends and themes emerged, I was able to understand the relationship between and among the participant groups as they described their experiences of the district support team process.

Theming

The purpose of theming is to extract meaning from the data as a result of the coding and recoding process. DeSantis and Ugarizza (2000) explained that, “a theme is an abstract entity that brings meaning and identity to a recurrent experience and its variant manifestations. As such, a theme captures and unifies the nature or basis of the experience into a meaningful whole”

(p. 362). While simple themes often begin to develop during the initial cycle of coding, they typically evolve and become interwoven as analysis progresses, expressing tensions, rationale, or emerging conclusions (Rubin & Rubin, 2011).

As I examined the data in this study, looking for relationships among pattern codes as well as commonalities and differences across the sub-units of analysis, several themes emerged. These themes helped me to make meaning of participants' described experiences with the DST process and it provided answers to the research questions (Maxwell, 2004; Miles, Huberman & Saldaña, 2014). An early example of the identification of interrelated codes is depicted in Table 6 for one of the themes that emerged from this study: the delicate balance between power and trust in collaboration.

Table 6

Early example of emerging theme development

PROCESS	CHALLENGES	PERIPHERAL PARTICIPATION	SOCIAL ENGAGEMENT	JOINT WORK
Collaborative	<u>Building trust</u>	<u>Viewed as capable</u>	<i>Challenge only in private</i>	Collaborative solutions
<i>Top down</i>	Unclear communication	<u>Viewed as incapable</u>	Learning opportunity	<i>Hierarchy</i>
Targeted PD	Increasing collaboration	<u>Respected</u>	<u>Distrust</u>	<u>Lack of trust</u>
State accountability	<i>Increasing accountability</i>	<u>Not respected</u>	<i>Challenge based on data</i>	<i>Fear of reprisal</i> <i>Accountability</i>
Demographics			<u>Mutual respect</u>	Priorities based on data
Key:				
<u>Trust</u>				
<i>Power</i>				
Collaboration				

As the study progresses and my thinking continued to evolve, a more coherent map of the emerging theme was developed, as shown in figure 4 based on Saldaña’s code-to-theory model (2013).

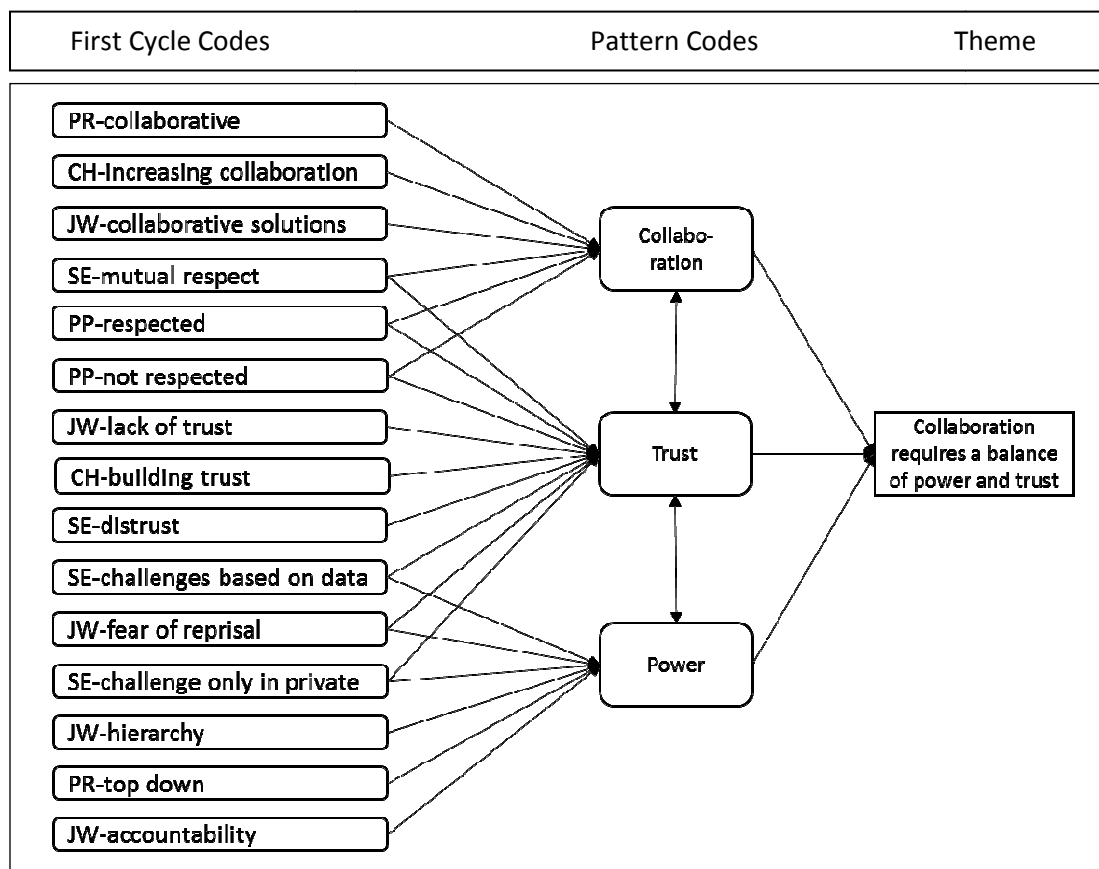


Figure 4. Refined example of theme development.

The four themes that emerged from the analysis—described in detail in Chapter IV—illuminated the experiences of DST participants and pointed to avenues for improving the DST process and the differentiated support model approach to central office transformation.

Validity in the Case Study

In qualitative research, “the researcher is the instrument” (Patton, 2002, p. 14) and human behavior is never “static” (Merriam, 2009, p. 220). Therefore, while it is of utmost importance

to ensure validity and reliability in qualitative research, strategies for doing so will be different from those used in quantitative research.

Internal Validity and Reliability

Internal validity is the extent to which research findings capture reality with respect to the purpose of the research study (Maxwell, 2005). A qualitative study, according to Maxwell, investigates each participant's constructions of reality and inevitably results in multiple constructions or understandings of the phenomenon under investigation. Qualitative researchers should nevertheless attempt to ensure that findings make sense, are coherent, and are integrated and unified in their relationship to one another (Charmaz, 2011; Eisner, 1991). Several strategies can enable qualitative researchers to increase "the correspondence between research and the real world" (Wolcott, 2005, p. 160).

The most common strategy is triangulation using multiple research methods, sources of data, and investigators or theories (Denzin, 1978). A second strategy for ensuring validity is member checks: sharing preliminary findings with several participants to gather feedback (Maxwell, 2005). Such member checking may be "the single most important way of ruling out the possibility of misinterpreting the meaning of what participants say and do and the perspective they have on what is going on, as well as being an important way of identifying your own biases and misunderstandings" (Maxwell, 2005, p. 111). A third way to increase validity is to gather data until reaching saturation, i.e., no new information surfaces (Merriam, 2009). The fourth strategy, negative or discrepant case analysis, involves intentionally looking for alternative explanations of the data (Patton, 2002). Fifth, qualitative researchers must describe their own biases and examine critically how those might affect the collection and interpretation of data

(Lincoln & Guba, 2000; Maxwell, 2005). Finally, peer review increases internal validity through examinations of data and conclusions by one or more colleagues (Merriam, 2009).

Reliability in qualitative research rests not on replication, the standard for quantitative research, but on “whether the results are consistent with the data collected” (Merriam, 2009, p. 221). To ensure reliability in a qualitative study, researchers rely on some of the same strategies that increase internal validity: triangulation, investigator’s position, and peer review. In addition, qualitative researchers increase reliability by creating an audit trail that describes in detail how data were collected and analyzed (Merriam, 2009).

This study utilized five of the aforementioned methods to ensure internal validity and reliability of the research findings. The triangulation methods employed for this study included multiple methods and sources of data: interviews of the 20 participants, observations in schools and at the central office, and a review of documents. In addition to using the research questions as the primary lens for gathering data, I crosschecked information derived from interviews against the field notes from observations and documents guiding or developed through the DST process. Additionally, member checking (Maxwell, 2005) ensured that the transcription and coding process was accurate and reflected what participants said during interviews, and that the analysis uncovered themes and patterns leading to precise conclusions. Finally, two participants and two nonparticipants familiar with the DST process provided feedback on the initial findings.

External Validity

External validity, or transferability of findings, in qualitative research deals with the question of whether the research findings will apply to other situations. Because it is common for the reader of a study to determine the extent to which the findings apply to his specific

situation, making that determination requires that the researcher provide sufficient information about the context of the study (Merriam, 2009). Two strategies are used for this purpose. The most common way to make transferability of findings possible is to provide “a rich thick description of the sending context so that someone in a potential receiving context may assess the similarity between them and... the study” (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 125). According to Maxwell (2005), the phrase “rich, thick description” was initially used to convey an individual’s first-hand knowledge. The other common strategy for enabling transferability involves sampling: either providing maximum variability of the study sample to increase the likelihood that the findings will apply to a reader’s context, or purposefully selecting a typical sample (Merriam, 2009).

To increase the external validity and transferability of the findings in this study, I intentionally collected data from interviews of people with different perspectives and who occupied different levels in the organizational hierarchy (Merriam, 2009), thereby capturing a multitude of experiences and perspectives from individuals in a variety of roles in the organization. Finally, rich, thick descriptions were utilized to enable readers to identify similarities and differences with their own contexts. This type of detailed description includes the setting, the participants, quotes from field notes and documents, and the rationale for their use as evidence for the findings.

Limitations

The nature of a case study used as a method of research is, by definition, limiting in that it examines a bounded system, a single unit of entity, a unit around which there are boundaries (Smith, 1978), or a case. Even though care was taken to ensure that a rich, thick description be

the cornerstone of this research, the findings, due to the constraints of case study research methods, are difficult to apply to other instances. For this study, the use of one specific case, the central office transformation of a particular district, is a limitation.

Interview participants were chosen based on their roles and involvement in the district support team, and they were able to deeply describe their experiences as related to this process. However, participants did not include other members of the school-based community or members of the central office from departments outside the Division of Academics.

Observations of the District Support Team process at the elementary school sites, as well as at the central office, were included, but not observations of other levels of high support schools at the secondary level were not. This was an additional constraint of the study.

Finally, a selection of documents representing the various artifacts from a cross section of the participating schools and documents from the central office was examined. Additionally, documents from the central office that were used as guiding documents and templates were also examined. However, I did not review every document from every meeting nor every school due to time constraints.

Role of the Researcher

At the time of this study, I had been an employee of the district since August of 1992. Prior to my role as an administrator in Puget Sound School District, I was a classroom teacher and then a building principal at a high support elementary school. At the outset of this study, I was a supervisor of principals in the Puget Sound School District, and I had held that position for 1 year. I resigned from that position effective June 30, 2014, and since that time have held a similar position in a neighboring school district.

I hold a Bachelor of Science degree in Elementary Education from Oklahoma State University in Stillwater, Oklahoma; a Master of Science degree in Curriculum and Instruction from Lesley University in Cambridge, Massachusetts; and an educational administration certificate from Western Washington University in Bellingham, Washington.

As a principal and principal supervisor, I had prior, first-hand experience with the District Support Team process, and worked closely with central office and school staff. All solicited participants agreed without hesitation to be interviewed and were encouraged to provide answers to the interview questions with honesty. The confidentiality of their responses was ensured throughout the process. Additionally, when asked to share documentation to be included in the data for this study, documents were provided without reluctance and the same level of confidentiality was ensured.

Ethical Considerations

Stake (2005) shared that, “Qualitative researchers are guests in the private spaces of the world. Their manners should be good and their code of ethics strict” (p. 459). Prior to the interviews, participants were made aware of my role in the district, the purpose of the study, and the commitment to maintaining confidentiality despite the lack of anonymity, since a collegial relationship existed between myself and each of the participants. I further shared that the same level of confidentiality would be applied to any additional information obtained from this study.

Finally, it is important to recognize my own potential for bias as a former principal of a high support school receiving district support team intervention that emerged with great success. As a School Improvement Officer I played a different role, but still related to the district support team process. I was aware of this and did due diligence in making certain that the potentially

positive bias related to the district support team did not interfere with the collection or analysis of data.

Summary

In order to better understand the experiences and feelings of central office staff and school-based staff related to the district support team process, I collected data through open-ended semi structured interviews, observations recorded in field notes, and document review and analysis. This chapter detailed the research design and method used in this case study. More specifically, the chapter provided background on the case selection with context, described the sampling of participants and the processes utilized for data collection analysis, along with the assurances made for reliability, validity, and ethical considerations. The chapter further detailed the limitations of the study and the role of the researcher.

Chapter IV

RESEARCH FINDINGS

The purpose of this study was to investigate participants' experiences as part of the District Support Team (DST) process; a manifestation of central office transformation to improve instruction and student achievement. One-on-one interviews captured the experiences of 20 participants from four different subgroups: teachers, principals, central office specialists, and central office executives. Analysis of field notes and supporting documents corroborated and bolstered the evidence gathered from the interviews to create a comprehensive view of the DST process as experienced by central office and school team members.

In order to provide the reader a clearer insight into the DST process, this chapter begins with a descriptive portrayal of a DST meeting, drawn from field notes from observations. The chapter then explores the four prevalent themes that emerged from the interview data, field notes, and a review of documents: (a) the ambiguity of the DST's purpose, process and participants' roles in the process; (b) the role and impact of power and trust in the collaborative process; (c) the use of tools and resources as a means to focus discussions and decisions; and finally, (d) the process itself as the impetus for growing and building the instructional capacity of all participants. Additionally, each of the four themes has several subthemes, as shown in Table 7.

Table 7

Themes and Sub-themes

Theme	Related Subthemes
Lost in Translation: An Ambiguous Process:	Ambiguous purpose Ambiguous process Ambiguous roles Gradual release of responsibility
A Delicate Balance: Power, Trust and Collaboration	Collaborative or imposed? Building trust Open behind closed doors
Laser-Like Focus: Data, Tools & Resources	Focusing discussions Focusing decisions
Expanded Horizons: Building Instructional Capacity	Central office integration Principal instructional leadership Improved instruction Accountability

The identified themes, when integrated with one another, provide a descriptive and holistic understanding of the case study and furthermore help to draw conclusions to answer the research questions that are posed in this study.

Description of the DST Process

As part of the differentiated service model, a team referred to as the District Support Team (DST), comprised of central office executives and specialists, worked in collaboration with school-based staff in an effort to change principal leadership practice and teacher instructional practice. This collaboration was intended to result in an increase in student achievement. Schools were categorized into three tiers of need based upon 3 years of student achievement data in the areas of literacy and mathematics. The tiers were categorized based on the level of support a school received. High support schools received the most intensive assistance from central

office staff, enhanced schools received the second most intense level of assistance, and schools identified as core received the least amount of support from central office staff members.

Once a school was identified as high support, central office staff members partnered with the principal of the school, teacher leaders, instructional coaches, and other members of the school improvement team to identify and provide targeted professional development to the staff based on various forms of data. This professional development included, but was not limited to: instructional practices, standard-aligned lesson development, and data analysis. Additionally, central office staff members participated in classroom walk-throughs with the principal and teacher leaders to capture classroom data on the implementation of previously provided professional development.

Every 6 to 8 weeks a collaborative meeting was held at each identified high support school to review student achievement data, analyze classroom walk-through data, establish the next 8 week professional development plan, and provide updates regarding past areas of focus. Typically, these meetings were facilitated by a central office staff member in partnership with the building principal. The degree to which the principal facilitated the meetings depended upon the readiness of the principal and school staff.

What follows are field notes collected from an observation of a district support team meeting. These notes capture the entire meeting from start to finish and provide details regarding process and people. In an effort to provide a holistic view of the district support team meeting process and a deeper understanding of participant roles, the field notes are extremely detailed. The field notes depict the processes of a high functioning team and serve as an example of the work described in this study.

Field Notes from Observation

Nestled in a neighborhood surrounded by homes occupied by retirees, Oakview Elementary is one of the oldest schools in the district. Although it has cracks in the sidewalk, paint chipping off the walls, stained and worn carpet, the hallways and classrooms are steeped in the energy of children from kindergarten through sixth grade. Over 580 students arrive at school daily and the majority travel by bus. Of these students, 83% qualify for free and reduced lunch, 37% speak a language other than English, and 11% receive special education services. Oakview Elementary is ranked as one of the lowest performing schools in the district and in the state. Despite this identification, the teachers, all highly qualified and many holding masters' degrees, arrive to teach every day. School administrators press forward with the vision and hope for improvement—always feeling the urgency, pressure, and need to increase student achievement—but very cognizant of the intense and often fatiguing work that such a commitment requires. On this late afternoon, students are quickly boarding the buses as the district support team arrives on the school campus. Checking in at the front office, DST members are greeted warmly as they make their way to the library where the room is set up with six round tables, each surrounded by six chairs.

The agenda for the district support team meeting is located on the center of each table. The agenda details topics to be covered over the course of the next 1 1/2 hours. Topics include: welcome and introduction, purpose for the meeting, student data analysis, walk-through data analysis, and next 8t-week action planning. The agenda is also projected on the Smart Board for reference. Members of the school improvement team and central office staff, both executive level and specialist level, begin to enter the room. Central office staff, supporting the school as part of the differentiated model of support and district support team, and school-based staff sit

together throughout the room. School-based staff members are observed talking with central office staff and laughing with them in an exchange of pleasantries. After 8 minutes, the room is filled with the building principal, members of the school improvement team, and central office staff members. One of the executive level central office members begins the meeting by welcoming everyone and setting the purpose for the meeting by referring to the agenda to which all have access. At the tables there is some discussion that takes place as the agenda is reviewed. One school-based participant is overheard commenting about the walk-through data and wondering what progress has been made on the two instructional strategies the school has been focusing on. Another central office staff member comments to the teacher sitting next to her about the sneak peek she got of the positive growth in their students' Reading Benchmark Assessment data as compared to other schools. There is a feeling of comfort in the room as staff from the central office and school are at ease in one another's company.

The central office staff member asks the school principal to remind the group of the areas of focus that came from their problem of practice of the school. The principal shares that the staff has been focusing on student engagement techniques and, more specifically, increasing student discourse in both literacy and mathematics and using visuals and gestures during instruction. She reminds the group that, at the previous DST meeting, the walk-through data revealed that 20% of staff members were using student-to-student talk strategies to enhance discussion. The data noted also that 28% of staff members were using visuals and gestures consistently in their instruction so that English Language Learners could access the content. She further explains that staff received targeted professional development from the central office specialist in partnership with the school-based instructional coach in both instructional strategies. The principal reports that although she has not seen the walk-through data, she observed a

change in teacher practice immediately following the professional development that was delivered by the central office specialist. She notes that she also provided two additional follow up professional development sessions after the initial training, as she felt that her own capacity and understanding had been built in these areas. She shares that although not all staff members are currently implementing the strategies of focus, she estimates that 80% of staff are implementing the strategies. She thanks the central office staff member for providing the professional development and working with a few of the grade level teams that had had more questions.

Two central office members stand and disseminate a document that contains indicators or look-fors in the left margin of the paper. These indicators are the teaching and student learning behaviors that should be present in a classroom where high quality instructional practice is occurring. A central office staff member begins the discussion by asking participants in the room to look independently at the data and to notice any increases or decreases in instructional strategies; those that have been an area of focus and those that have not. Staff members from the central office as well as the school staff work independently, making notations in the margin of increases and decreases in observed teacher instructional strategies and student learning behaviors that were apparent to them. As individuals finish up, groups at various tables begin to quietly share what they have observed in the data. After several minutes, a member of the central office team stands up and shares that based on some of the conversations she was hearing, she thinks the group is ready to start the next portion of the analysis.

Two central office members pass out a sheet of paper, one per table, entitled “Here’s What, So What, Now What.” The central office facilitator shares that this will be used to capture the observations that were made from the data. After all tables receive the template, she reviews

the process they will use to analyze the data. All tables will select a recorder that will capture the observations made as the table group works together to determine the areas of growth and existing areas of challenge in the walk-through data. She continues by sharing out loud her thinking process regarding how she would complete the template. After asking if there are any questions, and receiving none, she tells the groups that they may get started and have a 10 minute time limit to review the data together. There is a buzz in the room as central office staff and school-based staff at each table group share out and record their collective findings. Snippets of conversation indicate that gains have been made in classroom instructional strategies, especially in the targeted areas. Student-to-student talk increased from 20% (on the previous report) to 68% (now being reported) of the time, and the use of visuals and gestures improved from 28% to 72%. When the data are examined according to grade levels, one staff member comments that first grade is still struggling in both areas. Questions are raised as to why this might be happening and discussions occur at table groups regarding what needs to happen next. After 10 minutes of table discussion, the central office member brings the group back together and asks for tables to share out their findings. One at a time, groups comment on the progress made in the identified areas of focus and also mention the gap at the first grade level. Teams further mention that, despite the growth seen in the previous problems of practice/areas of focus, there are still several areas of concern; the weakest two instructional strategies being linking past to present learning and connecting learning to the real world.

As the last group finishes sharing out their findings, the central office staff member asks for reflection on what they believe spurred the growth. Pausing for a moment, she suggests that the table groups turn and talk to a partner before sharing out to the greater group. Conversation resumes, with participants actively engaging in dialogue at their tables. One table is overheard

sharing that they believe the reason for the rapid increase is the focused professional development, and that the data helped to identify the problem of practice. Also, they discuss that when data is being collected by central office staff and school administration using the walk-through tool, it increases accountability, and teachers feel more compelled to apply the professional development. The group comes back together and shares the ideas generated by the table groups. The major theme that emerges is the application of professional development back into classroom practice. Teachers raise questions regarding the sustainability of the practice once the focus is changed to another problem of practice. The school principal shares that walk-throughs to collect classroom practice data will help monitor the practices and that instructional practices that were of past focus will be revisited as needed. Heads nod in agreement throughout the room.

Two central office administrators rise once again and disseminate another data set. These data show the performance of Oakview students on the most recent Reading Benchmark Assessments. The comparison charts in the center of the page depict growth over time from Reading Benchmark Assessment one (RBA1) to Reading Benchmark Assessment three (RBA3). Additionally, the charts show how Oakview student scores compared to the other 27 elementary schools in the district. The central office facilitator reopens the conversation by sharing what the data represent and the process for analysis. She explains the data set and asks the staff to grapple with what they are seeing. What do they think are the areas of strength? What are the areas of challenge? This time, she has the tables work together through the analysis process, paying particular attention to identifying the strengths and challenges by standard. She takes a moment to model the analysis process for the group. After she completes this, she asks the group to do the same analysis with the remaining standards; capturing strengths and challenges as well as

what they are noticing and what they are wondering as they work with the data. Table groups have 15 minutes to analyze the data together. As participants begin the analysis, celebrations are heard throughout the room. The results make apparent that the collaborative team planning time focused on unpacking standards, facilitated by a central office specialist, has had a positive effect on student learning. Teams continue working on the analysis, identifying the strengths and challenge area of each standard. Twelve minutes pass and staff members are ready to proceed to the share out of findings. Using a laptop connected to the projector and Smart Board, the central office facilitator begins collecting findings that are shared out by the group. Table groups are eager to share that the growth from RBA 1 to RBA 3 is an average 46% gain school wide, with one grade level making a 60% gain. Table groups point out that certain standards were stronger than others. They list the items missed most often by each grade level and juxtapose those against the standards with the greatest level of proficiency and those that posed the greatest challenge. The discussion continues with participants making additional observations. Prior to transitioning to the last item on the agenda, the 8-week plan, two central office staff members congratulate the school staff on their focus and hard work. Several other individuals then join in and congratulate the Oakview staff. The school principal acknowledges the hard work of the staff, but reminds them that they have a long way to go so continued perseverance is a must.

As the group moves to the last item on the agenda, creating the 8-week plan, it is evident that the participants have done this planning before. Conversations at the table begin regarding what the focus should be, and what professional development the central office specialist team might provide. The central office facilitator asks the group to look again at the data sets, both classroom walk-through data and the Reading Benchmark Assessment data, and consider the school improvement plan and the areas of focus articulated therein. She reminds the group that,

when making choices, all data, current needs, and the school improvement plan should be taken into consideration. She asks the tables to generate three problems of practice or areas of focus for the next 8 weeks and record those ideas on a sticky note. She asks that after table groups decide and record their three areas of focus, they place their thoughts on the chart paper, hanging on the far wall. Table groups quickly begin to work. Members of the central office as well as school staff look at data, point out areas of potential focus, and engage in conversation with one another. After 6 minutes pass, a member of one of the groups stands up to place the sticky notes on the chart paper. It is important to note that table groups have also recorded a rationale for each focus and tied the selected problem of practice back to the school improvement plan and the data. Several other table groups finish and place their information on the chart. The central office facilitator asks a school staff member to read off the content one at a time as she records the suggestions on the 8-week plan template. Several groups suggest the same problems of practice or areas of focus. As she records the information, items that are repeated receive a check mark. When all items have been read aloud and recorded, she thanks the group for their participation and revisits the purpose of the meeting. She asks that participants provide feedback on the process using the exit slips and reminds the group that the 8-week plan will be crafted and solidified by her, the principal, the instructional coach, and the principal's supervisor. She congratulates the school staff again for their growth, as do the other central office staff members. The school principal thanks the central office specialist team for the support and the meeting comes to a close. Staff members and central office members linger, speaking to one another about both personal and school related topics.

In context of this study, the above field notes provided first hand observational knowledge of a district support team meeting and the process. Highlights from this portrayal

include: the use of modeling and protocols, the analysis of both student achievement and instructional walk-through data, and the creation of a professional development plan. The portrayal also illustrates the roles of various participants and depicts their peripheral participation and their collaborative interactions. Finally, the portrayal illustrates the level of trust between participants as they engaged in conversation, which balanced the differences in positional and expert power.

The remaining portion of the chapter explores the four prevalent themes and supporting sub-themes that emerged from the interview data, field notes, and a review of documents. These themes include: (a) the ambiguity of the DST's purpose, process and participants' roles in the process; (b) the role and impact of power and trust in the collaborative process; (c) the use of tools and resources as a means to focus discussions and decisions; and finally, (d) the process itself as the impetus for growing and building the instructional capacity of all participants.

Lost in Translation: An Ambiguous Process

The DST process was intended to be one in which a team of central office executives and specialists, selected for their particular expertise, collaborated on a problem of practice with principals and teacher leaders in a community of learning. The objectives were to build instructional capacity at the school, and thereby improve teaching and learning in specific areas targeted in the school improvement plan. The process was designed as a gradual release, with the central office members playing a strong leadership role in the initial phases of the work, while gradually transferring that leadership responsibility to principals. Ideally, by the end of the second year the central office members would be present at meetings merely to provide input, not to direct the process or decisions. Thus, the leadership role was initially held by the central

office leaders, then would be shared between the principal and central office leader, and finally would be assumed fully by the principal.

Central office executives, as architects of the DST process, expressed a clear understanding of how schools were selected for participation and the intended roles and responsibilities of each team member. One of the central office executives summed up the process as follows:

The District Support Team process is intended to provide additional support to School Improvement Teams and principals to accelerate student achievement, in particular to apply that support and assistance to schools where student achievement is further from the target or where the greatest gaps exist between current student performance and where we're targeting that performance to be.

Central office specialists, benefiting from frequent scheduled meetings with the participating central office executives, expressed a consistent understanding of the process as well.

The district support team is a model that we use to target and support our lowest performing schools based on student achievement data. We provide all the technical support that the school might need, with extra walkthroughs, extra observations, and extra trainings. Our program specialists and coordinators go in and really work with the principal and the building leaders to see where the schools need support and then either provide that PD, or provide that support for the people in the building that are providing the PD.

A review of the documents corroborates this expressed understanding. The Differentiated Services Delivery Model Fact Sheet (see Appendix C) describes and explains the process as well as provides the rationale for the district support team. On the Fact Sheet a high support school is

defined as one that “when compared to other district schools with the same grade span is among the lowest achieving schools in both reading and mathematics based on state assessment data.”

Differentiating the levels of support allows the district to “target resources to the schools that demonstrate the greatest need for central office support.” The Fact Sheet also delineates the supports to be provided as follows: “high-quality professional development; technical assistance supports to principal and teacher leaders; regular collaborative meetings with School Improvement Teams.” It further defines the roles and responsibilities of members of the district support team, in addition to how the team is comprised. In fact, the fact sheet even communicates the tools and the systems that reinforce and frame the work that is provided to schools. It is unknown as to whether this document was shared with stakeholders outside the central office staff.

In addition to the fact sheet, a Scope of the Work document provides a framework and guide for the DST process. This document provides greater detail than the fact sheet, clearly articulating the roles, responsibilities, timelines and the work that occurs in schools, which staff is responsible for the work, and how the team will work together as they support the school (see Appendix D).

Additionally, school principals of high support schools receiving targeted assistance from the district support team received a personalized letter from the assistant superintendent. In the letter, the assistant superintendent articulated the purpose and rationale for the differentiated support model, the district support team process, the rationale for the work, the methodology by which schools were selected, the roles and responsibilities of the central office executives and specialists providing support to the schools, and how services would be applied at the school. The content of the letter (see Appendix E) was drawn from the information in the Fact Sheet.

Despite these efforts in communication, clarity around the process, purpose, roles, and responsibilities was somewhat lost in translation. Furthermore, the process itself seemed much more obscure for school-based participants as opposed to central office executives, the central office specialist, and principals. Ambiguity about the purpose, process, and roles was reflected in school-based participants' initial feelings about participation, their understanding of how their school was selected to be a part of the DST process, the variability in the ways in which they described their roles, and their feelings about changes in the intensity of the participation of central office staff. The discussion that follows gives further details and examples of those ambiguities.

Ambiguous Purpose

Given that the intention of the DST process was to provide support to school improvement efforts at the most struggling schools, one might expect positive reactions to having school in which one works selected to receive DST support. But when principals and teacher leaders were asked in interviews how they felt about the inclusion of their school in the DST processes, their initial responses generally ranged from negative to neutral. School-based participants appeared to feel uncertain about the DST processes due in part to a lack of information about the purpose of the DST and what the process would entail. One teacher-leader noted this lack of information, along with concerns about the potential impact on workload.

Well, at first we didn't know what it was about, and exactly what direction it was going to go, and how much time was going to be required, what the expectations were going to be, or what we were going to be asked to do. You know, our plates were already plenty full. So what was this going to require?

While echoing those feelings of uncertainty, one principal worried about the possibility of losing control over his school. However, like many other school-based participants, the principal made positive statements about the added support and potential for school improvement through the DST process.

I was unsure. I didn't know exactly what it would look like. Well, initially hearing about it, it sounded kind of like a district takeover over of the school. Then I realized it was just a higher level of collaboration that would happen within the school. I think at times I really wanted more supports, but I was unsure how much support I wanted.

Another principal expressed similar feelings ambivalence—wanting support, but not wanting to give up control. As she reflected back on her initial reaction to the selection of her school for the DST process, her wariness about the purpose and process came through clearly. She also spoke to the potential of the process to increase the high levels of stress and even discouragement that she and her staff were already feeling.

At the onset things can be scary, you know. Is it a whole bunch of people up there, who really don't know what's going on, judging and pointing out things? Or is it going to be a true authentic process where they really want to contribute and support? And you know it's a lot of pressure on schools that are really trying hard, working their tails off. And in high needs schools, you got burned-out staffs and sometimes burned-out leaders trying to keep a positive climate and spirit.

For one teacher leader, the selection for the DST process initially brought feelings of failure. But, like the principals previously discussed, she also saw the potential for school improvement through the additional support.

I felt a little discouraged initially because, just to be transparent, obviously that means that we're not doing what we could be doing, which a little is discouraging. But, it's an opportunity to do it the right way, and it makes it apparent that it's possible.

Only one school-based participant expressed a positive reaction to the selection of her school for the DST process. She was unique among the participants in having experienced the DST process and its positive impact on instructional practices and student achievement at her prior school. Her reaction, based on her prior knowledge and information about the purpose and process, was vastly more positive than the reactions of all other school-based participants. Rather than having concerns about a potential loss of control or an increase in work or stress, she focused on the improvement opportunities made possible through added support.

I was thrilled, actually. I saw the power there comes with extra support. With extra hands, extra eyes, extra expertise and brains looking at a problem, you're going to come up with a far greater solution and you're going to see better results. I was a bit overwhelmed when I initially took on the role as the building administrator. When I looked at our data, I was thinking *Oh my gosh! How am I going to turn this around?* So I was extremely thrilled to have the DST come in.

In summary, the marked contrast in the feelings of the principal with prior DST knowledge and experience as compared to the feelings of other school-based participants about being selected for the DST process highlights the information gap between participants and nonparticipants.

Ambiguous Process

An information gap also existed between the central office architects of the DST process and school staff that resulted in a lack of understanding about how schools were selected for participation. Although participants commonly described the DST process as one in which

schools were provided targeted support to improve instructional practices and thus student achievement, their understanding of the selection process varied considerably. According to a central office executive involved in designing the process, all schools in the district were rank ordered based on the most recent 3 years of student achievement data in reading and mathematics, with the lowest performing schools being selected to receive high support from the District Support Team. That explanation is supported by the description of the school ranking process excerpted from the Principal Update Letter in Appendix F, shown in Table 8.

Table 8

In order to identify the schools with the greatest need, DST uniquely ranked the schools according to grade level: Elementary, Middle, and High Schools. Schools were ranked from highest to lowest achieving in terms of proficiency of the “all students” group on the State’s 2011 reading and mathematics assessments. This required DST to average all the grades together within a grade span (i.e., 3-6, 7-8, and 9-12) and generate an aggregate reading and aggregate math score per school from which the schools were then ranked. In a few cases where schools were close in performance, DST considered:

- The growth/gains of the school performance in both reading and math compared to other same grade span schools;
- Performance data after pulling out results from students enrolled in Highly Capable programs;
- Poverty, special education and ELL eligibility rates; and
- The school’s *Step of Improvement*

The objective of ranking schools is to help the district prioritize the support it provides by targeting personnel resources, time, and supports based on performance.

Excerpt from DST Update Letter to Principals

The level of support could be adjusted based on principal leadership. For example, a school near the bottom of the ranking could exit from DST high support status if the principal demonstrated an ability to continue the work without such intensive support. One central office executive alluded to such adjustments in her interview.

We have 41 schools and we look at the last 3 years of their data in the areas of reading and mathematics. We rank order the schools and then look at those that are the lowest performing. We target the lowest 25 percent of the schools for district support team services. We also take into consideration overall principal leadership.

Central office specialists, one step removed from the selection process, explained a similar selection process but with additional variables related to school demographics. One mentioned poverty as a factor. Another central office specialists described both free and reduced lunch status and the population of English Language Learners (ELL) as factors in the selection process, as follows:

Schools were rank ordered based on 3 years' trailing data. The data was mostly based on their test scores, but things were also weighted in terms of if the school was a high free and reduced lunch school and or had a high ELL population. So schools could have lower data but because they are such a highly impacted school, they're doing much better than schools with perhaps slightly higher data but different demographics.

All of the participating schools did in fact have higher percentages of English Language Learner (ELL) students; the percentage spanning from 16.1% to 31.9%, with an average of 26% of ELL students across high support schools, as well as high degrees of students from poverty; these percentages spanning from 67.2% to 82.8%, with an average of 76% across high support schools. However, according to central office leaders, those factors were not actual selection criteria.

School principals, one step further removed from the leaders who designed the selection process, demonstrated similar variability in their understanding of the reasons that schools were chosen to participate in the DST process. Three of the five principals interviewed confused the internal selection criteria with the external factor of being a state-designated Focus School—one

of the lowest 10 percent of schools in the state—or Emerging School—the next lowest 10 percent— based on student achievement data for a particular subgroup such as ELL or special education. This confusion existed among the participants despite the letter (introduced earlier in the chapter) addressed to the principal of the school identified as high support, which described the selection process. The statement from one of the principals is representative of the responses from those three principals.

Our school was selected because we were designated by the state as an Emerging School in special education—students with special needs. Therefore the district support team felt the need to provide extra support to help improve school leadership in instruction and learning.

The other two principals interviewed understood that the participation of their school was based on student achievement data, but they were not able to provide any details about the selection process. Interestingly, none of the principals reported that their school was selected because it was one of the lowest ranked among all of the schools in the district based on student achievement data.

Teacher-leaders, the furthest removed from both the central office decision making and the school selection process, demonstrated the greatest variability in their understanding of how schools were selected to receive DST services. One teacher echoed the principals by attributing the selection to being a state-designated Focus School. Another teacher leader, like the central office specialists, attributed the selection of her school to a combination of student achievement data and demographics.

We had a very low percent of students who passed the MSP. We also had a high percentage of free-and-reduced lunch kids and ELL population, and so we were a building identified as in need of high support from the district level.

The other teacher leaders interviewed simply cited low test scores as the reason for the selection of their schools, but were not able to give further details. No respondent in the teacher leader group indicated any awareness of the school rankings utilized in the selection process. The lack of awareness of any of the principals and teacher leaders of the internal school ranking process as the primary criterion for selecting schools underscores the ambiguity of the DST process. This further highlights the large and discrepant gap in understanding between the central office and schools. It should not be surprising, then, that similar gaps existed in participants' understandings of their various roles in the DST process.

Ambiguous Roles

Despite the documents introduced earlier in this section, that clearly articulated and defined the role and the responsibilities of the various participants in the DST process, interviewees still had varying degrees of understanding of their roles in the process. In interviews, participants were asked to describe the roles they played in the DST process, and also the roles that other participants played. Interview data showed distinct differences in central office staff and school-based staff understanding of the role of the central office. There was no such difference in their understanding of principal roles, however.

I categorized the roles described by participants as Leader, Expert, Doer, and Communicator in order to aid in analysis. Table 9 shows examples of activities in each role category.

Table 9

Sample Activities Included in Each Role in the DST Process

Leader	Expert	Doer	Communicator
Allocate resources Lead meetings Champion the process Gather feedback Monitor progress	Provide coaching Deliver training Share information and expertise	Collect data Analyze data Develop plans Implement plans	Share information with staff Communicate with peers

Central office roles. In response to interview questions, central office executives, central office specialists, and principals described the roles played by the central office in the DST process. Central office executives described their roles primarily as Leader and Doer. These participants mentioned Leader activities five times, Expert activities once, and Doer activities four times. The field notes and document review confirmed the Leader and Doer roles. Field notes from observations of DST meetings showed central office executives leading meetings, analyzing data, and developing plans. Agendas from monthly meetings of central office DST participants indicated that executives monitored the progress of each school team.

In contrast, central office specialists described themselves primarily as Experts and secondarily as Doers. There was one mention of a Leader activity, nine mentions of Expert activities, and six mentions of Doer activities. DST meeting observations, as recorded in my field notes, were that specialists delivered professional development, coached teachers, analyzed data, and developed plans. A central office specialist articulated several roles that she played, including Leader (see that change is possible) and Expert (training).

I advise the principal and instructional coach. I've also done quite a bit of training at the building. I've met with some pockets of teachers that I think could really make a

difference, and if I can get those teachers excited and going, maybe I can build some momentum in the building. I want schools to change their mindset in terms of what's possible, especially the kids who are not succeeding—I want them to see that it is possible and change those kids' lives.

Central office executives and specialists, in total, cited Leader activities six times, Expert activities 10 times, and Doer activities 10 times, as shown in Table 9. In contrast, school principals, when asked to describe the role of central office DST participants, cited Leader activities three times, Expert activities 10 times, and Doer activities four times.

Table 10

Roles of Central Office Participants

Central Office Role	Central Office Executives	Central Office Specialists	Central Office Total	Principal
Leader	5	1	6	3
Expert	1	9	10	10
Doer	4	6	10	4
Communicator	0	0	0	0

Numbers represent activities for central office roles cited by central office executives, central office specialists, and school principals.

The following description of the central office role from a principal interview is typical in its focus on Expert activities. Despite mentioning one Doer activity (i.e., brainstorm ways to improve instruction), there was no mention of Leader roles played by central office participants.

Their role is really to join us as a team member. They came to us as experts in their areas but they were also there to listen and collaborate and brainstorm together about ways in which we could improve instruction and therefore student achievement. I made sure my staff understood that these are people that come in as extra support. They have an area of

expertise that they are bringing with them but they are not dictators. Their job is to come in and to observe, evaluate dialogue openly, support, provide professional development and then provide analysis and feedback.

The differences between central office staff and school staff descriptions of central office roles in the DST process might suggest that principals valued the expert roles played primarily by central office specialists most highly, and that they perhaps undervalued the Leader and Doer roles cited by the central office executives and specialists. If central office participants intended to demonstrate collaboration by working shoulder to shoulder with principals in the spirit of joint work, their efforts might have gone unappreciated. Perhaps the perceived value of their work was related to their position in the organization. This point will be further discussed in the discussion of power in the next section.

Principal roles. The roles played by principals were described quite consistently by central office participants, principals, and teacher leaders, as shown in Table 10. Each group of participants described principals as nearly equal parts Leader and Doer, with principals performing a few Communicator activities as well.

Table 11

Roles of Principals

Principal Role	Principals	Teacher Leaders	School staff Total	Central office staff
Leader	8	6	14	8
Expert	0	0	0	0
Doer	6	7	13	7
Communicator	2	1	3	2

Numbers represent activities for principal roles cited by principals, teacher leaders, and central office staff.

Central office participants described principals as having many Leader and Doer roles, including: leading the school improvement process, collaborating with central office executive to align DST services with the school's needs, providing feedback to the DST team, developing 8-week professional development plans, holding teachers accountable for changing their practice, and analyzing data to look for trends. This description by this principal of her own role mentioned similar responsibilities.

My role is to help the school staff members be on the same page with the District Support Team. This helps us become more focused and aligns our practices with district initiatives, so it doesn't seem like another thing—getting things connected between what we're doing as a school and what the district is trying to do. My role was also to be a good communicator and to build the capacity of my leaders in the school.

Despite the overall consistency in the understanding of the roles of principals in the DST process, there was a difference in the expectations of central office members and principals about the evolution of roles over time, especially as it related to taking responsibility for the process after the school began to show positive progress in student achievement.

Gradual Release of Responsibility

According to central office executives, the DST process was designed as a gradual release model. In the early phases of support, central office leaders and specialists would provide strong leadership—facilitating meetings and data-based decision-making as well as providing professional development to school staff—with the goal of building the capacity of the principal to take over that instructional leadership role. Substantiating this point is a document that articulates four stages of implementation of services provided through the differentiated

services delivery model: installation, initial implementation, full implementation, and innovation and sustainability. A rubric embedded in the document illustrates the gradual release through changes in participant roles. It became evident through participant interviews, however, that this document was predominately utilized and understood by the central office participants and not by principals, despite the fact that this document referenced the roles of principals in the implementation process (see Appendix G).

It was intended that as responsibility was transferred to the principal and his or her school improvement team, the central office members of the DST would reduce the degree to which they were involved in the process until eventually the school was continuing the improvement process independently. In the interviews, neither principals nor teacher leaders demonstrated an understanding of that intention, however. Those school-based participants who noticed a decline in support from central office participants lamented their absence. Even school staff who recognized and described the increase in their own leadership did not seem to be aware of gradual release as part of the plan. One of the central office leaders who assisted in the design of the DST process described the intentionality of the gradual release model as follows:

Initially it was a very highly structured and somewhat rigid process with high levels of participation and lots of repeated communication. It was very tight in terms of most of the processes that were established, and really focused on building the capacity of the school's leaders to facilitate professional development with teachers. That was really intentional, and with this gradual release model over time we were able to scale back the intensity and tightness around some of structures and processes, because we had been building up the instructional leadership capacity at the school.

Though one of the participating principals described the initial phase as “central office folks coming in and teachers being stressed out,” he acknowledged that as the dialogue and work progressed, “it became more of a parallel type process where we worked together side by side.” He also noted that whereas a lot of central office staff came to the initial DST meetings, later “some of them kind of dropped off.” While the gradual release process was evident in his remarks, he did not seem to be aware of it as an intentional part of the DST process.

Several members of the school staff were confused about the changing participation of central office staff. Remarks by a teacher leader reflected feelings of bewilderment and regret at the loss of expertise when the central office participants reduced their visits to the school as they followed the gradual release model.

From the very beginning, I really appreciated having all of the people from the central office come and support us. Then, having them kind of taper off affected us, like “where is so and so? Why didn’t they come?” We had begun to work more as partners, and so as we did the work we wanted to be able to get feedback from others that weren’t there, and maybe have them guide us if they had any suggestions or ideas.

Interestingly, the reliance on central office staff to provide expert guidance was characterized by a central office specialist, at least in some cases, as over-reliance, and appeared to her to be a barrier to gradual release.

I think the DST process for some has been a crutch. Let’s say we’re going to do grade-level data analysis meetings for a school, and have seven meetings scheduled. The intent was that the central office specialist would be there for maybe the first two to model, and then the school-based instructional coach would take over the remaining ones. But instead, it ended up being that the central office person did all seven, and everybody else

just watched. Or take staff development. Building leaders would say “Okay, you’re coming. What are you going to do?” And we would be co-planning but it never felt like we got to that gradual release of responsibility.

This is yet another example of the gulf between central office staff and school staff in the ways that they understood the intended evolution in the participation of the central office. Only one of the principals interviewed spoke proudly of the increased leadership that she and her staff took in the later phases of the DST process. Notably, she did not indicate that doing so was part of a predetermined plan: that an intended outcome of her collaboration with the DST was to grow her ability to lead the school more independently.

At the onset I was asking what the central office staff DST members needed, what they wanted me to do, and how they wanted me to do things. I just wanted to be sure that I was doing all the things they wanted me to do. But now it's involved into, “This is our meeting. You guys come and join us.” And you know, we pretty much have taken over everything. My whole team has been really involved in that and it's not scary any more at all. They really feel a part of the team. It's not somebody coming in and doing something to us. It's us being in control and kind of giving feedback and advocating for ourselves.

It was clear from the interviews that while central office and school-based participants all understood the DST process as focused on improving instructional practices and student achievement, they had very different understandings of the roles that various participants were expected to play and how those roles were intended to change over time. Although this was documented and communicated from central office leaders to specialists, parts of the message were clearly lost in translation between the central office and schools and resulted in feelings of

confusion and even abandonment. In addition, the ambiguity and confusion around the school selection process might have been one of the reasons that some participants reacted negatively upon learning that their school would be receiving DST support.

A Delicate Balance: Power, Trust, and Collaboration

In their interviews, DST participants collectively defined collaboration as working together to develop solutions to identified problems of practice. In an ideal scenario, each team member would feel valued by the others for their expertise and commitment to common goals: Through joint work the team members would develop and demonstrate trust in one another that enables them to challenge each other's assumptions and reasoning with the goal of producing the best possible outcomes. But the reality is that when team members represent different departments and levels in the organizational hierarchy, issues of power can impede the development of trusting relationships and affect participants' perceptions of the process. District Support Teams included members holding positions at various hierarchical levels and reporting up through two different departments. School-based teacher leaders reported to their school principals. Principals reported to executives who were among the central office members involved in the DST process. Participating central office specialists reported to executives in the standards-based instruction department who also participated in the DST process. The principal supervisors and central office executives all reported to the same assistant superintendent, with the principal supervisor at a higher level in the hierarchy (see Figure 5). Successful collaboration in those circumstances requires a delicate balance of power to establish trust.

Building trust requires that all members feel equally valued, even though they do not wield the same amount or type of power within the organization. Executive DST members have a great deal of positional power. This type of power can be useful in getting things done, but can have the effect of muting participants at lower levels in the hierarchy if used too heavy-handedly. Central office specialists hold expert power due to their deep instructional content knowledge. In the eyes of school-based staff, they also hold a degree of positional power by virtue of working in the central office. The expert power in particular can be used to influence school-based staff if there is sufficient trust.

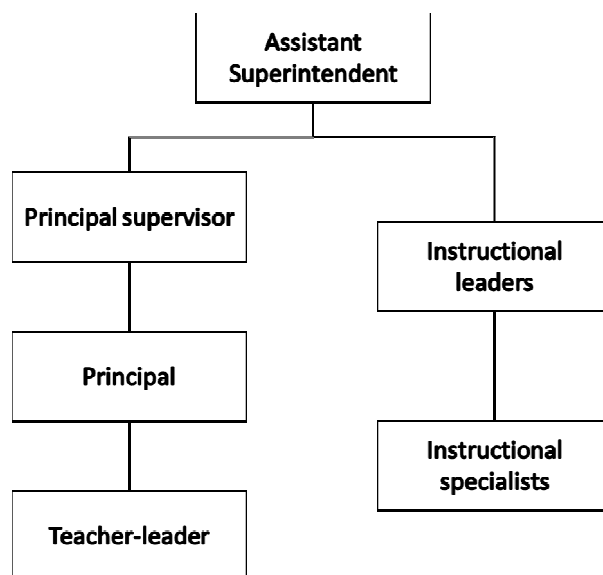


Figure 5. Hierarchy of positions involved in the DST process.

The precarious balance of power and its impact on trust was a theme woven through all of the interviews and mentioned by participants from each of the five schools. The influence of power was felt more strongly in some teams than in others, but in every case the balance of power shifted during the DST process, resulting in greater trust. In fact, building trust among

team members was identified as one of the most challenging aspects of the DST process, yet also noted by some as one of the greatest successes.

Collaborative or Imposed?

Central office executives initiated the DST process as a way to support school improvement by differentiating services to schools based on needs, ensuring that the schools with the greatest needs received the greatest support. Central office staff would partner with school principals and teacher leaders in high needs schools to develop and implement plans to better align instruction with best practices. While the improvement process was intended to be highly collaborative, the initiation of the process did, in fact, come from the central office. A supporting document, titled *Instructional Support Team Model*, describes the foundation upon which the DST model was built. Presented as Appendix H, this document defined the purpose and processes for teams of central office specialists to provide differentiated support to underperforming schools. The excerpt below highlights that services in this model are not only initiated from the central office, but are also prescriptive in nature.

Staff specializing in specific service delivery areas...from various school system departments or divisions ... work together as a team to provide prescriptive instructional recommendations, strategies and support, including coaching, to high need schools on best practices in data-driven, highly effective standards-based differentiated instruction. Reinforcing the prescriptive aspect of DST services, one central office executive noted in her interview that one indicator of success was principals “taking on and implementing the district level recommended services.” With that in mind, it is not surprising that two of the five principals interviewed noted that the DST process felt top-down, with comments like “it was a

bit of a top-down approach” and “you set your priorities and then the DST comes in and switches them.”

One of the central office executives reflected on the role ambiguity described in the previous section, as well as why some participants felt that the process was imposed from above.

I think the process was viewed by many as a top down initiative because I am not sure that we fully brought the principals to 100 percent understand the theory and the idea behind the district support team, and so people didn’t fully understand what they were supposed to do.

Conversely, several participating principals focused primarily on the supportive stance of central office staff with comments like, “They’re really coming in as a support, they really want to help make a difference in our school.” One of the central office executives described how making a shift toward more collaboration often required principals to change their own mindset, consciously choosing to view the central office members’ presence as supportive rather than directive.

The emphasis on DST shifted from a bit of top-down approach initially to a collaborative approach. The principals had to give away some of the control and to understand that the experts coming to their buildings weren’t there to tell them what to do but to provide support. And for those principals who are able to shift into that mode and not see it as something punitive, I think they really saw the power of the process.

In fact, central office team members, prior to embarking on the DST process, made a commitment to being collaborative. Their commitment was evident in a document, dated August 31, 2010, in which they expressed the intent to “foster a culture of collaboration through shared reflective practice, effective communication (e.g., common language) and removal of perceived

barriers.” Also important to note is that a graphic incorporated into the letterhead of the document states “Yes, we can! Together!” (See Appendix I).

Central office specialists were well aware of the power they held and the fear and resistance of some of the teachers with whom they worked. The following statement by a central office specialist eloquently speaks to the relationship between power and trust, and it illustrates her ambivalence about her own power. She began by describing the initial resistance on the part of teachers, and how she was able to overcome it by sharing her expert power. But she went on to indicate that she sometimes allowed principals to utilize her positional power to mandate teacher actions.

I think in some ways teachers saw me as someone coming in, telling them how to do things. I don't think they always felt like I was a partner, and with teachers you have to build relationships before you can really effect change. With some teachers, I felt like I had to first show how I could be of value. I was a classroom teacher for 18 years, so I try really hard to never forget how hard it is to be a teacher. I'm asking them to make a change and I know that they've got all of these jobs and responsibilities already. I know it's a lot to ask of someone, but if I can show them what will go away and what the benefit of that would be, I think I could succeed in the end. And then the other thing is that some of the principals liked to use my role, as in “Stephanie (pseudonym) says we have to”. And I'm okay with that, too.

Teacher leaders likewise acknowledged that the real or perceived positional power of central office staff was often applied as a lever to change practice. One teacher leader indicated that the performance of staff in her school varied noticeably with the changing presence of central office DST members.

The staff feel more accountable when they see district people coming in. So the more the central office DST members came in, the more compliant I noticed the staff was.

Although they balk at anything top down, they really respond to it. For those teachers that needed a little nudge in the right direction, that's what it took, and they responded.

The imbalance of power made visible through top-down directives and expert coaching often made DST participants uncomfortable. However, the application of power was successful in bringing about changes in practice. In other words, the use of power might not feel good, but it can get things done.

Building Trust

Changing perceptions of the DST process from top-down to collaborative required that trust be established between school staff and central office staff. As the central office specialist noted previously, building trust often involved using expertise to assist teachers in ways that added value. Individuals also needed to feel that others respected them, regardless of position. In fact, eight of the 10 school-based participants interviewed felt their central office counterparts viewed them credibly and respectfully. The following statement by a teacher leader was typical of school-based staff responses:

They definitely viewed me as an educator who knew what I was doing. Their demeanor was saying "we believe you can do this. We know that you're capable, and so we're going to approach you as a professional."

Central office staff also reported being viewed positively by school-based staff. Central office specialists felt valued for their deep content knowledge and ability to assist teachers in improving their practice: "I think I'm seen as a very useful resource who makes things practical

for teachers.” Central office executives, on the other hand, brought value by virtue of their positional power and role in the DST process, as noted by one executive, “I was viewed in a positive way, as someone who could help leverage support of the district level, and someone that principals could count on and call and confide in if necessary.”

The only interviewees who reported that they did not feel they were viewed as credible by all of the other participants were the two principals who stated that the DST process had been imposed upon them from the central administration. For example, they felt that some of the central office executives lacked confidence in their leadership. One of the principals related the lack of confidence to his perceived lack of drive.

I think that some were very collaborative and really were looking at me as the leader of the building, and others were very much questioning my leadership because they didn't think that I had the work ethic or drive or initiative to move this building forward.

The most common challenge with regard to the DST process mentioned by all of the interviewees was getting beyond the initial wariness of school staff toward central office staff to build trust among team members. Putting aside their own potential concerns, principals acknowledged the role they needed to play as building leaders and as intermediaries between school and central office staff in building support for the process among their teachers. One principal articulated both her role in calming the fears of school staff and the effect that doing so had on their experience with the DST process.

Building an environment of trust initially was difficult, really explaining that these are people that are not doing something to us but rather supporting us, helping us grow and helping us to improve. I watched staff go from complete distrust of district office,

referring to them as “them” and “other” and “they”. And by the time that first year was done, they really understood that it was a team effort so it was actually well received.

Central office executives also took responsibility for building feelings of trust between school and central office participants. My observations, as reflected in the field notes, were that DST meetings included a multitude of opportunities for central office and school staff to work together in small groups, for example when analyzing data, discussing implications, and recommending future actions. In her interview, one of the central office executives described the intentionality behind those interactions and the resulting transformation in trust over the course of a 2-year engagement at one of the school sites.

I remember vividly our very first DST meeting at one site. It really felt like us versus them, with central office members on one side of the table and the school staff on the other. We really tried, when setting up the agendas for all of our meetings, to have collaborative processes and to have interactive activities, so it wasn't just us talking at them, you know. And then I remember our last meeting at the end of our second year working with that same team. It was just so much more naturally interactive with everybody sitting together. It was just a really nice reflection on how far we'd come in terms of the process and people feeling a sense of relationship and trust.

Interview data indicated that every school site saw an increase in the level of trust and collaboration between school and central office staff through the DST process. This was largely due to the careful planning and actions of central office executives and specialists and the communication and advocacy of principals. This increased trust and collaboration led to more positive feelings about the DST process and a greater openness to learning that resulted in changes to practice. Ideally, the increased levels of relational familiarity and interpersonal trust

would also enable participants to challenge each other's thinking in the interest of school improvement. In fact, some participants acknowledged that they could do so, but only under certain circumstances.

Open Behind Closed Doors

In high-functioning teams, a foundation of trust facilitates open and honest dialogue, which enables the team to bring multiple perspectives to bear on a problem and, by working together, create a solution more effectively than any participant could have created by working alone. Several interviewees said that they felt they could challenge the thinking of other participants in theory, but never felt the need to do so in the larger group. One teacher leader shared that feeling, along with his confidence in the team.

If there was something that stuck out to me that I thought wasn't best practice, or was a misinterpretation of the data, I would have said something, but there were so many people cross-examining the data to begin with, and when you get a bunch of competent people focusing on the same thing, you can pretty much figure it out.

Another teacher leader stated that he felt he could challenge the ideas of other participants, but acknowledged that the central office members of the DST team had a broader understanding of best practices and school improvement. "The DST team has a much bigger view of the district and what's working in different schools. In this school, our view is much narrower, and we didn't realize that it was as narrow as it was."

Two of the five principals interviewed expressed confidence in their teams' abilities to challenge others and trust participants' professionalism and commitment to shared goals, "We didn't hesitate to say anything that needed to be said based upon fear of reprisal, not looking competent, or hurt feelings." The other three principals were not as comfortable and described a

particular aversion to open dialogue with others present. “People are not going to be saying things in public. You’ve got to create that privacy piece, and know that not everyone’s hearing what you’re saying. It’s confidential.” This suggests that challenging another’s thinking amounted to questioning their competence.

In addition to the three principals who described the presence of others as a barrier to openness, central office staff members were uniformly aware of the muting effect of positional power, particularly as it related to principals and the executives who directly supervised them. One central office specialist pointed out how challenging a principals’ thinking in front of his or her supervisor had the potential to erode trust, even if they realized the practice or what was being said was erroneous.

I felt very comfortable saying exactly what I thought when meeting with the principal.

But if we were in a DST meeting, and the executives were there, then I wasn’t going to challenge the principal and say “this is not right, I’m not seeing this.” I’d be throwing them under the bus. There’s a very strict hierarchy here.

Such reluctance to challenge a colleague’s ideas in the presence of his or her supervisor was prevalent among central office staff at both the specialist and executive levels. All preferred holding such open conversations behind closed doors. One executive described this aversion to conflict as a reflection of the district’s culture.

We just have a certain culture, personalities, all of that embedded within our system where that made it hard to just speak up and say “hey, this isn’t working, guys.” I mean, that’s not the culture of our district.

An interesting finding was that successes and challenges from school site meetings were later reviewed by central office DST participants and documented using Microsoft OneNote, an

online notebook, which served as a platform for discussion among district office staff. Specifically, the entries outlined the successes of or challenges with implementation of professional development the school received. Although principals also had access to this file, it largely was utilized as a central office tool for reporting back updates to supervisors.

Two of the central office staff pointed out that the use of data and tools in DST meetings were supposed to facilitate discussions and enable participants to challenge one another's thinking without making it personal. One of them focused on data to neutralize discussions: "I really think that mostly it's looking at data and letting data speak. With data there is always some interpretation, but a lot of times it tells its own story." The other referenced the use of protocols for holding difficult conversations involving challenging others' thinking.

This year we put in place conversation protocols to use when challenging a school improvement team, for example in their interpretation of data, or their understanding of the research; really pushing them to think differently about the work that they're doing. With those protocols in place, that allowed us greater opportunity to push back on the system at the school level.

It is interesting that she mentioned pushing back on practices, or "the system," rather than on individuals. This seemed to reinforce the culture of conflict aversion.

In summary, positional power can be a barrier to trust, and expert power, when shared, can be a bridge to trust. Many school-based staff initially resented central office members coming into the school with the power to dictate. During the DST process, principals made concerted efforts to help teachers see the value of the knowledge and support brought by the central office staff. The central office team, in turn, earned the trust of teachers by treating them with respect and by adding value by sharing their expertise and access to resources. Through

those efforts collaboration and trust increased over time. Still, positional power limited the degree to which DST participants were able to hold open and honest conversations or challenge each other's thinking to create the best possible outcomes.

Laser-like Focus: Data, Tools, and Resources

With its broad objective of increasing student achievement, the District Support Team process could easily have fallen prey to any number of common pitfalls of organizational initiatives, including unproductive meetings, contentious discussions, and lack of follow-through. However, one of the most frequently cited benefits of the DST process was its ability to focus the collaborative efforts of principals and teachers on what mattered most in the effort to increase student achievement. A variety of tools—such as meeting agendas, data collection and analysis tools, and professional development planning templates—gave structure to meetings and kept the work focused on issues with the potential to move practice forward. These tools were developed by the central office DST members and utilized in their work with schools throughout the process. Every interview participant described a variety of these tools.

Focusing Discussions

One of the primary means of keeping discussions focused was the use of meeting agendas that, according to central office executives, “always included processes for engaging people.” Principals, in particular, appreciated the way specific agendas and templates, “helped to guide the conversation and keep everyone focused.” A typical meeting, as seen in the portrayal that opened this chapter, included reviewing conclusions reached and plans developed in the previous meeting. Team members would then update the group on actions taken in accordance with the plan, such as professional development or coaching provided by central office specialists or data

collected regarding teaching practices or student achievement. Next, the group would use protocols to collaboratively analyze the data and make recommendations regarding next steps. Throughout the meeting, the use of turn-and-talks and analysis protocols kept all participants focused on the work at hand (see Appendix J for an example of a DST meeting agenda).

Every DST meeting involved analyzing some type of data—an activity with which some participants had a great deal of experience while others had very little. The effective use of data analysis protocols not only prevented discussions about data from becoming fragmented, but also helped keep all participants equally engaged, as noted by one of the participating principals.

If you just give out the data and say “look at it,” you're going to have people looking at all different pieces of it. The data analysis protocols narrowed our focus to something more specific, which engaged everybody in the conversation because everybody knew what they were looking at.

Data analysis protocols helped give all participants a common focus, in part by leveling the playing field for team members with different levels of experience and expertise (see Appendix K which includes examples of data analysis protocol utilized in DST meetings).

Another way that protocols kept discussions focused and productive was by depersonalizing a data conversation; keeping the discussions objective and focused on findings and implications rather than defensiveness or the assignment of blame. In the words of a teacher leader, “When you're answering questions that are on the template, your conversation stays focused on those questions and doesn’t wander to the excuse making and finger pointing that can happen sometimes when you're looking at data.”

The DST process thus included valuable templates and tools that helped to focus conversations and keep all participants engaged in the purpose of each meeting. One principal

summed up this point by saying, “When there's a protocol or a template in place, it keeps you focused on the actual point of the dialogue.”

Focusing Decisions

In addition to keeping conversations focused in DST meetings, many of the tools and templates used throughout the process focused the attention of participants on data when making decisions. These decision support tools included the aforementioned student achievement data analysis protocol (see Appendix K). However, in the interviews the most frequently mentioned tools were the walk-through data collection tool and the protocol used to analyze the walk-through data. The walk-through tool included a checklist of 41 elements that reflect best instructional practices, and it was used to capture the prevalence of these practices in classrooms. (See the walkthrough tool in Appendix L and data analysis protocols in Appendix K.)

Many DST participants spoke of the usefulness of the walk-through tool in guiding decisions to focus on the practices most likely to improve instruction and increase student achievement. These were typically practices in the staff's zones of proximal development; a practice that was already present some of the time or in some form, but not as frequently or well developed as was optimum. A central office specialist gave this example of using data to bring awareness to best practices and decide on a focus for professional development.

Looking at walk-through data gave us a chance to see things that we were doing well and things we needed to change: both the easy wins and what we needed to take on over the longer term. The walk-through tool itself helped teachers realize that maybe they didn't understand some of the practices or how important they were. Like student-to-student discourse—you know, people didn't realize how important that was until the walk-

through tool came. So we were able to define some development needs and support needs and use tools and data to make those decisions.

The development needs identified by analyzing walk-through data in the DST meetings formed the basis for professional development plans. When making decisions about professional development, teams used planning templates to develop short-term plans as well as yearlong plans. (See Appendices M and N for examples of 8-week and yearlong professional development plans.) A central office executive described how the decisions were made and the rationale for the two types of plans.

We wanted at every opportunity to ensure that we had data-based decisions to inform our work. We designed and used 8- to 12-week plans for professional development, using data to identify what the needs were at the school level and when making course corrections. Having those shorter plans in place and tied to our larger yearlong plan allowed us to be flexible and fluid to adjust to whatever external and internal variables were impacting us.

While all participants spoke to the value of using data to inform decisions, the principals saw most clearly the benefits that resulted from the increased focus. Sometimes the decisions suggested by the data required principals and staff to let go of other initiatives or projects in order to focus on those actions that would make the greater impact on student learning. In his interview, one of the principals described how tools and data became an impetus for letting go.

What I think the tools did was help me increase my focus related to what we were doing with the teaching body. We were able to focus on very specific, high-impact initiatives, and it allowed us to let go of some of the other things that we were thinking about working on and really focus on what mattered.

Another principal echoed the benefits of the data analysis protocols to focus the teaching staff's efforts on high impact work, and his comments also reinforced the value of data in depersonalizing decisions about next steps.

They helped us analyze data in a very specific, systematic way. But they also helped us decide on next steps, and they helped make it non-personal. It was more about the building. It was more about the growth of students or the growth of teachers in their understanding of instruction.

As illustrated above through participant interviews and field notes, the tools and templates that were utilized throughout the DST process were invaluable in helping school-based staff use data to shape decisions that would focus their efforts on what mattered most. In the words of a principal who summed it up nicely, "The tools made us look into the data, and the data's what drove us to come up with our strengths and our weaknesses, which then drove us to what we should work on." As stated previously, one of the most frequently mentioned benefits of the DST process was the increased focus brought by the use of tools and templates. Rather than attempting to improve every instructional practice across every content area, principals and their school improvement teams were able to make data-driven decisions to focus their energy and resources on best practices that would be most likely to yield positive results for teachers and students.

Expanded Horizons: Building Instructional Capacity

At every level regardless of position, central office executives, central office specialists, principals, and teacher leaders all mentioned and agreed that the district support team process allowed them to grow as professionals. Furthermore, each participant at one time or another

during the interview process stated that the district support team process itself was the impetus for growth and that without the DST process schools would likely have continued to fail. Specifically, the participants shared that the process evoked a change in the way the central office staff provided service and support to schools, the way principals led staff in their buildings, and the way teachers instructed students in their classrooms. Such change, at all levels, allowed learning and improvement to be the primary focus of the work.

Central Office Integration

One change brought about by the DST process was a breaking down of barriers within the central office. Leaders and specialists from different departments came together to combine efforts and expertise in order to provide services targeted to the unique needs of each school. Some schools needed broad support to improve instruction for low-income students in reading or math. Others needed assistance developing strategies to better serve their ELL students, and still others required help with finding ways to improve instruction for their special education students. Combining forces in this way not only improved service to schools by differentiating support based on needs, it also increased the knowledge of central office specialists and executives through their interactions with each other. Three of the executives interviewed mentioned how much they learned from colleagues through the DST process. One of them said that the processes were put in place to facilitate knowledge sharing within the central office that contributed to professional learning.

All of our specialists across divisions—special education, English language learner services, and standards based instruction—came together on a monthly basis. That's been a plus to continue my learning personally and definitely the learning across our system.

Reinforcing this finding from interviews are two documents, introduced earlier in this chapter. The principal update letter (see Table 8) describes the DST process as being purposefully “integrated,” and the Scope of the Work document (see Appendix D) shows the various members of the district support team, representing a multitude of departments.

Another executive articulated the many ways that he learned and grew professionally through the DST process; from interacting with central office colleagues and attending DST meetings at school sites. His words show a clear admiration for the deep expertise the central office specialists brought to the process.

Working elbow to elbow with those folks who had this tremendous capacity allowed me grow as an administrator and an instructional leader. Listening to instructional specialists, who have a focus in a particular content area, on a regular basis whether at the monthly DST meeting at the district office or going to a school site and listening to them share their expertise, I learned a lot. Every time I attended a DST meeting, I learned something more about the school, the instructional capacity of the principal, the knowledge of the teachers versus teachers in other schools. I learned every single time.

The other significant change brought about by the DST process was a change in the roles of central office specialists and executives. Rather than spending the bulk of their time at their desks in the central office, these professionals began spending a great deal more time in classrooms. This afforded them new learning opportunities. The executives acknowledged the value of getting closer to the work, “The DST process really kept me connected to schools. We’re on the ground a lot at schools which I think is really important for central office staff.” Another central office executive described how working closely with school staff as a DST

participant gave her a much clearer understanding of the multitude of competing priorities facing school leaders.

I now have a broader understanding of all the different facets and responsibilities that schools have, all the competing initiatives and variables and you know really helping prioritize that, those at a district level as well as at a school level.

Central office specialists, like the executives, described several ways that the changes in their responsibilities led them to grow professionally. They gained a better understanding of the day-to-day realities of principals and teachers, forged closer relationships with instructional staff, and developed their abilities to influence instructional practices. That growth enhanced the specialists' abilities to provide services and effect change at the schools to which they were assigned.

The DST process has really gotten me into the buildings in a much different way. I've always done a lot of trainings for the whole district, but with schools that I've been assigned through the DST process, I know those teachers. I'm in their PLCs and I am coaching them, and that's an entirely different relationship. It's also gotten me into multiple schools. So it's helped me grow my content knowledge and broaden my perspective as to what's actually happening in schools on a day-to-day basis. Through this work, I've built my creditability with people. I speak with a little bit more authority because the work I'm asking them to do is work I'm willing to do myself.

By reconfiguring the mode of delivering professional development and other support to schools, the DST process grew the capacity of central office staff by allowing them to learn from colleagues and from direct experience in schools. It is natural, then, that the presence of central

office DST members in schools would also lead to learning on the part of principals and teachers.

Principal Instructional Leadership

Central office executives noted an increase in the instructional leadership capacity of principals. The learning originated from monthly professional development sessions and ongoing contact with and modeling by central office specialists with deep expertise, as well as the use of tools to focus on best practices. Specific growth areas included making data-driven decisions and gaining a better knowledge of the instructional practices being utilized in classrooms. This was not only evident in interviews, but also evident during observations. In fact, the portrayal that introduces this chapter illustrates this, as does the following excerpt taken from field notes of a DST meeting observation:

The principal shares that the staff has been focusing on student engagement techniques and, more specifically, increasing student discourse in both literacy and mathematics and using visuals and gestures during instruction. She reminds the group that at the previous DST meeting, the walk-through data revealed that 20% of staff were using student to student talk strategies to enhance discussion. The data noted also that 28% of staff were using visuals and gestures consistently in their instruction so that English Language Learners could access the content. She further explains that staff received targeted professional development from the central office specialist in partnership with the school based instructional coach in both instructional strategies. The principal continues to report that although she has not seen the walk-through data, she observed a change in teacher practice immediately following the professional development that was delivered by the central office specialist. She notes that she also provided two additional follow up

professional development sessions after the initial training as she felt that her own capacity and understanding had been built in these areas. She shares that although not all staff members are currently implementing the strategies of focus, she estimates that 80% of staff are implementing the strategies. She thanks the central office staff member for providing the professional development and working with a few of the grade level teams that had had more questions.

This excerpt illustrates not only the growth of instructional leadership, but also the scaffolds of support provided by central office members to increase the instructional capacity of both the principal and the teaching staff. Furthermore, one central office executive explained the support put in place for principals, “We put in place monthly professional development sessions for the principals to support the implementation at the school level, helping them understand what it should look like in the classroom.” Another executive indicated that he saw, “greater insights with people looking at particular areas of the walk-through tool, and deeper levels of conversation including how it might look different in each building or in particular grade levels.” A central office specialist noted that the DST process both forced and enabled principals to spend more time in classrooms and “be much more hands-on in terms of the teaching and learning.”

All of the principals interviewed also noted ways in which the DST process increased their own instructional leadership. The frequent presence of central office staff in schools enabled principals to learn from their expertise by observing and interacting with them. One principal pointed to several areas in which he gained deeper content knowledge in this manner.

Having access to an executive with knowledge of change theory and specific turnaround experience in a building such as this was invaluable. Having contact with ELL, ELA,

and math specialists who delivered professional development for the entire school district and then assisted in the roll-out with my staff was highly effective at changing the school and the direction of instruction.

Other principals mentioned modeling by central office executives as another primary source of growth. Two principals specifically mentioned learning how to use tools based on best practices to make data-based decisions from the modeling of central office staff.

She modeled the discussion of the data: sharing the data, coming up with the strengths and weaknesses, and coming up with the plans. She would model all of that, and really helped me understand the process of using data to focus our efforts. The whole experience is about bringing staff attention to what's important, always backing it up with the data and research-based best practice.

The growth in the instructional leadership capacities of principals was noticed not only by central office staff and by the principals themselves, but also by teacher leaders. One teacher leader described the benefits to teachers of the principal's growth: "I think instructionally it made the principal more in tune with what was happening in the classrooms, and helped him to be able to offer ideas and share those among the staff members as well."

Increases in the knowledge and skills of central office staff and principals are positive outcomes of the DST process. However, the classroom is where the most significant learning must occur. Increasing the instructional leadership capacity of teachers by changing their classroom practice is what directly leads to increases in student achievement.

Improved Instruction

Teacher leaders who participated in the DST process had a unique opportunity to work closely with their principals, central office specialists, and executives to develop strategies to improve student learning. They were able to immediately address the needs of their students by applying the knowledge and best practices gained through instructional coaching, expert modeling, and formal professional development. Coaching was well received by both the teachers themselves and their principals; who saw those practices translated into the classroom. Modeling and professional development focused on the priorities identified through the analysis of student achievement data and walk-through data. Whether a school identified a need to focus on increasing student discourse, the use of hands-on mathematical manipulatives, or the use of higher order questions, for example, central office specialists were deployed to coach teachers, model instruction, and provide professional development to meet those needs. One principal specifically lauded the coaching provided by a central office literacy specialist.

A specialist with expertise in literacy was assigned to my building, and she brought her extensive knowledge of primary foundational literacy to the table. She worked specifically with my K-2 teachers on how to reframe their literacy workshop block. It was reaffirming to see the constant focus on examining our current practices, and then refining and keeping our focus.

Classroom teachers benefited directly from the instructional modeling provide by the central office specialists. Because the modeling was targeted to their specific needs, they were able to apply what they learned immediately in their classrooms, to the benefit of their students. One teacher leader described how this enabled him to become more of an agent for student growth.

Where the data showed a specific lack—perhaps in math problem solving—then that area was targeted by the DST members. They were willing to come in and model that specific skill for us. They offered ideas to change and to try, and ways for me to think about how to approach certain things with students. They offered ideas of how to present the material and to hold students accountable, to really be an agent for student growth.

Another teacher described the opportunities provided to some of his peers to observe modeling by classroom teachers in another school that was experiencing success. The team came back and shared their observations with others in the building. This is another example of how boundary spanning by central office staff benefited school-based participants.

In addition to modeling as a means of focusing teachers' efforts on best practices, central office staff provided onsite professional development. Strict protocols and structures guided the professional development to ensure consistency in the planning, delivery, and follow-through, as shown in the Professional Development Planning Checklist (see Appendix O). The delivery of professional development also utilized best instructional practices as an additional means of focusing staff on those practices. While the central office specialists delivered professional development, sometimes central office executives became involved to keep school staff focused on implementing best practices. One executive gave this example:

One specialist was working with an elementary school to increase the consistency of phonics instruction, and another one was helping them create meaningful math stations. Both specialists provided professional development, then followed up and noticed that the teachers were still not there in terms of consistent phonics instruction nor creating really engaging math stations. And so I stepped in and had a conversation with the principal. We revisited what it would take, and the teachers said they basically wanted

more planning time, so the principal did that. And within a month or 2, we definitely saw stations up and running, and then through walk-throughs we ascertained that the phonics instruction improved as well.

Collaboration between central office staff and school leaders to improve instruction in specific identified areas is a clear example of the intended function of the DST.

Accountability

Although the DST process brought expertise into school buildings as a means of improving practice, another impact was an increase in accountability. The process changed the way: teachers taught, teams worked together, principals led, and the way in which school-based staff held one another accountable for improved practice—all under the watch of the central office. In the words of the teacher leader quoted in the previous section on power, “The staff feel more accountable when they see district people coming in.” The presence of central office staff in schools gave a greater sense of urgency and pressure to improvement efforts and prompted teachers to be more intentional about their instructional decisions, as described by a teacher leader.

I believe that the DST process caused me to think about my teaching and what best practices were, and whether these best practices were taking place within the classroom. For example, it made me think about the time that I put into certain areas, and ways that the material was being presented.

Other teacher leaders commented on how the participation in the DST process increased the ownership and accountability they felt toward understanding and utilizing best practices to raise the level of their instruction and improve student achievement.

It has held teachers to a higher standard and level and has required teachers to seek out better modes of presenting the material and to use better or best practices within the classroom. The DST process has caused teachers to be more intentional about what they're doing and to specifically focus on student achievement.

Principals who worked closely with teacher leaders also noted the growth in the teachers' senses of accountability in its more positive form, empowerment, due to the presence of central office staff. In one principal's words, "they felt very empowered to be agents of change in the building, and felt very supported by the district in that role, which just furthered their desire to do it."

There was an outlier principal who did not see growth in instructional capacity. He stated, "I don't think that the DST process increased teachers' effectiveness. I don't think that it changed them as instructional leaders in the building at all." Interestingly, that principal is one who also felt the process had been imposed on him from above. A central office executive noted that differences in principal and teacher growth were directly related to the level of engagement of the principal.

In the schools where we made the most growth, the instructional capacity of both the teachers and the principal was impacted through their close working relationships with instructional specialists. In buildings where we weren't able to engage successfully with principals, not so much.

The presence of central office staff elevated the sense of urgency and increased the accountability of the school. There was almost consensus on this point.

Epilogue

Five elementary schools and their staff received high support assistance from the district support team. Out of the five schools, two have exited high support status, while three remain in this identification status. Despite these two schools exiting high support district status, as determined by improvement in student achievement data, they are still currently designated by the state as consistently underperforming schools. As a result, they remain identified as Focus schools by the state, representing the lowest performing 10% of schools in the state.

Summary

This chapter presented research findings through discussions of four themes extracted from interviews, field notes, and a review of supporting documents. These themes were: the ambiguity of the purpose, process, and roles within the DST process; the balance of power and its impact on trust and collaboration; the increased focus brought by the use of data and tools; and the growth in the instructional capacity of central office staff, principals, and teachers. In the next chapter, these themes will be utilized to answer the research questions of this study.

Chapter V will present the conclusions of this study and provide implications and recommendations for policy and practice. Additionally, Chapter V will present topics for future research that will help to inform district reform practices related to central office transformation.

Chapter V

CONCLUSIONS

This chapter summarizes the findings of the study, which focus on the experiences of central office and elementary school staff as related to the district support team model; a manifestation of central office transformation, in an effort to improve the performance of failing schools. There is limited research in the area of central office transformation as an answer to school reform, particularly the described experiences of those impacted by this action. Additionally, this chapter will discuss the findings and conclusions of this study in the context of broad literature. The chapter will end with recommendations for policy, practice, and future research.

Through semi-structured interviews with central office staff as well as elementary school based staff, review of documents, and observations, I captured the described experiences of participants from different positions within the organization as they related to the district support team process. Throughout this process, I paid particular attention to the commonalities and differences in those experiences and identified the elements of assistance relationships that either existed or were absent in the district support team process. Also, I attempted to detail how participants described collaboration as part of the process and to understand participants' perspectives on how the district support team process built their instructional capacity.

This study focused on answering the following research questions:

- Primary Research Question: How do central office staff, elementary principals and teacher participants describe their experiences as part of the district support team process, a manifestation of central office transformation, in an effort to improve student achievement?

The secondary research questions were as follows:

- Which elements of assistance relationships do participants identify as part of the DST process, as related to: modeling, peripheral participation, social engagement, tools, brokering/boundary spanning, and joint work?
- How do participants describe the collaborative process of the DST in working toward school improvement?
- How do participants describe the DST process as building the instructional leadership capacity of central office staff and principals?
- What are the commonalities and differences in the experiences of the DST process among participants?

From the analysis of the data, four major themes with several sub-themes emerged that captured the experiences of participants. When interwoven, these themes assisted in answering the research questions presented in this study: (a) the ambiguity of the DSTs purpose, process, and participant roles in the process; (b) the role and impact of power and trust in the collaborative process; (c) the use of tools and resources as a means by which to focus discussion and decisions; and finally, (d) the process itself as the impetus for growing and building the instructional capacity of all participants. The primary research question was answered through conclusions drawn from the secondary research questions and these conclusions are presented in a synthesized manner.

A summary of the findings is presented in relationship to the research questions in addition to their relationship to the literature and other research, the conceptual framework, and implications related to policy and practice. The concept of power and its influence on and role in

the district support team process is also presented. Recommendations for policy, practice, and future research are offered as well.

Research Question 1: Assistance Relationships in the DST Process

Which elements of assistance relationships do participants identify as part of the DST process, as related to: modeling, peripheral participation, social engagement, tools, brokering/boundary spanning, and joint work?

The DST process involved changes in the roles, relationships, and responsibilities of central office leaders and specialists that refocused their efforts and attention on building instructional capacity in schools with the intended outcome of increasing student achievement. One way to build the expertise and capacity of novices within a community of practice is through the formation of assistance relationships with expert practitioners (Honig, 2008; Lave, 1996; Lave & Wenger, 1991; Rogoff, 1994; Rogoff, Baker-Sennett, Lacas, & Goldsmith, 1995; Wenger, 1998). Honig (2008) delineated how central office staff members in expert roles can build instructional capacity through the formation of such assistance relationships with novice school staff. Moreover, Honig identified six elements of assistance relationships that applied to schools: modeling, peripheral participation, social engagement, brokering and boundary spanning, tools, and joint work. The presence or absence of each of these elements in the DST process is examined next.

Modeling

Research suggests that experts can build the capacity of novices by modeling the practices in which they are expected to engage (Brown & Campione, 1994; Honig, 2008; Honig et al., 2010; Tharp & Gallimore, 1991). Modeling occurs when an acknowledged expert

demonstrates a practice that the novice participant is expected to remember, emulate, and internalize (Bandura, 1971; Vygotsky, 1978). Overall, the participants in this study agreed that modeling was present in the DST process. Field notes and a review of documents substantiated this finding. Central office leaders reported that they engaged in modeling for principals and teacher leaders and the analysis of classroom walkthrough data and student achievement data to inform goal-setting and professional development planning. Central office specialists indicated that they had provided instructional modeling both in classrooms and in professional development sessions. School staff reported that such modeling helped increase their instructional capacity as they learned new behaviors and applied them to their own work, and this reinforced the value of embedded professional development in school improvement efforts (David & Shields, 2001; Elmore, 1996; Johnson & Crispeels, 2010; Leithwood, 2010; Marsh et al., 2005; Massell, 2000; McLaughlin & Talbert, 2003; Shannon & Bylsma, 2004; Snipes et al., 2002; Togneri & Anderson, 2003).

However, school-based participants did not mention the presence of modeling as often as did the central office participants. This finding raises questions of transparency: Did central office participants always communicate, when modeling, that they were doing so? Did they indicate that they expected school staff to take on the practices being modeled? For example, when central office leaders modeled the analysis of walkthrough data did they share with principals their expectation that in future DST meetings the principal would lead the analysis? The need for greater transparency is supported by several findings: principals expressed confusion when central office participants decreased their presence and participation; and a central office specialist complained about school staff failing to increase their ownership and leadership of grade-level data analysis meetings. Both of these findings point to a need for

clearer communication about when modeling is occurring, its purpose, and the expectations of school participants to change practice or increase their participation.

Peripheral Participation

Sociocultural learning theorists and researchers describe learning as the transformation in the roles of participants in a community of practice: Novices who enter the community begin participating at the periphery, but become full participants over time by developing mastery of the work; in essence *becoming* a practitioner rather than simply learning *about* practice (Brown & Duguid, 1991; Lave, 1991; Lave & Wenger, 1991; Rogoff, 1994). When forming assistance relationships with underperforming schools, it is critical that central office staff view each school and its staff as peripheral participants capable of strengthening their performance and participation with appropriate support, rather than as low performers (Honig, 2008; Lave & Wenger, 1991). Viewing a struggling school as low performing may become a self-fulfilling prophecy through lowered expectations and decreased staff morale (March, 1994; Mintrop, 2003; O'Day, 2002).

When asked how they were viewed by central office staff most school principals and all of the teacher leaders reported that they were viewed as professionals capable of growth. Several principals also noted an increase in their participation through the DST process, from a supportive participant in the beginning to an active leader over the course of a 2-year period as a result of their interactions with central office experts, thus becoming full participants in the community of practice (Brown & Duguid, 1991; Lave, 1991; Lave & Wenger, 1991; Rogoff, 1994). However, two principals felt that their leadership was questioned by at least some of the central office staff. Elaborating on this feeling, one of the principals felt that central office

leaders thought he lacked the work ethic and drive necessary to improve the school's performance. The citing of personal deficits, rather than a lack of experience, suggests that he did not feel he was viewed as a legitimate peripheral participant (Lave & Wenger, 1991). Thus, peripheral participation as an element of assistance relationships, while prevalent within the DST process, was not universal.

Social Engagement

Assistance relationships between central office and school staff that successfully improve practice must include intentional processes for facilitating the social construction of knowledge around teaching and learning (Honig, 2008). According to Vygotsky (1978), learning occurs when an external activity, such as the analysis of walkthrough data, is reconstructed and internalized between individuals in a social setting (Vygotsky, 1978). Social interaction enables the construction of meaning by giving each participant a voice, with each side illuminating the other (Bakhtin, 1984; Jabri, Adrian, & Boje, 2008). DST participants cited several processes that promoted the co-construction of knowledge, and they typically involved the analysis of data. Interviews and field notes provided evidence that central office leaders utilized defined protocols to lead school staff through the process of understanding the meaning of each best-practice item listed in the walk-through tool and its prevalence in classrooms. Continuing to follow the protocols, DST participants working in small groups analyzed the data to identify areas of growth and success and areas that needed improvement. Dialogue within the small groups allowed participants to share ideas as they worked together to construct the meaning of the data. Participants then shared their findings with the broader group, and this enabled participants to deepen their understanding of best practices, the current state of instruction at the school, and the

development needs of teachers. However, the social construction of knowledge was limited to the analysis of data, in part due to the heavy reliance on data throughout the DST process.

Another reason for the limitation might have been the acknowledged reluctance of DST participants to challenge each other's thinking in large meetings, preferring to air differences of opinion one-on-one. As reported in Chapter IV, the different sources and types of power held by participants (Baldrige, 1971; French & Raven, 1959; Kanter, 1977; Pfeffer, 1981, 1992; Russ, 1994) within a conflict-averse culture appeared to be a barrier to open communication (Brewster & Railsback, 2003). As participants noted in interviews, data often "tells its own story" and depersonalizes discussions.

Tools

Of the six elements of assistance relationships, tools were the most commonly mentioned element in the DST process. Tools are effective means of translating policies into practice and guiding the thinking and practice of school staff around teaching and learning (Burch & Spillane, 2004; Honig, 2008; Honig et al., 2010). Tools may be conceptual—framing how people think (Grossmaan et al., 1999; Honig, 2008)—or practical—guiding actions (Burch & Spillane, 2004; Grossman et al., 1999). Data from interviews, field notes, and a review of documents identified many tools that were utilized in the DST process. One of the most frequently used tools was the walkthrough data collection tool. Developed to monitor the prevalence of best practices in teaching and learning in the classrooms, this tool both codified and communicated the vision of quality instruction of the Puget Sound School District, mirroring the practices of successfully reforming districts (Elmore, 1996; Johnson & Crispeels, 2010; Marsh, 2001; McLaughlin & Talbert, 2003; Togneri & Anderson, 2003). Most of the tools used in the DST process were

primarily practical in nature, with many related to data collection and analysis. This reliance on data to monitor and assess the effectiveness of instructional practices and to plan and evaluate professional development aligned with the reform efforts of many other districts (David & Shields, 2001; Leithwood, 2010; Massell, 2000; Shannon & Bylsma, 2007; Snipes et al., 2002; Togneri & Anderson, 2003; Waters & Marzano, 2006). Other tools included meeting agendas, professional development planning templates, and protocols for professional development design and delivery. One of the primary themes that emerged from this study was the usefulness of these tools in focusing discussions and decisions on best practices and the learning needs of the staff and students.

Brokering and Boundary Spanning

Brokering and boundary spanning, as elements of assistance relationships, are actions that central office staff take to bring new knowledge and understanding into schools (Honig, 2008; Wenger, 1998). A common feature of school districts succeeding at improving teaching and learning is the creation of structures to promote such sharing of knowledge and interactions around problems of practice (Burch & Spillane, 2004; Elmore, 1996; Fullan, 2006; Hargreaves & Fink, 2006; Togneri & Anderson, 2003). Brokering occurs when central office staff give access to knowledge resources from both inside and outside of the school district (Burch & Spillane, 2004; Swinnerton, 2007). DST participants cited two instances in which central office leaders brought in outside consultants to work with school staff and numerous instances in which central office specialists with various areas of expertise worked with school staff to improve their understanding and practice through coaching, modeling, and formal professional development sessions.

Boundary spanning occurs when staff bridge or span the boundaries between different organizational units (Honig 2008; Honig et al., 2010). In the DST process, central office leaders and specialists played dual roles: central office responsibilities related to curriculum development and district level professional development, and DST responsibilities that supported specific high needs schools. In addition, central office specialists spanned boundaries by working with two or more high needs schools, and they were able to share knowledge of practices between them. For example, central office participants arranged for teachers at one participating school to visit another school to observe classroom practices in order to bring new knowledge and ideas back to their home school. Wenger (1998) and Honig (2008) stated that boundary spanners must be viewed as a trusted resource with a high degree of legitimacy.

This study found that brokering/boundary spanning and trust were mutually reinforcing. Offering useful expertise and resources helped central office staff establish credibility and legitimacy, which in turn led to more opportunities to influence practice through brokering and boundary spanning. All school-based DST participants cited the learning that occurred through these brokering and boundary spanning activities as contributing to building their instructional capacity. Furthermore, the central office participants indicated that the time spent in schools contributed to their own professional learning by improving their understanding of the day-to-day realities of principals and teachers.

Joint Work

Little (1990) described a continuum of professional collaboration that includes scanning and storytelling as the weakest form, followed by help and assistance, then sharing, and finishing with joint work as the strongest form of collaboration. Within the context of assistance

relationships, Honig (2008) defined joint work as reciprocal participation in work that both central office and school staff find meaningful and valuable. Joint work leads to improvement as participants inquire into and explore challenging problems of practice together (Fullan & Hargreaves, 2012).

Data gleaned from documents, field notes, and interviews suggest that the experiences of DST participants were only partly collaborative. There is little doubt that central office and school participants found the DST process to be meaningful and valuable. In interviews, every participant indicated that the process built their capacities and led to improved instruction in classrooms. However, many school participants reported that the DST process felt top-down to them and, in fact, central office leaders, who defined the school selection criteria and developed all of the processes and protocols, did initiate the process. Still, participants reported that collaboration increased through working together over several months or even years, with central office staff earning the trust of school staff and school staff gaining confidence in the process and in their roles in it. In a true partnership, principals and executives would be jointly accountable for gains in student achievement (Honig et al., 2010). However, DST participants consistently reported that principals were more accountable for the success of the school—in terms of increasing student achievement—than any of the central office staff, including the executive participants. This difference in perceptions of accountability might have contributed to an imbalance of power.

In summary, the DST process as experienced by participants included all six of the elements of assistance relationships to varying degrees. The most prevalent were tools and brokering/boundary spanning, as both of those elements were built into the structure and operations of the District Support Team. Special tools were developed explicitly to guide the

work of the district support team; brokering and boundary spanning naturally occurred through the assignment of central office experts to work with school staff. Modeling might have seemed more prevalent to all if there had been clearer communication from central office participants about when and why modeling was occurring. Peripheral participation was missing from the experiences of two principals who felt their leadership was being questioned. Greater transparency about the purpose and process of the DST might have alleviated those concerns. The final two elements of assistance relationships, social engagement and joint work, were present, but with limitations related to power. The presence of participants with greater expert power, and particularly positional power, prevented participants from challenging one another's thinking. In addition, different levels of accountability for student achievement outcomes prevented collaboration between school and central office participants from truly reaching the level of joint work.

Research Question 2: Collaboration as Experienced by DST Participants

How do participants describe the collaborative process of the DST in working toward school improvement?

The DST process brought together staff with different areas of expertise from the central office and school sites. The participants also represented different levels in the organizational hierarchy, with some participants supervising others. Specifically, this study explored whether participants felt that the process was collaborative and what elements of the process either contributed to or impeded collaboration.

Research has shown that working in isolation is a barrier to improving student achievement, whereas working within a professional community with shared purpose and

collective responsibility can build teacher efficacy and organizational capacity (Newmann & Wehlage, 1995; Pfeffer & Sutton, 2000; Rosenholtz, 1991; Schmoker, 2006). Through collaboration with other professionals both within and outside of their work group, teachers acquire new knowledge to improve their practice. Thus, collaboration builds social capital through the establishment of new professional connections and builds human capital through the circulation of knowledge (Hargreaves & Fullan, 2012). However, true collaboration can only occur within an environment of trust, which is necessary to provide support for teachers who need to take the risks involved in changing practice (Baier, 1994; Bryk & Schneider, 2002; Goldring & Rallis, 1993; Louis, Kruse & Associates, 1995; Moolenaar et al., 2010).

The central office initiated the DST process to support selected underperforming schools through prescriptive instructional recommendations. While top-down in its genesis, the process was designed to be collaborative. Moreover, the intent was for central office executives to transfer the leadership of the improvement efforts of the DST team to principals through a gradual release model. But not all participants felt that the process was completely collaborative.

The delicate balance of power in the DST process and its impact on trust and collaboration was a major theme that emerged in this study. When describing their experiences, some of the participating principals described that the process felt imposed upon them by central office executives. Authorities with positional, decision-making power can effect change by influencing subordinates and compelling people to adopt new practices (Gamson, 1968; Pfeffer, 1992). However, Hargreaves and Fullan (2012) pointed out that excessive prescription of instructional practices from above does not develop educators' capacities to reflect on and create new practices themselves. In addition, many DST participants pointed to a lack of trust, particularly in the early phases of the process, and a noticeable restraint in staff words and

actions when central office executives were present. As Tschannen-Moran (2014) noted, the cultivation of trust is difficult in school district hierarchies because those at higher levels have the ability to reward and punish those at lower levels. In the Puget Sound School District, described by many participants as particularly hierarchical, the positional power held by central office executives delayed the development of trust and ultimately prevented the openness necessary for many DST participants to challenge one another's thinking in the spirit of collaborative dialogue. Power in organizations resides not only in the hierarchical structure, but also in social networks and accepted ideologies. Without the ability to challenge one another's thinking openly, both of these become inhibitors of reflective practice (Boud & Walker, 1998; Fook & Askeland, 2006; Foucault, 2001; Reynolds, 1998, 1999; Vince, 2001a, 2001b).

Although slow to begin and develop, collaboration and trust increased through the DST process over time at some school sites. The experiences of school staff working with central office participants, including the sharing of expert power by central office specialists, reduced the initial imbalance of power and increased trust. As trust began to develop, participants demonstrated a greater willingness to work together. Thus, trust and collaboration were reciprocal and mutually reinforcing (Brewster & Railsback, 2003; Tschannen-Moran, 2001). However, trust does not just occur naturally and spontaneously, rather, it "must be cultivated through speech, conversation, commitments, and action" (Solomon & Flores, 2001, p. 87). In fact, the findings of this study suggest that central office specialists worked to cultivate trust by adding value to teachers, whether by modeling instruction or providing information and resources—essentially sharing their expert power. Additionally, tools and protocols were also developed intentionally to increase collaboration. Meeting protocols and agendas always called for central office and school staff to sit together in small groups, with frequent group discussions

to analyze and interpret data, identify implications, and propose next steps. In essence, DST participants worked together in a community of practice, with individuals regularly interacting and learning from one another with a shared repertoire of tools and routines (Lave, 1991; Wenger, 1998). By participating in and sharing power through collaboration, school staff felt increasingly valued and engaged in school improvement efforts. As a result, the level of trust between school and central office staff grew.

The increasingly collaborative dialogue that formed the heart of DST meetings was an example of reflective practice (Habermas, 1970, 1971; Osterman & Kottkamp, 1993), wherein teacher leaders, with the support of their central office colleagues, examined areas of consonance and dissonance between their own practice and the best practices incorporated into the walk-through tool. That collaboration enabled teacher leaders to reflect on action, as described by Schön (1983), as well as to make adjustments to their own practice and incorporate the ideas gained from the collaborative discussions into their teaching practice. The DST process thus increased organizational learning by promoting the formation of both relational and ideological linkages (Johnson & Crispeels, 2010) between the central office and school-based participants. This occurred through the development of trusting relationships and a shared understanding of what good instruction is (Johnson & Crispeels, 2010; Lasky, 2004).

In summary, although some school participants initially viewed the DST process as a top-down imposition of power, central office members earned the trust of school staff by sharing their expertise and by working collaboratively with school staff utilizing shared tools and protocols. While positional power acted initially as a barrier to trust, the sharing of expert power and carefully planned collaboration were keys to increasing trust. Growing trust enabled further

collaboration, reflective practice, and organizational learning. Further discussion of the issue and influence of power appears in a later section of this chapter.

Research Question 3: Building Instructional Capacity

How do participants describe the district support team process as building the instructional leadership capacity of central office staff and principals?

The importance of this question cannot be overstated, as the driving purpose behind the District Support Team process was to build the instructional capacities of teachers and the instructional leadership capacities of principals in order to improve student achievement in struggling schools. Research on school district reform has shown that common factors in successfully reformed districts included recasting principals as instructional leaders, providing necessary professional development support (Leithwood, 2010; Marsh et al., 2005; Togneri & Anderson, 2003), and providing embedded professional development for teachers based on best practices (David & Shields, 2001; Johnson & Crispeels, 2010; Leithwood, 2010; Marsh, 2001; Marsh et al., 2005; Massell, 2000; McLaughlin & Talbert, 2003; Shannon & Bylsma, 2004; Snipes et al., 2002; Togneri & Anderson, 2003). Moreover, research on central office transformation showed that when forming brokering relationships with school staff, central office specialists developed their own capacities as they learned from the reform experiences of schools (Burch & Spillane, 2004). The DST process, as the impetus for change and growth in all participants' professional capacities, was a major theme that emerged from this study. The growth of principals, teachers, and central office staff through the DST process are each discussed separately below.

Principal Instructional Leadership

Documents defining the DST process and interviews of central office executives clearly indicated that the DST process was designed to grow the instructional leadership capacities of principals through the gradual release of responsibility for facilitating DST meetings. In these meetings, participants analyzed data on instructional practices and student achievement in order to monitor the alignment of instructional practice with best practices and to plan professional development to fill in the gaps. Only some of the participating principals readily took on a greater leadership role in the meetings, partly because the principals, as a group, were not aware of the expectation of a gradual release. However, all of the principals interviewed discussed other ways in which the DST process increased their instructional leadership capacities. Examples included: learning from the modeling provided by central office executives as they led DST meetings, participating in monthly professional development led by principal supervisors, observing on-site teacher professional development sessions led by central office specialists with deep content area expertise, and participating in learning walks and the associated debriefings with colleagues from the central office and from other schools.

The increase in the instructional leadership of the principals was noted not only by the principals themselves, but also by central office executives--particularly the principals' supervisors who worked closely with them throughout the DST process. Consistent with the research finding that improving schools reprioritized the work of principals to focusing more on instructional leadership (Honig et al., 2010; Leithwood, 2010; Marsh et al., 2005; Marzano & Waters, 2009; Togneri & Anderson, 2003), the principals in this study spent more time in classrooms to collect the required amount of walk-through data, and thus became more aware of the instructional practices in place. This placed them in better positions to guide teachers toward

best practices. Consistent with the partnerships with principals referred to by Honig and colleagues (2010), the principals' supervisors accompanied them on classroom visits, led professional development, and linked the needs of the schools with the necessary central office experts.

Teacher Instructional Capacity

Of all of the actions taken by districts attempting to improve schools, providing effective professional development support to teachers is among the most prevalent, as noted by Shannon and Bylsma (2007) in their meta-analysis of research studies of improving school districts. All of the teachers interviewed in this study agreed that the DST process increased their instructional capacities through a variety of activities, such as: side-by-side coaching and modeling provided by principals and central office specialists, guided classroom observations in other schools, and structured professional development sessions facilitated by central office experts. The source of learning that appeared most useful to the teachers was the modeling of and coaching on best practices that were provided in the classroom by central office specialists with instructional expertise in literacy, math, and English language learners. This is consistent with research that has found that the most effective professional development for teachers is based on best practices that are job-embedded, differentiated, and aligned with school improvement initiatives (David & Shields, 2001; Johnson & Crispeels, 2010; Leithwood, 2010; Marsh, 2001; Marsh et al., 2005; Massell, 2000; McLaughlin & Talbert, 2003; Shannon & Bylsma, 2004; Snipes et al., 2002; Togneri & Anderson, 2003). In addition, the instructional capacities of teachers grew as a result of reflecting on practice both in DST meetings and in one-on-one coaching conversations. Researchers have elaborated on the role of collaborative dialogue in promoting reflective

practice to enable novice practitioners to find areas of consonance between their own practice and that of experts (Habermas, 1970, 1971; Osterman & Kottkamp, 1993; Schön, 1987).

By exposing areas of deficit, reflective practice entails personal risk and vulnerability for the practitioner. Openness, therefore, requires that power among participants not be wielded in a punitive manner (Finlay, 2008; Habermas, 1971, 1984). Administrators—whether principals or central office staff—who exercise power over teachers will inhibit growth, while those who engage in power with teachers will spur capacity-building that results in improved teaching and learning (Blasé & Blasé, 2002; Follett, 1918). Consistent with these findings, central office DST participants who were deployed to support teachers in this study described having to overcome an initial resistance and lack of trust on the part of school staff members who felt vulnerable in the presence of central office outsiders. As their instructional capacities and confidence grew through the DST process, several teacher leaders described themselves as taking on leadership roles with their peers in order to effect change beyond their own classrooms. This reinforces Applebaum, Bailey, Berg, and Kalleberg's (2000) findings that investing in employees empowers them, with the result of increasing morale and quality outcomes. While an analysis of outcomes in the form of quantitative student achievement data was beyond the scope of the current study, previous researchers have found that the more individuals understand and are empowered, the better the results (Axelrod, 1980; Block, 1987; Burns, 1978; Lax & Sebenius, 1986). This raises the question of whether the increased empowerment of at least some teachers through the DST process led to improved student achievement.

The professional development activities designed as part of the DST process increased teachers' human capital by giving them new pedagogical content knowledge that could be used to improve their classroom practice (Coleman, 1988; Fullan & Hargreaves, 2012). A valuable

byproduct of the DST process was the development of new ties between teachers and central office staff through the increased presence of the central office staff in the schools, thereby increasing the social capital of the teachers and their access to a greater store of knowledge and information (Hargreaves & Fullan, 2012; Leana, 2011; Pil & Leana, 2009). Leana (2011) found that although human capital does contribute to positive student achievement outcomes, social capital contributes even more. Therefore, the increase in the social capital of the teachers through the DST process might ultimately prove to be more effective in producing long-term improvement in schools than the gains in teacher human capital.

Central Office Capacity

While not a stated purpose of the DST process, capacity building extended from teachers and principals to include central office specialists and executives as well. All central office participants described ways in which their capacity grew. Most notably, the opportunity to spend extended amounts of time in classrooms increased the understanding of executives and specialists about current instructional practices and the day-to-day challenges faced by teachers and principals. This supports the finding of Burch and Spillane (2004) that the brokering activities of central office staff had an important role in the development of the instructional leadership capacity of the central office by helping district staff learn from the experiences of school staff. In addition, central office staff learned from interactions with their expert colleagues (Gallucci, 2008; Honig, 2008; Vygotsky, 1978), both in DST meetings held at school sites and in monthly central office DST participant meetings. The DST process allowed professionals with different areas of expertise to combine forces and work collaboratively in the

support of struggling schools, and this removed barriers between central office departments. As a result, these experts learned from each other in unanticipated, yet satisfying ways.

In summary, the DST process facilitated the instructional capacities or instructional leadership capacities of all of the participants in a variety of ways. As trust developed between school and central office staff, both teachers and principals grew through collaborative reflection, modeling and coaching, formal professional development, and particularly through their interactions with central office experts as more knowledgeable others. In addition, principals grew from increasing their participation in, and leadership of, DST meetings. Central office staff grew from increased time in schools and from interactions with each other. These findings illustrate the interrelationship between social capital and human capital: The new social connections provided DST participants access to information and knowledge that enabled them to improve their practice. In addition, the findings support the value of the human resource frame as a lens for examining organizational improvement: Investing in the learning of employees can result not only in greater productivity but also empowers them to contribute in greater ways. Finally, the findings reinforce the work by Honig (2008) on the effectiveness of assistance relationships between expert central office staff and school practitioners to build instructional capacity as a school improvement strategy.

Research Question 4: Commonalities and Differences in Experiences

What are the commonalities and differences in the experiences of the district support team process among participants?

The fourth research question examined the commonalities and the differences in how teacher leaders, principals, central office specialists, and central office executives experienced

the District Support Team process. It is natural to expect that, due to the design of the process, participants should have many experiences in common, but also that they would have some diverse experiences based on their different roles. Some elements of the work of the DST, such as meetings to analyze data and plan professional development, were accomplished in meetings that involved all participants, while other elements, such as modeling a particular instructional practice, involved subgroups of participants. Therefore, the activities that each participant engaged in varied.

Commonalities

Some of the common experiences of DST participants related directly to the design of the DST process and tools. All participants—from the central office as well as from schools—spoke of the importance of data, templates, and protocols for bringing focus to discussions and decisions. Participants appreciated the walk-through data collection tool as a means to focus attention on best instructional practices, and data analysis protocols to facilitate decision-making and neutralize discussions. In fact, as mentioned previously, the use of tools to focus discussion and decisions was a major theme that emerged from this research. Another common finding across participant groups was an increase in the instructional capacities of the participants. All participants formed new or stronger connections through the DST process, and they gained new knowledge and skills from these connections, thus increasing both their social capital and human capital (Baker, 1990; Coleman, 1988; Hargreaves & Fullan, 2012; Leana, 2011; Pil & Leana, 2009). Although the purpose of the DST process was to increase the instructional capacities of school staff members, the central office participants learned and grew as well. While these

common experiences were shaped by the DST process, others stemmed from the culture of the school district.

Participants described the Puget Sound School District as being particularly hierarchical and, in fact, the influence of power on the DST process was felt and described in every interview. Power is the force that makes things happen in organizations, and it stems from many sources (Bolman & Deal, 2008; French & Raven, 1959; Pfeffer, 1992). DST participants recognized that power stemmed first and foremost from one's position within the hierarchy, but also that it stemmed from one's knowledge and expertise. Hierarchically, central office executives outranked principals, who outranked teachers. In terms of expertise, central office specialists with a great deal of expertise had the power to influence the actions of both principals and teachers. One result of these power imbalances was the teachers'—and even several of the principals'—mistrust of the central office staff in the initial phases of the DST process. By sharing their expertise with teachers through modeling and coaching, central office specialists reduced the power differences and cultivated the trust necessary for collaboration to occur. As collaboration increased, the trust among participants continued to increase as well, forming a mutually reinforcing cycle, consistent with the findings of Brewster & Railsback (2003). This interplay of power and trust, and the gradual increase in collaboration throughout the DST process, were common experiences across participant groups.

Differences

As mentioned above and described in Chapter IV, participants with different positions in the school district showed a great deal of variation in their understanding of the DST process, and they played different roles in it. Central office executives initiated and designed the process,

developed the tools, and led the initial meetings with school-based participants. Naturally, they showed a very clear understanding of the purpose, process, and procedures, including the school selection criteria and the intended gradual release model. Central office specialists, who reported directly to some of the participating central office executives, had knowledge of the process that was almost as clear. These specialists benefited from a great deal of communication with the central office executives, including monthly meetings with all central office DST participants in addition to the day-to-day interactions with them both in the central office and at school sites. As a result, they were aware of the purpose, process, and gradual release model, and they had a reasonable grasp on the school selection criteria.

The school-based participants, including principals and teacher leaders, were further removed from central office executives both geographically and politically. Located in schools, they did not have daily access to the central office architects of the DST process, nor did they attend monthly meetings with them. Also, they reported up through a different chain of command: They were accountable directly to the central office executives who supervised principals, rather than to those responsible for curriculum and professional development who designed the DST process. While the principals did receive a document that outlined the DST process in detail, they demonstrated a lack of understanding of why their school was selected, the roles of various participants, and how those roles were intended to change over time. Increasing the clarity around roles might have increased the effectiveness of the District Support Team. The structural frame, as described by Bolman and Deal (2008), indicates that well-defined roles and responsibilities are essential to an organization's performance and that in their absence confusion arises. In addition, a necessary ingredient of high-performing teams is a blueprint of roles and relationships designed to achieve common goals (Bolman & Deal, 2008; Keidel, 1984).

Many school-based staff felt, at least initially, that the DST process was something done to them by the central office. There is a difference between communicating with participants as subjects of a process and communicating to them as objects of the process (Jabri et al., 2008). Communications from the central office might have contributed to the interview finding that school-based staff felt like objects. A different approach, perhaps in the form of a personal meeting in conjunction with the received written communication (see Appendix E), might have prevented this reaction from school staff and engaged them sooner as active contributors to the DST process. In addition, implicit in the staff's response was the role of power.

Communications from the central office embodied three types of power: positional power, wherein positions confer certain levels of authority (French & Raven, 1959; Pfeffer, 1992); information power, held by those with the information and know-how to solve problems (French & Raven, 1959); and knowledge-linked power, which assumes the authority of the truth (Foucault, 1977). The issue of power will be addressed further in a later section of this chapter

The different types of participants played different roles in the DST process, as discussed in Chapter IV. Central office participants—a combination of executives and specialists—played roles categorized as leader, expert, and doer; and principals played roles categorized as leader, doer, and communicator. One of the major themes that emerged was the ambiguity of roles and processes. Through the process, the role of central office participants diminished and the roles of some school-based participants expanded, in accordance with the gradual release model that was intended, though not widely understood. In addition, central office and school-based participants had different levels of accountability for the measures of the DST process success, classroom instructional practices and student achievement. Although central office leaders were the visionaries and architects of the DST process, the school principals were the ones who felt the

greatest accountability for its outcomes. Ideally, partnerships between central office and school staff would include a shared accountability for positive outcomes (Honig et al., 2010; Katzenbach & Smith, 1993).

A final difference in participants' experiences with the DST process was a variation in the five principals' initial feelings about the participation of their schools. Two principals viewed their inclusion of their schools negatively as a district imposition or takeover, two viewed it neutrally, and one welcomed the DST process as support in the form of extra hands, eyes, and expertise. While those attitudes were likely shaped by numerous factors—perhaps the principals' own levels of efficacy, levels of confidence in their staff, and previous experiences with the central office participants—their different levels of familiarity with the process were undoubtedly at play. The principal who reacted positively had had prior experience with the DST process in another school receiving such services, and this person was able to use that experience to more readily build trust in the process among her staff. That finding suggests that a lateral network of support—as described by Fullan (2006) and Hargreaves and Fink (2006)—between principals and staff at the various participating schools could be a positive resource for the DST process, facilitating a sharing of experiences that could alleviate concerns and fears and aid in building trust.

In summary, differences and commonalities in the roles, responsibilities, and reactions of DST participants coexisted. All participants benefited from the tools and protocols that focused discussions and decisions, and grew their professional capacities through interactions with team members and participation in the process itself. In addition, the influence of power was pervasive in the process, as evident in the underdevelopment of the social engagement and joint

work elements of assistance relationships which impacted collaboration and openness between central office and school staff, and influenced the receptivity of participants to the process.

Primary Research Question: Described Experiences

How do central office staff, elementary principals and teacher participants describe their experiences as part of the district support team process, a manifestation of central office transformation, in an effort to improve student achievement?

The four emergent themes as well as the conclusions drawn to answer the secondary research questions, when synthesized, provide the answer to this question. Overall, participants reported positive experiences regarding the district support team process. All participants shared that the district support team process grew their instructional and leadership capacities. In addition, several participants described the DST process as the impetus for both change in practice and school improvement. Participants also reported the value derived from the expansion of their social networks outside of their immediate work group; a form of social capital as described by Baker (1990) and Coleman (1988), who posited that social capital is created through changes in vertical and horizontal relationships. Participants stated that the network provided access to new information and expertise, affirming the findings of previous research that an individual's interactions with others affect his or her access to resources such as knowledge, information, influence, and opportunity (Hargreaves & Fullan, 2012; Leana, 2011; Pil & Leana, 2009). This highlights the potential of assistance relationships to promote and develop professional capital in school improvement efforts.

Noticeable in the described experiences of all of the participants were the use of data, tools, templates, and protocols to neutralize and focus conversations targeting improvement

efforts. Protocols, tools, and templates created for the DST process enabled participants to identify gaps between current practices and best practices that allowed the prioritization of professional development needs to surface. Additionally, the use of these items represents joint work; a crucial element to assistance relationships and the most sophisticated form of collaboration.

The described experiences of school-based participants revealed a lack of clarity about the DST purpose and the process. School-based staff reported that they did not have a clear picture of their role, the role of their staff, nor the role of central office staff. As a result, the majority of school-based participants were initially passive recipients of the process. Although their passivity changed and they grew more active over time, the onset of the DST began in a confused state and left many school-based staff wary of central office participants, as they viewed them as intruders in the school who did not truly understand the situation in the building. As noted by Keidel (1984), a cohesive structure with clear roles and responsibilities is a hallmark of high-performing teams; its absence during the initial part of the DST under study likely inhibited the initial success of the DST.

Finally, aspects of power were present in the described experiences of the participants in the DST process, which was conceptualized, constructed, and deployed from the central office. As a result, the school staff viewed the process as an imposition of power by those responsible for its deployment. This created an initial barrier to trust, that made collaboration slower to develop. However, the conscious application and sharing of expert power by central office specialists built credibility and trust, allowing the elements of assistance relationships to foster the school improvement process.

The Consideration of Power

The theoretical framework of this study draws upon sociocultural learning theory (Bandura, 1971, 1977; Vygotsky, 1978), which posits that all learning is social and describes the environment and processes for human development and learning (Bandura, 1971, 1977; Vygotsky, 1978). This set of theories asserts that learning is situated in social contexts, learning manifests in changing participation in communities of practice, learning occurs through modeling by a more knowledgeable other, and individuals make meaning through communication and dialogue (Bakhtin, 1984; Bandura, 1971; Brown & Duguid, 1991; Jabri et al., 2008; Lave, 1991; Lave & Wenger, 1991; Rogoff, 1994; Vygotsky, 1978; Wenger, 1998; Wertsch, 1991; Wertsch & Tulviste, 1992). Sociocultural learning theory is a driver for assistance relationships (Honig, 2008); a key element of central office transformation (Honig et al., 2010). Whether intentional or not, the DST and its processes are representative of assistance relationships. Therefore, the DST and the use of assistance relationships, through a collaborative and trusting process, cultivated a method by which to build instructional and leadership capacities at the school level in an effort to increase student achievement.

However, upon deeper analysis of the DST process and the described experiences of all participants, the concept of power and its pervasiveness throughout the system at the macro and micro levels surfaced. At the macro level, power is present through accountability measures embedded in federal, state and local policy, such as NCLB and ESEA Flexibility waiver mandates. Driven by power, these mandates triggered district and school reform efforts as a means of meeting the multitude of federal, state, and local accountability requirements. This macro-level power, disguised as accountability requirements, is transmitted to the micro level at both the central office and the school building and most importantly, is present in both position

and process. It is this permeation of power and how individuals both understand and use it that expands or diminishes the potential of the DST process. More specifically, the impact of power on assistance relationships, collaboration, and trust can contribute to the success or failure of the model at each building. Therefore, both the misunderstanding and the misuse of power, and either the transmission of too much or too little power, may positively or negatively influence the ability to build instructional and leadership capacity in schools.

Figure 6 provides a graphic representation of the conceptual thinking about the role of power in the district support team process. Power, albeit a generator of the reform process, is both understood and equalized in the process. When power is understood and used properly by both central office and school-based staff, it becomes balanced with equal amounts of trust, making assistance relationships with high degrees of collaboration possible, thus resulting in increased instructional and leadership capacity building.

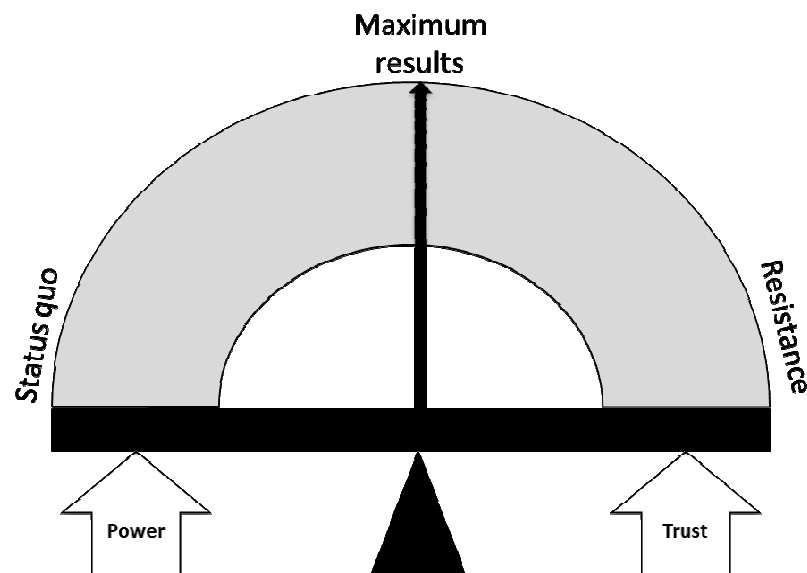


Figure 6. Power is balanced, enabling highly collaborative assistance relationships that result in instructional and leadership capacity building.

In contrast, Figures 7 and 8 depict the overuse and underuse of power, respectively. The overuse of power undermines trust and creates resistance to the improvement process, offsetting aspects of assistance relationships and collaboration, and therefore negating efforts to build instructional and leadership capacity. The underuse of power will produce similar results but with a different cause: yielding inadequate improvements in instructional or leadership capacity building due to a lack of impetus for change.

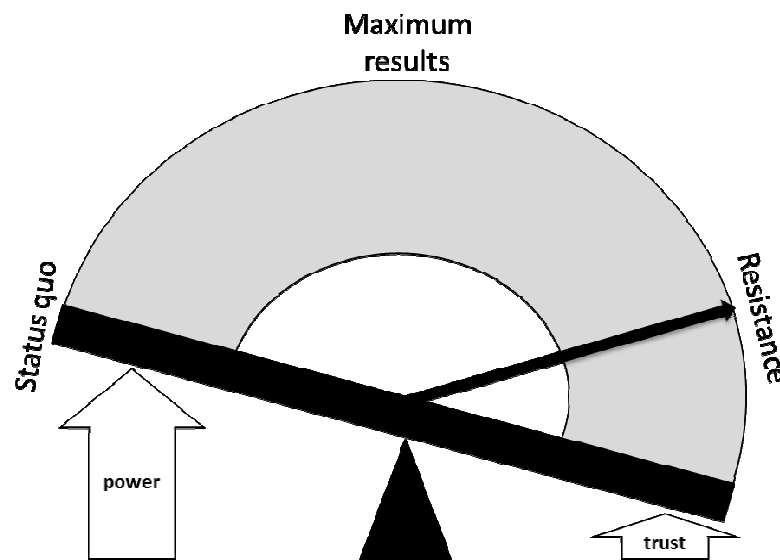


Figure 7. The overuse of power diminishes trust, inhibits the formation of assistance relationships, and stymies capacity building.

As described in Chapter II, Foucault (1977) postulated that power produces reality, and in fact power “reaches into the very grain of individuals. . . inserts itself into their actions and attitudes, their discourses, learning processes and everyday lives” (p. 30). Therefore, power was not only pervasive throughout the DST process, but its balance was critical to a successful improvement process. Any attempt at central office transformation through the use of assistance relationships to build instructional leadership and capacity in schools must address the sources and degrees of power present in the organization.

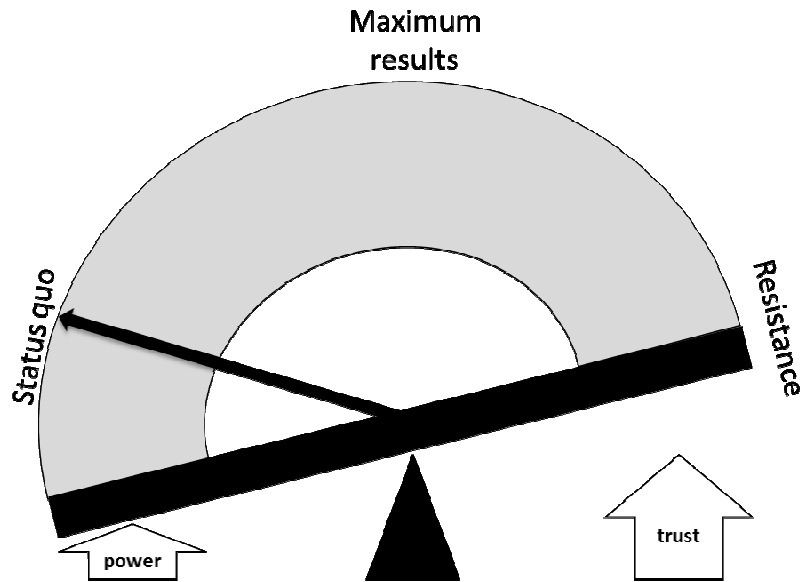


Figure 8. The underuse of power minimizes the impetus for change and maintains the status quo.

Recommendations for Practice

Emerging from the findings of this study are several topics for which recommendations will be made to inform and improve future practice for districts embarking on central office transformation work or considering employing a similar system of support. These recommendations relate directly to the district studied, as well as to other districts that, in the future, may opt to utilize a differentiated support service model that includes a district support team to build leadership and instructional capacity in failing schools in order to increase student achievement. The recommendations are all centered on building shared understanding and capacity of team members. These recommendations include: (a) clearly communicating the purpose, process, roles, responsibilities, and vision for central office transformation work via a district support team model; (b) understanding and addressing the nature of power, its influence and its role in reform efforts, and specifically in the district support team process; and (c)

ensuring that stakeholders develop a shared understanding and knowledge of the elements of assistance relationships and their role in school improvement.

Clear Communication

Transforming any organization is challenging, as organizations are complex living ecosystems with ever-changing environments. The Four Frame Theory, developed by Bolman and Deal (2008), provides a framework to diagnose and analyze organizational needs and accompanying challenges. The structural frame is the most appropriate frame for clear communication of the purpose, process, roles, and responsibilities of the district support team process.

The structural frame is built on the basic assumption that clearly articulated goals and well-defined roles and responsibilities in an expressed hierarchy, with coordinated and efficient effort, are critically important to the success of an organization (Bolman & Deal, 2008). When structural foundations are absent in an organization or do not align with organizational goals, troubles and confusion often arise (Bolman & Deal, 2008). Structural theorists believe that structure influences an organization's behavior and that through careful delineation of roles and responsibilities an organization's ability to achieve its goals increases.

During the interview process, it was readily apparent that there was confusion among participants—who were at different levels in the organizational hierarchy—regarding the overall purpose of the district support team, as well as the roles, responsibilities, and the process itself. The central office staff demonstrated a much clearer understanding of the purpose, process, roles, and responsibilities than did the school staff. Central office staff involvement in, or proximity to, the planning and development of the differentiated service model and the district support team process likely accounted for this difference.

Since the district support model is predicated on school-based staff and central office staff operating as a team, clearly defining and communicating the overall purpose, the process, and various team member roles and responsibilities is critically important to a high functioning team and, most importantly, a successful process. Katzenbach and Smith (1993) emphasized the characteristics of high performing teams. High functioning teams shape purpose in response to a demand; translate common purpose into specific, measurable performance goals; maintain a manageable size; develop the right mix of expertise; develop a common commitment to working relationships; and hold themselves collectively accountable. Therefore, jointly defining and then clearly articulating the purpose, the process, and each individual's role and responsibility in the district support team will create a shared understanding among all team members and, therefore, positively impact the process. Lastly, it will be of paramount importance that the purpose, process, roles, and responsibilities of team members be frequently revisited and refined in order to ensure clarity in understanding.

Understanding Power

The second recommendation is related to power and the role it plays in any organization, and, more specifically, the district support team process. In much of organizational life individuals and groups are interdependent; they need things from one another and power relationships are multidirectional. From the view of the political frame, power is a “daily mechanism of our social existence” (Crozier & Friedberg, 1977, p. 32). Since power is a natural part of social existence, understanding its presence as part of the district support team process would help to alleviate the misinterpretation or misuse of power.

Some interview participants in this study shared that the district support team process felt top down. This was likely due to the positions held by central office participants, which conferred certain levels of legitimate authority, as defined by French & Raven (1959) and Pfeffer (1992). If all members of a district support team understand the impact of power, the types of power, the sources of power, and the applied use of power as a natural part of the process, tension between team members may be less likely to develop or may be addressed openly. Lastly, it is further recommended that as part of the initial phase of the DST process, operational norms be created around how the team will behave, recognizing and addressing power as a natural part of the process. Additionally, reconfiguring the District Support Team to redistribute the power, for example by inverting the process to honor the expertise that resides at the principal and teacher leader level, might help make the process more successful.

Increased and Shared Understanding of Assistance Relationships

The third recommendation for practice is based on increased and shared understanding by DST participants of the elements of assistance relationships (Honig, 2008), and the role each plays in the DST process. Acting upon this recommendation will aid and reinforce the first recommendation presented as related to clarity of roles, responsibility, purpose, and process. Honig (2008) identified assistance relationships as an integral aspect of central office transformation work. Influenced by the ideas of sociocultural learning theory, the six elements include modeling (Brown & Campione, 1994; Honig, 2008, 2010; Tharp & Gallimore, 1991), peripheral participation (March, 1994; Mintrop, 2003; O'Day, 2002), social engagement (March, 1994; Mintrop, 2003; O'Day, 2002), tools (March, 1994; Mintrop, 2003; O'Day, 2002), brokering and boundary spanning (Honig, 2008; Wenger, 1998), and joint work (Honig, 2008).

As stated throughout this study, these six elements of assistance relationships outline how the work is pursued and the process by which central office staff members and school-based teams engage in the work. These elements should be intentionally unpacked and presented to all members of the team. Identification of the elements within the process, and the role team members play as part of the process, will support the work of school improvement.

Recommendations for Policy

Emerging from the findings of this study are several topics for which policy recommendations will be made at the state and local levels. Four policy recommendations are as follows. First, to reduce the ambiguity of the differentiated service support model it is recommended that school district policy require the establishment and communication of a clear theory of action prior to any District Support Team engagement (City, Elmore, Fiarman, & Teitel, 2009; Honig et al., 2010). Second, to build instructional capacity to the extent necessary for widespread school improvement school district policy should require the training and deployment of central office staff to support all underperforming schools. Third, to balance power among district support team members, it is recommended that school district policy ensure the accountability of both school-based staff and central office staff for increasing student achievement as a result of school reform efforts. Finally, to support the reform efforts of school districts, it is recommended that state policymakers adopt central office transformation as a state-approved transformation or turnaround model for low performing schools.

School districts should consider implementing a policy requiring that prior to engaging in work with schools, central office staff develop and communicate a theory of action (City, Elmore, Fiarman, & Teitel, 2009; Honig et al., 2010) that defines the work to be done and the

expected outcome. In addition, district policy should require that a joint service agreement be developed by the central office staff and the school improvement team that gives all participants an opportunity to have a voice in the scope of services to be provided, the roles of each participant, the time frames, and the success measures. Ambiguity of the DST purpose, process, and roles was one of the major findings of this study. The central office executives who designed the DST process as an intervention for school improvement possessed a clear understanding of how it was intended to unfold. But despite the existence of documents defining the purpose and structure of the DST, principals and teacher leaders at participating schools expressed a lack of clarity about the process. This resulting uncertainty contributed to the wariness on the part of school staff who received the support services, which delayed the development of trust and collaboration between school and central office participants. These district policy recommendations should help create a sense of shared ownership and an understanding of the process and roles from the outset, thus fostering the earlier development of collaboration and trust.

The Puget Sound School District, and any other district pursuing central office transformation as an approach to school improvement, should implement policy requiring that all central office specialists and executives involved in teaching and learning services participate in the school improvement efforts as district support team members, and furthermore, that all underperforming schools receive support. This study found that the DST process—with central office experts coaching, modeling, and providing professional development—grew the instructional capacities of school staff members. At the same time, the experience of working side by side with school staff grew the capacity of central office staff, which enabled them to provide even better support. In the Puget Sound School District, DST support was limited to the

lowest performing 10 schools due to limited central office staff capacity. To more broadly support school improvement, it is recommended that district policy require a reallocation of resources to support all underperforming schools, by either hiring or redeploying central office staff to support school improvement and providing the necessary training to enable them to do so.

Establishing a district policy that mandates equal and shared accountability of central office and school leaders for and to school improvement efforts, and increasing student achievement as part of the district support team process, will aid with the intentional balancing of power between the central office and school based staff. This district policy recommendation emerged from the interviews with school-based staff, which suggested that, while central office and school staff worked jointly on improvement efforts, the ultimate responsibility for increasing student achievement was with the principal. Agreeing with this, central office staff reported that while they felt a shared responsibility for helping to build the instructional and leadership capacities of principals and teachers, they did not feel equally accountable for increasing student achievement and school improvement efforts. This mismatch in accountability represents an imbalance in power that, when unaddressed, inhibits collaboration and the formation of assistance relationships in the DST process. Therefore, it is recommended that central office staff and school principals be held equally accountable for building leadership and instructional capacity as well as improving student achievement results.

Lastly, since the onset of NCLB in 2001, schools failing to meet AYP targets have been sanctioned at both the state and federal level. It is required that schools identified as in improvement select from a list of identified interventions. These interventions include, but are not limited to, applying comprehensive school reform models, removing the staff and principal,

and restructuring the school entirely. Missing from this list are state and federal policies that identify central office transformation, and more specifically the use of a differentiated support service model, as an approved reform model. Research indicates that the teacher is the single most important factor in student achievement (Sanders & Horn 1994; Wright, Horn & Sanders, 1997) and that the principal is the second most important factor (Leithwood, Louis, Anderson, & Wahlstrom, 2004). Knowing this, it is recommended that state educational agencies (SEA) and policy makers consider establishing policies that allow for central office transformation to grow instructional and leadership capacities as viable strategic interventions as part of transformation and turnaround efforts as mandated by NCLB and the ESEA flexibility waiver.

Recommendations for Future Research

This study, situated in one school district and five schools, presented individuals' experiences of the district support team process and revealed key findings as related to assistance relationships, collaboration, instructional capacity, and the overall commonalities and differences regarding shared experiences of participant groups. Findings from this study of the DST process, a byproduct of central office transformation, reinforced the somewhat limited extant research on assistance relationships, central office transformation, and professional capital, and the more extensive research on collaboration and trust. The scale of this study, focusing on only five high-support elementary schools within one district, limits the ability to draw definitive conclusions about the DST process. However, the findings highlight the need for more conscious attention to addressing issues of power that affect both the access to information and the levels of trust and collaboration among central office and school staff when engaging in central office transformation work to improve teaching and learning. Thus, this study suggests the need for

expanded research to gain insights and deepen understanding of the district support team process as part of the differentiated support model. Future research opportunities at the current district under investigation and other districts embarking on similar work as an element of central office transformation, both inside and outside the state, include but are not limited to those suggested below.

First, instead of exclusively examining the experience of participants in relationship to support provided to identified high support elementary schools, additional qualitative case studies that examine the described experiences of participants at underperforming middle and high school levels that received the same support services should be undertaken. This would allow for a comparison between school levels and the assessment of the similarities and differences in their experiences, which would inform future practice with the district support team model.

A further extension would be for additional qualitative studies to examine the experiences of identified core and enhanced schools within the differentiated support model. Core and enhanced schools are those that have historically produced higher levels of student achievement as determined by the applied school ranking methodology. Core and enhanced schools do not receive intensive nor frequent support, but rather they receive support around targeted district initiatives or trends in classroom practice that emerge as a consistent problem of practice across schools. Conducting such a study would provide a more holistic understanding of the differentiated service model in its entirety, rather than exclusively from the experiences described by high support school staff and the members of the central office that partnered with those schools.

A recommended future quantitative study would be to investigate changes in student achievement at schools receiving high support from the district support team. Such a study would aim to identify the possible relationships between the assistance provided to high support schools and the outcomes in student achievement, as measured by specific assessments over a determined amount of time. This would allow for potential correlations to be identified and evaluated. This would then aid in substantiating the differentiated service model and the district support team as vehicles to increase student achievement and aid in school reform.

Additionally, inherent in this study was the influence of power and the role it played in the improvement process. A mixed-method study that examines the influence of power on the DST process would likely identify opportunities to improve the process. Such a study could investigate, by survey, the degree to which participants felt that the influence of power played a role in the differentiated service model and process, juxtaposed with interview data from participants with questions focusing on the way in which participants felt the different forms of power impacted the district support team process.

Lastly, additional research should look at the experiences of districts embarking on central office transformation, within the state and outside the state. This increased body of research would allow districts considering utilizing central office staff differently in an effort to build the capacity of principals and increase student achievement.

Summary

This study examined the described experiences of central office staff and elementary school-based staff as related to the district support team model—a manifestation of central office transformation—in an effort to improve the performance of failing schools. Twenty participants, five at each level of the organization—central office executive level, central office specialist

level, elementary school principals, and teacher leaders—participated in interviews that provided information about their experiences. In addition to interviews, a review of documents related to the district support team process and observations of district support team meetings provided information regarding the district support team process. Four dominant themes emerged from the data analysis process: (a) the ambiguity of the DSTs purpose, process, and participant roles in the process; (b) the role and impact of power and trust in the collaborative process; (c) the use of tools and resources as a means by which to focus discussion and decisions; and (d) the DST process itself as the impetus for growing and building participants instructional and leadership capacity. Sociocultural learning theory, central office transformation, assistance relationships, professional capital, and four-frame organizational theory assisted in defining and supporting these themes.

This study found that all participants agreed that the DST process grew their instructional and leadership capacities and, furthermore, the participants acknowledged that the collaborative process, which developed over time, aided in this capacity building. While commonalities and differences existed between participant experiences, it was evident that the elements of assistance relationships, which are critically important to the district support team process and central office transformation, existed in varying degrees. Given the limited research in the area of central office transformation, this study contributes to the existing body of research by describing the actual experiences of individuals at different levels of a school district who were engaged in such work.

Finally, this study identified the need for further research related to the role of power in central office transformation work as an intervention for school improvement. Furthermore, recommendations were provided for future practice that focused on clarifying communications

about the purpose of the differentiated service model, the district support team process, and the roles and responsibilities of all participants. In conjunction with clear communication, it is recommended that shared participant understanding and knowledge be built around the elements of assistance relationships and the integral part each plays in central office transformation.

Policy recommendations presented for both the district and state level proposed that the use of a district support team structure as a manifestation of central office transformation be considered as a legitimate process for school reform.

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Appendix A

Matrix of Theories

	Elements of learning					Central office transformation				Org. Theory		
Theorist/Researcher	Learning situated in social context	LPP/ Changes in participation	Communities of practice / joint work	MKO/ Modeling	Dialogue as meaning making	Roles & responsibilities/ Structure	Building instructional capacity	Brokering	Tools	Structure	Human Resource	Political
Vygotsky	X	*		X								
Rogoff	X	X	X	X								
Lave	X	X	X									
Brown & Duguid	X	X	X									
Bandura	X	*	*	X								
Bakhtin	*				X							
Jabri et al	*				X							
Shannon & Bylsma			X			X	X	X		X	X	X
McLaughlin & Talbert			X				X	X			X	X
Honig	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
Gallucci	X	*	X				X				X	
Burch & Spillane	*		X		X		X	X	X		X	
Fullan & Hargreaves			*			X	*		X	X	X	X
Leana			*				*				X	
Taylor						X			X			
Gullick & Urwick						X			X			
Mintzberg						X			X			
Helgeson						X			X			
Katzenback & Smith			*			X			X			
Wellins			*			X			X			

	Elements of learning					Central office transformation				Org. Theory		
Theorist/Researcher	Learning situated in social context	LPP/ Changes in participation	Communities of practice / joint work	MKO/ Modeling	Dialogue as meaning making	Roles & responsibilities	Building instructional capacity	Brokering	Tools	Structure	Human Resource	Political
Cohen & Ledford			*			X			X			
Emery & Fredendall			*			X			X			
Keidel			*							X		
Follett											X	
Mayo											X	
MacGregor			*		*						X	
Argyris & Schön					*						X	
Lewin/Burnes			*								X	
Aubrey & Tilliette				X								
French & Raven				*								X
Cyert & March												X
Pfeffer												X
Axelrod					*							X
Block					*							X

X specified

* implied

Appendix B

Research Questions and Interview Questions Matrix

The purpose of this study is to understand the experiences of elementary school principals, school based staff and central office staff as they are involved with the District Support Team process, as a part of central office transformation and school improvement effort. More specifically, this study aims to identify key elements that shape the DST process and to examine the elements of assistance relationships present in the process, the role of collaboration; the building of instructional leadership capacity of all participants; and the commonalities and differences related to participant experiences.

Research Question	Rationale/Theories	Method for Gathering Data	Interview Questions
Overarching question: How do central office participants and elementary school principals describe their experiences as part of the District Support Team (DST)?	Organizational Theory, Professional Capital—Decisional (Fullan & Hargreaves) Looking for common understanding among participants Looking for transformed roles of central office staff, principal as instructional leader Looking for alignment between central office staff and principals Looking for differences in experiences at different schools with different school site teams that might explain different results	Interviews of elementary principals (5), one site based school improvement team member (5) and central office DST members (10) Analysis of interview findings Observation of DST Meeting Document Review	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What's your understanding of the purpose of the DST process? • Why was school selected to participate in the DST process? • What was your role and responsibilities in the DST process? • What was your role and responsibilities in the DST process as it relates to school improvement? • What was the role and responsibilities of the school principal/central office members in the DST process? • What was the role and responsibilities of the school principal/central office members in the DST process as it relates to school improvement? • How has the DST process changed the responsibilities of your role (as a principal/central office employee)? • Describe your experience with the DST process as related to success, challenges.
1. What elements of assistance relationships facilitate or hinder the DST process?	Assistance relationships and evidence are the basis of Honig's conceptual framework for central	Interviews of elementary principals (6 sites), one site based school	<i>Modeling:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What was the level of your participation in the DST process at the onset?

	<p>office transformation.</p> <p>Lave/Wenger Honig Vgotsky Bandura Bhaktin</p> <p>Looking for presence or absence of these elements during interviews.</p>	<p>improvement team member and central office DST members</p> <p>Observation of DST Meeting</p> <p>Document Review</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How did your participation evolve over time? • What caused any changes in the level of your participation? <p><i>Peripheral Participation:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SB*: How did you feel about your school being included in the DST process? • How do you feel you were viewed by the principal/central office members of the DST? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ capable of growth and success <p><i>Social Engagement:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To what degree did you feel you could challenge the ideas of other members of the DST, for example in interpreting data, setting priorities for school improvement, best practices in teaching and learning, identified areas for professional development during the DST process? <p><i>Tools:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What templates and tools were utilized in the DST process? • How were these templates and tools used? • How did the templates and tools contribute to the school improvement process? <p><i>Brokering/Boundary Spanning:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How did central office members of the DST provide outside information, resources, and expertise to inform the school improvement process? • How did central office members as DST members challenge teaching and learning practices? <p><i>Joint Work:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How were priorities and plans for school improvement selected? • How were you involved in understanding the meaning of challenges and co-constructing potential solutions in the school improvement process?
2. How do participants describe the	Intersection between joint work	Interviews of elementary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Define what collaboration means to you. How

collaborative process of the DST in working toward school improvement?	<p>and social engagement (which are elements of assistance relationship); furthermore as part of the central office transformation conceptual framework Honig identifies ‘partnerships between central office leaders and principals to build capacity as instructional leaders’ as a key element of the transformation process</p> <p>Professional Capital--Social Capital element (Fullan/Hargreaves)</p> <p>Collaboration</p> <p>Trust</p>	<p>principals (5), one site based school improvement team member (5) and central office DST members (10)</p> <p>Observation of DST Meeting</p> <p>Document Review</p>	<p>does this definition apply to your experience with the DST process?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do you feel that central office and school-based members of the DST have equal commitment to, and accountability for, meeting the school improvement goals? • How did conversations within the DST process lend themselves to open, honest dialogue? <p>Also see questions under <i>Social Engagement</i> and <i>Joint Work</i> in research question 2 above</p>
3. How do participants describe the DST process in regards to building instructional leadership capacity and collaboration of central office staff and principals?	<p>As part of the central office transformation conceptual framework Honig identifies ‘partnerships between central office leaders and principals to build capacity as instructional leaders’ as a key element in COT</p> <p>Professional Capital--Human Capital element (Fullan/Hargreaves)</p>	<p>Interviews of elementary principals (5 sites), one site based school improvement team member and central office DST members</p> <p>Observation of DST Meeting</p> <p>Document Review</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How did participation in the DST process build your capacity as an instructional leader? • How do you feel about school’s participation in the DST process—particularly around it increasing the instructional leadership capacity of teachers in the building? <p>Also see questions under <i>Modeling, Tools, Boundary Spanning</i>, and <i>Joint Work</i> in research question 2 above</p>

Appendix C

DST Fact Sheet

	<i>Differentiated Services Delivery Model</i>	<i>Fact Sheet</i>
3 Levels of Central Office Support:		
Core	12 schools	
Enhanced	18 schools	
High	10 schools	
Supports:		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Targeted, high-quality professional development and technical assistance supports to principal and teacher leaders Regular collaborative meetings with School Improvement Teams 		
Tools:		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Classroom Walkthrough Observation Tool Data Analysis Protocols Interim Progress Assessments and Training Instructional Planning Resources 		
Systems:		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Defined roles and responsibilities via Scope of Work Common expectations for school leaders Communication and Debrief Protocols Team of supportive experts in Reading, Math, Special Education, ELL, and Assessment Bi-monthly collaborative planning sessions at the district level for cross-department 		
	<p>Purpose</p> <p>In the <i>DSDM</i>, schools are grouped into three levels of support based on student performance on the state assessment. During a time where resources are scarce, this allows the district to focus and target resources to the schools that demonstrate the greatest need for central office support while allowing higher performing schools to continue school improvement efforts with standard levels of support from central office. It will also allow the district to track the implementation and efficacy of interventions so that they may be replicated and scaled over time. The <i>DSDM</i> provides a framework for how central office provides different levels of support based on need. Thus,</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Schools that are higher-performing and show more growth have less oversight and support from the district Schools that are lower-performing and show less growth receive more oversight with increased levels of intensive assistance from the district <p>Definitions</p> <p>After schools were ranked according to performance in reading and mathematics, each school was placed into one of three levels: <i>Core Support</i>, <i>Enhanced Support</i>, or <i>High Support</i>.</p> <p><i>Core Support</i> is defined as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Any PSSD elementary, middle school or high school that when compared to other district schools within the same grade span is among the highest performing schools in both reading and mathematics based on the 2011 state assessment data. <p><i>Enhanced Support</i> is defined as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Any PSSD elementary, middle school or high school that when compared to other district schools with the same grade span is among the bottom half of schools in both reading and mathematics based on the 2011 state assessment data, but that is above the highest performing High Support school. <p><i>High Support</i> is defined as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Any PSSD elementary, middle school or high school that when compared to other district schools with the same grade span is among the lowest achieving schools in both reading and mathematics based on the 2011 state assessment data. <p>Differentiated supports for each level</p> <p>In order to better coordinate as well as maximize district level supports, a dual approach to provide structure, oversight and accountability is provided.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> District Support Team (DST) Leads: For each support level (Core, Enhanced or High), a DST Lead team made up of 8 team members has been established to provide oversight of all work taking place at each level. School Improvement Officers (SIO) provide ongoing follow-up and support to building principals on a regular basis, at intervals based on schools' levels of need. The role of the DST is to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prioritize and identify school needs based on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> an analysis of school performance data, and collaboration with principals and SIT teams, Validate major strategies and direction for school specialist teams and schools, Approve plan and schedule, and Conduct onsite <i>Implementation Visits</i> with principal and targeted SIT members to build leadership capacity and ensure accountability. School Specialists Teams: Similarly, a School Specialists Team consisting of individuals with expertise in the areas of reading, mathematics, special education, English Language development, and data analysis have been identified to provide professional development and technical assistance. The role of the School Specialists Team is to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conduct walkthroughs with the principal, analyzing classroom practices, and reviewing and refining interventions as appropriate, Assist with facilitation of data analysis based on formative and summative assessments, and Deliver professional development/technical assistance in identified areas. 	

Appendix D

Scope of the Work

High Support Schools Work Flow Process			
Role	Members	Responsibility	Timeline
DST Leads Oversight and accountability team		Assigned DST Leads prioritize and identify key interventions based on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> an analysis of school performance data; and principal data dialogue DST requests SIO's make deliberate connections from identified 30-60-90 days plans to the recommended district supports Assigned DST Leads and the Specialist Team holds initial meeting with school principal and SIT to review recommended key interventions and the whole team contributes to designing a yearlong customized, professional development plan aimed at: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> building local capacity at the school level; and rapidly improving student outcome data for <i>ALL</i> students in reading and mathematics as measured by district benchmark assessments, unit assessments, and the 2012 state assessment DST Leads: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Validate major strategies and direction for Specialist Teams and schools Approve plan and schedule Conduct monthly onsite <i>Implementation Visits</i> with principal and SIT to build leadership capacity and ensure accountability Ensure personnel resources available to the schools (identify other district expert supports as needed) Monitor implementation and effectiveness of interventions Review bi-weekly progress briefings to address or remove barriers interfering with DST implementation Present system and progress at meetings, including the Board, Cabinet, and other central office leadership meetings as appropriate Ensure successful implementation of identified services 	Week of: October 10, 2011 Week of: October 24, 2011 October Monthly (Oct-Jun)
Elem Specialist Team Provides on-site "Just in Time" PD, consultation and technical assistance	Reading: Math: Spec Ed: ELL: Data:	On-site Assigned DST Leads and the Specialist Team holds initial meeting with school principal and SIT to review recommended key interventions and the whole team contributes to designing a yearlong customized, professional development plan aimed at: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> building local capacity at the school level; and rapidly improving student outcome data for <i>ALL</i> students in reading and mathematics as measured by district benchmark assessments, unit assessments, and the 2012 state assessment 	Week of: October 24, 2011

Elem:		<p>District Level:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Design, lead and facilitate professional development supports Plan and collaborate with the Specialists Team at least 90 minutes bi-weekly to co-develop, evaluate, adjust and monitor ongoing support efforts to ensure timely and effective implementation. <p>On-Site</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conduct bi-weekly walk-throughs with the principal, analyze classroom practices, and review and refine interventions as appropriate (Rapid re-try) Deliver PD/technical assistance as identified in the yearlong plan Design data analysis protocols and supports for scaling up evidenced-based practices on a school wide basis Provide combined bi-weekly written progress briefings per school (<i>Implementation Logs</i>) following each on-site visit to track progress and monitor implementation. Share with the site principal, SIO and DST Leads to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify resources, personnel, or other barriers that may be interfering with progress and implementation 	<p>October (design) PD delivery as scheduled (Nov-June)</p> <p>Begin October and every other week thereafter through June 2012</p>
Principal/SIT Implements school wide identified interventions/ supports	<p>Principal</p> <p>EA or AP</p> <p>Teacher Leaders including Title I, IP, SA, or SC and ELL</p> <p>Interventionist</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Meets with DST and Specialist Team to review recommended key interventions SIT revises <u>SIP</u> to reflect identified yearlong supports as appropriate Principal/AP and/or SIT team interventionist conduct classroom walk-throughs in every classroom over a one week period for elementary/two week period for secondary, balancing walk-throughs between literacy and math blocks/courses Principal/AP and/or SIT team interventionist enters walk-through data to examine with all staff, school and classroom practices in all grades for core reading and mathematics instruction and implementation Leads, replicates, and facilitates school wide interventions/supports for all instructional staff to scale-up evidenced-based practices Provides data to Specialist Team and DST Leads on school and classroom practices at the school, grade, classroom, and student levels by content area during site visits for ongoing analysis and refined support. Provides ongoing communication and progress updates with all faculty 	<p>Week of: October 24, 2011</p> <p>Begin November 2011 and ongoing through June</p>

Appendix E

Letter to Principals

Office of the Chief Student Achievement Officer

October 18, 2011

To: Sam Smith
Oak View Elementary

From: Dr. Jerri Ranger
Chief Student Achievement Officer

Re: *Differentiated Services Delivery Model from District Support Team*

We hope you are off to a wonderful start to the 2011-2012 school year! We truly enjoyed your *Principal Data Dialogue* presentation and appreciate the time and energy you and your team spent analyzing results. Your commitment and enthusiasm was indicative of the leadership your students, staff and families deserve. We look forward to being your partner as you continue your school improvement efforts this year.

As a follow-up to your *Data Dialogue* session, we are excited to inform you of some key changes regarding how the district is prioritizing supports from the District Support Team to all schools through a *Differentiated Services Delivery Model (DSDM)*. In this update, you will find important information concerning your school's status regarding supports available and a more comprehensive description of expectations and process. As you read through the following overview, please know that we welcome your comments, suggestions or questions and that we will continue to refine the model throughout the school year to ensure we are meeting unique needs of your school.

DIFFERENTIATED SERVICES DELIVERY MODEL

Background

As you know, during the 2010-11 school year, the *District Support Team (DST)* was established and charged with developing and implementing a support model to meet the identified needs of all schools. In order to do this, the district first developed key foundational tools and resources from which targeted school support would be provided. This included supporting schools with the implementation of a new elementary mathematics curriculum, professional development and curricula for tiered interventions (Math Navigator, Language!), development of the Literacy and Mathematics Instructional Frameworks, and adoption of a Data Management System (School City), to name a few. While we have encountered a few glitches along the way, these initiatives are central to all of our work and drive district wide efforts so that every PSSD student is provided equity and access to high quality instructional practices. To build on these successes, PSSD is implementing the next phase of DST supports by launching an articulated and refined *Differentiated Services Delivery Model*.

Purpose

In the *DSDM*, schools are grouped into levels of support based on student performance on the state assessment. During a time where resources are scarce, this allows the district to focus and target resources to the schools that demonstrate the greatest need for central office support while allowing higher performing schools to continue school improvement efforts with support from central office in a single area of focus. It will also allow the district to track the implementation and efficacy of interventions so that they may be replicated and scaled over time.

The *Differentiated Services Delivery Model* consists of five major components:

1. Methodology
2. Definition of levels and school placement
3. Differentiated supports for each level
4. Selection and customized responses for schools
5. Delivery and implementation of identified responses

These components are discussed more fully below.

1. Methodology

In order to identify the schools with the greatest need, DST uniquely ranked the schools according to grade level: Elementary, Middle, and High Schools. Schools were ranked from highest to lowest achieving in terms of proficiency of the “all students” group on the State’s 2011 reading and mathematics assessments. This required DST to average all the grades together within a grade span (i.e., 3-6, 7-8, and 9-12) and generate an aggregate reading and aggregate math score per school from which the schools were then ranked. In a few cases where schools were close in performance, DST considered:

- The growth/gains of the school performance in both reading and math compared to other same grade span schools;
- Performance data after pulling out results from students enrolled in Highly Capable programs;
- Poverty, special education and ELL eligibility rates; and
- The school’s *Step of Improvement*

The objective of ranking schools is to help the district prioritize the support it provides by targeting personnel resources, time, and supports based on performance. The methodology described above will be improved for ranking of schools in future years to take into account multiple years of data and common performance metrics as the system is more fully defined.

2. Definitions and School Status

After the schools were ranked according to performance in reading and mathematics, each school was placed into one of the three levels: *Core Support*, *Enhanced Support*, or *High Support*.

Core Support is defined as:

- Any PSSD elementary, middle school or high school that when compared to other district schools within the same grade span-
 - Is among the highest performing schools in both reading and mathematics based on the 2011 state assessment data

Enhanced Support is defined as:

- Any PSSD elementary, middle school or high school that when compared to other district schools with the same grade span-

- Is among the bottom half of schools in both reading and mathematics based on the 2011 state assessment data, but that is above the highest performing *High Support* school

High Support is defined as:

- Any PSSD elementary, middle school or high school that when compared to other district schools with the same grade span-
 - Is among the lowest achieving schools in both reading and mathematics based on the 2011 state assessment data

As already mentioned under Methodology, DST reviewed other indicators to inform decisions for appropriate placement of schools in the levels, where necessary.

Based on the above methodology and definitions, **Oakview Elementary** has been identified as a **High Support** School.

3. Differentiated supports for each level

In order to better coordinate as well as maximize district level supports, DST developed a dualistic approach to provide structure, oversight and accountability for the *DSDM*.

DST Lead Team

For each support level (Core, Enhanced or High), a DST Lead team will be established based on the identified needs of the schools. Membership will be flexible to allow for either a comprehensive oversight team of up to eight members if being served in multiple areas, or membership consisting of 1-2 DST members if only focusing on a single area. The DST Lead team will always include the assigned School Improvement Officer (SIO).

The role of the DST is to:

- Prioritize and identify school needs based on:
 - an analysis of school performance data; and
 - principal data dialogue DST requests
- Validate major strategies and direction for school specialist teams and schools
- Approve plan and schedule
- Conduct onsite *Implementation Visits* with principal and targeted SIT members to build leadership capacity and ensure accountability

School Specialists Teams

Similarly, a School Specialist Team consisting of individuals with expertise in the areas of reading, mathematics, special education, English Language development, and data analysis have been identified to provide professional development and technical assistance. Your school's identified needs will determine access to these specialists. Other district level specialists may be assigned as needed.

The role of the School Specialists Team includes:

- Conducting walk-throughs with the principal, analyzing classroom practices, and reviewing and refining interventions as appropriate
- Assist with facilitation of data analysis based on formative and summative assessments
- Delivering PD/technical assistance in identified areas

	Core Support	Enhanced Support	High Support
DST Oversight	Bi-annually	Quarterly	Monthly

School Specialist Team	Bi-Monthly	Monthly	Every 2 weeks
Type of PD/Technical Assistance	Single area of focus	Professional Development Cluster	Intense/on-site

More information concerning the role of the DST Leads, the School Support Team, as well as the role of the principal and school leadership teams will be forthcoming.

4. Selection and customized responses for schools

At this point in the development of the DSDM, the DST Leads have identified key areas of intervention support for *High Support* schools only. Support for Core and Enhanced placed schools will be identified in the coming weeks and shared by the assigned SIO. We appreciate your patience and respectfully request that you withhold from contacting district specialists for on-site support until we finalize plans for priority schools.

Information for High Support Schools Only: Next Steps.

In the next week, you will receive information from the district office to schedule an initial meeting with the assigned DST Leads and the School Specialist Team to review recommended key interventions and begin designing a yearlong customized, professional development plan aimed at:

- building local capacity at the school level; and
- rapidly improving student outcome data for *ALL* students in reading and mathematics as measured by district benchmark assessments, unit assessments, and the 2012 state assessment

The agenda for the meeting will be shared once the meeting is confirmed.

5. Delivery and implementation of identified responses

For schools placed in the Core or Enhanced Levels, district level services and next steps will be explained by the SIO as these decisions are finalized. The SIO will contact you accordingly.

For High Support Schools, more information concerning the delivery of supports will be shared during the initial DST/SIT on-site meeting.

For each group of schools, there will be a Lync training scheduled to answer specific questions concerning the DSDM beginning with the High Support Schools. An outlook invitation will be issued accordingly.

Thank you for your great work! Please contact your SIO if you have any immediate questions.

Sincerely,

Dr. Jerri Ranger

JR:ch

Appendix F
Principal Update Letter
2012 Methodology
Principal Updates
September 19, 2012

1. Methodology

In order to identify the schools with the greatest need, the district uniquely ranked the schools according to the following levels: Elementary, Middle, and High Schools. Schools were ranked from lowest to highest achieving based on proficiency in the “all students” group over the past three years on the State’s reading and mathematics assessments. An average of all the grade spans (i.e., 3-6, 7-8, and Grade 10) generated an aggregate reading and aggregate math score per school from which the schools were then ranked. This methodology also takes into consideration the following variables:

- The growth/gains of the school performance in both reading and math compared to other same grade span schools;
- Poverty, special education and ELL eligibility rates;

A school’s designation as Priority, Focus or Emerging Schools is then added to further determine appropriate supports. The objective of ranking schools is to help the district prioritize the support it provides by targeting personnel resources, time, and professional development supports based on performance.

2. Definitions and School Status

After the schools are ranked according to performance in reading and mathematics, each school is placed into one of the three levels: *Core Support*, *Enhanced Support*, or *High Support*.

Core Support is defined as:

- Any PSSD elementary, middle school or high school that when compared to other district schools within the same grade span-
 - Is among the highest performing schools in both reading and mathematics based on the past 3 years of state assessment data and growth

Enhanced Support is defined as:

- Any PSSD elementary, middle school or high school that when compared to other district schools with the same grade span-
 - Is among the bottom half of schools in both reading and mathematics based on the past 3 years of state assessment data and growth, but that is above the highest performing *High Support* school

High Support is defined as:

- Any PSSD elementary, middle school or high school that when compared to other district schools with the same grade span-
 - Is among the lowest achieving schools in both reading and mathematics based on the past 3 years of state assessment data and growth

Appendix G

Rubric

	Stages of Implementation (The value assigned should be the current rubric value at the time that the professional development/technical assistance is being offered)				
	Rubric Score	Installation (1) Structural supports necessary to initiate the action are put into place; sources of evidence point to some level of implementation with more than 50% of targeted grades/teachers.	Initial Implementation (2) Application is evident in some cases; sources of evidence point to greater implementation with more than 80% of targeted grades/teachers.	Full Implementation (3) Systemic application is evident with 100% of targeted grades/teachers implementation; data supports the <i>effectiveness</i> of implementation.	Innovation & Sustainability (4) Systems are in place to adapt the innovation in response to data and continually monitor fidelity of implementation.
I. DST representative, School Leader(s), Teacher Leaders		The DST Specialist, the date of support, and the audience present at the training are not noted.			The DST Specialist, the date of support, and the audience present at the training are noted.
II. Site-Based Outcomes - These are either ongoing or new initiatives that can be written as goals, strategies or action steps. These outcomes are clarified and agreed upon prior to or as part of the PD/technical assistance session and are related to the PD/TA provided. Outcomes can be very specific, or general, and can vary in grain size (e.g., Full implementation of district curriculum and pacing guides). The focus should align with the 8 week, 12 week or Bi-Annual Plan. Other school or district initiated work may be included if justified based on an identified need. Include completed tasks, PD, findings, data, analysis results, or questions.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Some One Note entries are specific and aligned to the 8 week, 12 week or Bi-Annual plan. Some department/ grade-level teams have time to meet with specialists, but not all grade level teams have had access. Few classroom walkthrough or other data is included that provides evidence of some implementation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All One Note entries align with the 8 week, 12 week or Bi-Annual plan. Other topics/actions are justified and directly correspond with improving core instruction and/or access to core for all students. 50% of department/ grade-level teams have access to specialists for on/off-site PD/TA support. Student achievement and classroom walkthrough data provides evidence of implementation. 	All of 2 plus- <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Various sources of student achievement and classroom walkthrough data provide evidence of effective implementation. 80% of department/ grade-level teams have access to specialists for on/off-site PD/TA support. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Various sources of student achievement and classroom walkthrough data provide evidence of effective implementation. Teachers use data to review, adapt or modify practices or strategies to further accelerate student learning. 100% of department/ grade-level teams have access to specialists for on/off-site PD/TA support.
III. Steps to next level of implementation- Refer to the rubric value and Stages of Implementation. The goal is to list all steps necessary to start or increase the level of implementation. The steps listed should be concrete and specific enough so that data/evidence can be generated to document the steps needed for completion.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Some, but not all, One Note entries address the steps to next level of implementation. Or steps were addressed, but there is no evidence of follow-through for implementation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Entries include specific next steps including a timeframe, audience/participants. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Entries include specific next steps including a timeframe, audience/participants. Next steps clearly outline what is necessary for completion/implementation. 	All of 3 plus,

<p>IV. Who is Responsible? The name of a district or school level sponsor should be included. Avoid using expressions like “Math Leadership Team” or “Grade Level Team.” Instead, use official titles (School Principal, Director of Standards-based Instruction, and Instructional Coach.</p>					
<p>V. Data or evidence needed to get to next step in implementation-Both initial and full implementation stages necessitate data collection related to the outcome. The steps listed in the One Note entry include data collection as well as district supports, professional development, grade level or staff meetings, etc.</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Some One Note entries identify data that will be collected to document the degree to implementation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All One Note entries identify data that will be collected to document the degree to implementation. Some One Note entries identify data/evidence that documents the effectiveness of implementation. Examples include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Percentage of teachers on track with curriculum/pacing guide, classroom walkthrough data, interim, formative assessment student data. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All One Note entries identify data that will be collected to document the degree to implementation. All One Note entries identify data/evidence that documents the effectiveness of implementation. Examples include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Percentage of teachers on track with curriculum/pacing guide, classroom walkthrough data, interim, formative assessment student data. Dates to conduct data checks are included as part of monitoring implementation. 	
<p>VI. Principal/SIO Follow-up</p>		<p>Department/grade-level teams are encouraged to implement their plans on their own. Or some teams are supported, but not all.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Principals and SIOs regularly review One Note entries and provide updates and/or follow-up on entries that require their attention, support and implementation prior to next scheduled PD session, as appropriate. The principal actively monitors progress to provide appropriate support, communication, and school wide emphasis. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Principals and SIOs regularly review One Note entries and provide updates and/or follow-up on entries that require their attention, support and implementation prior to next scheduled PD session, as appropriate. The principal actively monitors progress to provide appropriate support, communication, and school wide emphasis. The principal adjust steps towards implementation as needed, based on data. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none">

Appendix H

Instructional Support Team Model



Instructional Support Team Model To Accelerate Increased Student Achievement

Purpose: The purpose of the Instructional Support Team (IST) model is to provide District level highly integrated, specialized comprehensive and intensive multidisciplinary instructional support to individual schools that is highly prescriptive in nature, and targets underperforming schools and staff whose students are vulnerable to continued failure. The primary intent of a district level IST is to increase and accelerate the overall effectiveness and efficiency of the instructional service delivery system for students so as to significantly increase student achievement across all student subgroups, close the achievement gap and meet school and district Annual Yearly Progress (AYP) targets.

Design: The design of an IST is multi-disciplinary in nature, transcends traditional organizational structures when needed, and is decidedly definitive in nature. In this regard, an IST can appear to be more of a matrix management structure as opposed to a traditional hierarchical or bureaucratic structure. In this model, staff specializing in specific service delivery areas are assigned to the IST, on a part-time or as needed basis, from various school system departments or divisions, as a part of their regular duties, depending on the type of expertise and support needed by an individual school(s). For the purposes of this project, these individuals work together as a team to provide prescriptive instructional recommendations, strategies and support, including coaching, to high need schools on best practices in data-driven, highly effective standards-based differentiated instruction. While individual team members may come from different departments or divisions in the district, for the purposes of this project, they report to a lead administrator who oversees and is responsible for the execution of the district's IST.

The prescriptive elements may include but are not limited to: the specific use of data driven instruction, power standards, standards based curriculum and materials, powerful instructional strategies, pacing guides, differentiation levels, professional development, coaching, instructional walk-throughs, vertical and horizontal articulation among grade level teachers, and leadership development.

Timeframe: The operational timeframe is generally based on the performance levels of the target school(s) and degrees of improvement as IST recommendations are implemented along with school staff. Suggested timeframes range from a minimum of one year to up to three or four, depending on the school's progress and No Child Left Behind AYP status and/or sanctions.

Oversight Lead Administrator: The district IST team members report to a lead executive/central office administrator who is responsible for the execution of the process, procedures and timelines for targeted instructional improvement at a particular school(s). The lead administrator directly supervises the school principal(s) of the target school(s) and works closely with the them and their school leadership team to ensure that the prescriptive application of best practices in data-driven, standards-based differentiated instruction are applied consistently in every classroom for every student enrolled in the school. The lead administrator communicates regularly with the Superintendent on the effect of the IST intervention, as well as with Superintendent's Leadership Team or Cabinet in order to garner any needed support from the various divisions from human resources, finance, operations, etc., and make recommendations, as appropriate, to ensure the success of the students in those schools under IST oversight.

IST Membership: Standing members represent, at a minimum, the various levels targeted (elementary, mid or high) as well as the various instructional domains, including but not limited to specialists in: literacy, language arts, math, special education, English Language Learners (ELL), social studies, science, parent education, etc., depending on the instructional needs of the school as defined by disaggregated student achievement data, AYP disaggregated sub-group performance and district accountability priorities. Members may also include representatives of support service areas beyond curriculum and instruction, such as finance, facilities, operations, human resources or the leadership team from the target school(s), depending on the nature of the support being prescribed and the capacity building needs of the school and district.

Process: IST staff meet regularly to continually diagnose, assess and evaluate the individual school and the associated performance of the classrooms and prescribe interventions to the principal, leadership team and classroom teachers and monitor their on-going effectiveness based on interim, benchmark and annual state testing student achievement results. All IST meetings document and record prescriptive recommendations and their impact on the schools performance, gleaned and sharing knowledge captured for on-going improvement along the way. School wide student achievement performance targets are set with each school and a corrective action plan is developed, executed, monitored and evaluated, with modifications as needed or necessary.

Procedures: IST staff initially meets to review school level disaggregated student achievement data, school improvement plan, budget expenditure patterns, school climate and culture and also conduct a preliminary pattern and gap analysis. The team then meets with the school principal to present their preliminary diagnostic findings of student performance, with detailed analysis of content standard, skill, strand, etc. performance disaggregated by student and classroom. Once the principal and IST discuss the facts, increased achievement targets and expectations are set for/with the Principal. Consecutively, IST expectations and support process are outlined and defined. Regularly scheduled instructional learning walks are conducted periodically by the entire IST utilizing a half-day session format, using agreed upon protocols with training provided as needed, in order to assess the extent to which effective and powerful standards-based data-driven instruction is being provided. After the instructional walk through, the IST team meets together to debrief on their observations and findings. After the IST debriefing, the IST team then meets with the principal and the school leadership team to offer observations, commendations and areas in need of support. Recommendations are documented and follow up reviews are established at regular intervals, i.e., every nine weeks or regular grading period. IST support is then defined, outlined

for the school and provided in writing. The support can take on various forms from instructional coaching, attendance at grade level team meetings, training on effective data teams and data-driven instruction, research-based differentiated instructional best practices, effective ELL strategies, and/or team teaching and inclusionary program development in special education, etc. etc. On-going instructional learning walk throughs and reviews are conducted by the IST to ensure any needed on-support and/or coaching is provided as necessary. School Improvement Plans are aligned with IST recommendations as needed and schools are expected to increase achievement levels to established targets. Targets may be established collaboratively and incrementally and/or as required under NCLB. Student achievement is monitored regularly via aligned benchmark or interim assessments to determine the treatment effect of the IST's interventions and the school's daily execution of classroom instruction.

Evaluation: The IST self-assesses its effectiveness and value continuously at periodic intervals and makes adjustments as needed based on interim student achievement subgroup performance. The annual review of the IST effectiveness is triangulated with the school principal's results review of the school's progress in the form of a Principal Data Review presentation with the Superintendent and IST Lead Administrator or team.

Principal Results Review of the Data: The school's principal annually prepares a formal (approximately ½-1 hour) power point Data Review Presentation (see attached examples) of their school's performance profile in collaboration with the IST. This profile generally includes: student demographics and related patterns; AYP short and long term performance; disaggregated student achievement by subgroup; annual achievement gain scores and multi-year trends; an analysis of what they attribute the success – or lack of success to- as well as the school principal's recommendations for continued improvement – with specific timelines, and; any other data deemed important by the Superintendent or IST lead administrator. The principal then presents their final Annual Data Review Presentation to the Superintendent and IST Lead Administrator, after which a discussion is held on the progress for the year and the principals proposed recommendations for continued improvement in the upcoming year.

Summary: As stated at the beginning of this document - the purpose of the Instructional Support Team Model is to provide a highly integrated, specialized comprehensive and intensive multidisciplinary instructional support from a district level, that is highly prescriptive in nature, and targets individual schools and staff whose students are vulnerable to continued failure. However, the IST descriptions noted in this document are not cast in concrete and should be modified or adjusted as the school district sees appropriate. Finally, the focus of the work should always be on what's best for the students based on student achievement and student success results - and on building the capacity of the school in order to ensure success for every single student.

Appendix I

Yes We Can!



District Support Team

August 31, 2010

DRAFT

In order to increase the achievement of each student, the District Support Team will foster a culture of collaboration through shared reflective practice, effective communication (e.g., common language) and removal of perceived barriers.

As District Support Team members, how do we foster a culture of collaboration?

Appendix J**DST Agenda***Oakview Elementary School*

High Support Schools

DST/SIT Site Meeting

Agenda

April 16, 2013

Welcome/Introductions:**Purpose of Meeting**

- Check progress of CCSS implementation-self-assess
- Discuss PD thus far
- Input on areas of focus for 14-15

CCSS Implementation Rubric

- Self-assess progress towards implementation of the CCSS

Professional Development Updates/Reflection

- What has been the most effective PD delivery and support?
- Refer to Walkthrough Data as appropriate
- What challenges remain?

DRAFT Quarterly Plan

- What areas of professional development are needed for the 2014-15 school year?

Closing/Next steps

Appendix K
Data Analysis Protocols

Oakview Elementary – DST-SIT

PD Reflection

Consider the last 8-12 weeks of PD opportunities this year. How has this impacted your instruction?	How is the PD impacting/supporting your grade level team or PLC work?
<ul style="list-style-type: none">•	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•
What challenges are you experiencing that you want us to know about?	

DST: Walkthrough vs. Student DIBELS Data

Walkthrough and DIBELS Fall to Winter Data		
	Walkthrough Data	DIBELS Data
What do you notice about the data? Is our data trends increasing or decreasing?		
What are specific barriers or obstacles? How does this impact student learning?		
What practices or PD support do you need to amplify the current work?		
How do you plan to use these data to inform goals/shifts?		

School Improvement Team: Analysis of Classroom Walkthrough Data

What do you notice from the walkthrough data?
What factors may contribute to what you are noticing?
What are the implications for PLC or school wide professional development?

School Improvement Team: Analysis of Classroom Walkthrough Data

What do you notice from the walkthrough data?
What factors may contribute to what you are noticing?
What questions will you pose during the reflective dialogue with your PLC Teams?

PLC: Analysis of Classroom Walkthrough Data

What do you notice from the walkthrough data?			
What factors may contribute to what you are noticing?			
Using these insights, what are some actions you can take next?			
What?	Who?	When?	Evidence

Appendix L

Walkthrough Tool for DST/SIT

School: _____ **Grade:** _____ **Observer:** _____
Subject: ☐ Reading ☐ Writing ☐ Math ☐ Soc Stu ☐ Sci ☐ Elective ☐ Other **Lesson/Block:** ☐ Beginning ☐ Middle ☐ End
Setting: ☐ Core ☐ Intervention ☐ SpEd ☐ ELL ☐ Primary ☐ Intermediate **Date:** _____
Grouping Format(s): ☐ Whole Group ☐ Small Group ☐ Paired ☐ Individual
Instruction Delivered by: ☐ Teacher ☐ Specialist ☐ Paraeducator

I. Core Program

- ☐ District adopted core instructional materials are used
- ☐ Lesson is within two weeks of pacing guide

II. Learning Objectives and Success Criteria

- ☐ Content learning objectives are communicated to students
- ☐ Clear success criteria and standards for task completion are provided and based on high, but appropriate expectations
- ☐ Language objectives are communicated to students
- ☐ Students know the learning objectives and how they will meet them
- ☐ Learning objectives and resulting student work are aligned with grade-level standards

III. High Expectations/Strong Relationships

- ☐ Effort is communicated to students and students understand their effort impacts their achievement
- ☐ Confidence in students is expressed to build self-esteem in the subject area
- ☐ Students are called on by name
- ☐ Eye contact is used with all students
- ☐ Close proximity with students is used equitably

IV. Instruction:

Motivate and Focus Learning	
Instructional Action	All Students
<input type="checkbox"/> Hooks students to stimulate attention, motivation, and engagement with the day's learning <input type="checkbox"/> Builds background knowledge necessary for success in the learning	<input type="checkbox"/> Contribute to building background knowledge <input type="checkbox"/> 80% or more are engaged throughout the learning
Develop New Learning	
Instructional Action	All Students
<input type="checkbox"/> Links explicitly new learning to prior knowledge <input type="checkbox"/> Emphasizes key vocabulary <input type="checkbox"/> Uses modeling/think-alouds to make concepts clear <input type="checkbox"/> Uses visuals, gestures, or body language to clarify concepts	<input type="checkbox"/> Engage in development of understanding new vocabulary <input type="checkbox"/> Use manipulatives or hands-on experiences to develop understanding
Check Understanding/Correct Misconceptions	
Instructional Action	All Students
<input type="checkbox"/> Elicits evidence of learning from all students <input type="checkbox"/> Watches, listens, and/or looks at responses from all students <input type="checkbox"/> Provides individuals descriptive and immediate feedback related to the learning target <input type="checkbox"/> Adjusts instruction based on observation	<input type="checkbox"/> Demonstrate learning progress based on teacher prompts <input type="checkbox"/> Self-reflect on their own progress based on the criteria for success
Deepens and Expands Knowledge	
Instructional Action	All Students
<input type="checkbox"/> Provides students opportunities for guided practice <input type="checkbox"/> Provides opportunities for teacher-student interaction <input type="checkbox"/> Provides opportunities for student-to-student interaction <input type="checkbox"/> Connects concepts to real world <input type="checkbox"/> Uses an intentional progression of questions that leads to higher order thinking <input type="checkbox"/> Provides sufficient wait time <input type="checkbox"/> Probes student responses beyond correct answers (How? Why?)	<input type="checkbox"/> Engage in relevant practice through speaking, writing, and/or problem solving/demonstration <input type="checkbox"/> Engage in teacher-student exchanges and/or discussion <input type="checkbox"/> Engage in student-to-student exchanges and/or discussion <input type="checkbox"/> Connect learning to real world concepts <input type="checkbox"/> Articulate their thinking strategies <input type="checkbox"/> Use evidence to support opinions or answers

Adapted from BERC Star protocol; Teachscape classroom walkthrough; Just Read Florida; SIOP; research from C. Dweck, J. Hattie, D. Lemov, and B. Goodowin

Appendix M

Sample 8-Week Plan: Oakview Elementary

Date: 10/31/11 Grade Focus: _____ School wide: _____
 Reading_X__ Math_X__ Special Education_X__ ELL_X__ Data_X__

	Descriptor	Who	When
Reading -Core -Standards -Instruction -Assessment	<input type="checkbox"/> (First 4 weeks) Conduct school wide classroom walkthroughs during literacy block initially, then in 2 nd 4 weeks, conduct walks with intervention groups and in special education settings as appropriate, to identify strengths and needs in reading instruction <input type="checkbox"/> (2 nd 4 weeks) Based on identified needs, provide PD and apply to unit planning based on pacing guide <input type="checkbox"/> Monitor implementation on agreed area(s) of focus <input type="checkbox"/> Explicit conversation concerning the use of time within the literacy blocks		Start walks the week of Nov 7 th
Math -Core -Standards -Instruction -Assessment	<input type="checkbox"/> For the upcoming unit of study, unpack standards to determine level of rigor and appropriate instructional strategies <input type="checkbox"/> Provide PD or model preferred instructional strategies <input type="checkbox"/> Support grade level teams in unit planning <input type="checkbox"/> Monitor implementation <input type="checkbox"/> Conduct school wide classroom walkthroughs during math instruction		Nov 4 th - start with standards Nov 16 th Start walks the week of Nov 7 th
Special Education -Program Review -Access to Core -Standards-Based IEPs -SDI -Assessment	<input type="checkbox"/> (First 4 weeks) Examine school master schedule and procedures to ensure students access to core instruction is maximized (How instructional decisions are made; placement procedures; review IEPs and evaluations eligibility decisions/compliance data) (Transition times) <input type="checkbox"/> Participate in walkthroughs and monitoring to determine PD or structural needs (transition b/t SDI and core classes; etc.) <input type="checkbox"/> Review Special Education student data and program delivery model <input type="checkbox"/> Review Special Education staffing structures <input type="checkbox"/> Review Special Education caseload		Start walks the week of Nov 7 th
ELL -Program Review -Access to Core -ELD Standards -Assessment	<input type="checkbox"/> (First 4 weeks) Examine school master schedule and procedures to ensure (L1, L2, and L3) students <u>access to core</u> instruction is maximized (transition times) <input type="checkbox"/> Participate in walkthroughs and monitoring to determine PD or structural needs <input type="checkbox"/> Review <u>ELL student data</u> and <u>program delivery model</u> <input type="checkbox"/> Review ELL staffing structures		Start walks the week of Nov 7 th

Data	<input type="checkbox"/> Review master schedule (transition times) <input type="checkbox"/> Review and analyze the schools' use of DIBELS Next/Math Navigator/VPORT data for tiered intervention implementation <input type="checkbox"/> Participate in classroom walkthroughs to monitor how this benchmark data is used to influence classroom instruction <input type="checkbox"/> Review tiered instructional grouping		Start walks the week of Nov 7 th
DST Leads Site visit Schedule	<input type="checkbox"/> Next DST Leads Meeting: Monday, December 3:00-4:30 p.m. <input type="checkbox"/> PLC/Grade Level Times: Thursdays-7:30-8:15 a.m. <input type="checkbox"/> Staff Meeting Times: Tuesday- 2:50-3:38 p.m.		
Principal/ School	<input type="checkbox"/> Participate in walkthroughs with the Specialists <input type="checkbox"/> Conduct walkthroughs in every math/literacy block per week		

SIO: _____ Principal: _____

Appendix N

Sample Yearlong PD Plan

Year At-A-Glance PD Plan DRAFT				
No meetings on: a workshop or late arrival day or conference day. No meetings 5 days prior to conferences ✓ 5 principal directed days ✓ 27 hours Principal Effective Ed (+3 Open House)				
Month	District PD	Data Analysis	School Focus 1: Reading/Writing/SIOP	School Focus 2: Math/SIOP
Aug	- K-2 Math CCSS K-Jul 31, Aug 8, or 16 1-Aug 1, 9, or 14 2-Aug 2, 7, or 15 Group B Follow-up (8/28 8:00-11:00) - ELA Gr 5-6 5-Aug 10, 15, or 17 6-Aug 14, 16, or 20 Group B Follow-up (8/28 8:00-11:00) - ST Math Training (8/28 8-11 a.m.) - K-2 ELA Foundational Skills Aug 22 or 23	CAST meetings through release	August 27 OV Staff will provide an overview of Literacy Instructional Model & <u>Writers Workshop Model</u> . School level instructional coaches: With all teachers, begin developing the first 4-6 weeks of instruction for lit/writer's workshop via PLCs. Unpack upcoming standards for a unit; identify and intentionally plan lessons w/ success criteria. Instructional coaches: Review with grade 3-4 teachers the curriculum guide frameworks. 8/28 Morning training for 5-6 Staff ELA -New curriculum guides will be shared with staff during Aug 28 th follow-up meetings. Afternoon PD 11:30-3:30pm Writer's Workshop	August 27/28- OV staff will provide an overview of Math Instructional Model School level instructional coaches: With all teachers, begin looking at developing the first 4-6 weeks of instruction for math via PLCs. Unpack upcoming standards for a unit; identify and intentionally plan lessons w/ success criteria. 8/28 Morning training for K-2 Staff CCSS Math Morning training: ST Math 3/4 Afternoon PD 11:30-3:30pm Establishing Protocols for the use of manipulatives in the classroom

Year At-A-Glance PD Plan DRAFT

No meetings on: a workshop or late arrival day or conference day. No meetings 5 days prior to conferences

- ✓ 5 principal directed days
- ✓ 27 hours Principal Effective Ed (+3 Open House)

Month	District PD	Data Analysis	School Focus 1: Reading/Writing/SIOP	School Focus 2: Math/SIOP
Sept	Literacy <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - DIBELS Next (K-6) Math <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - MX Makeup - CPM Makeup - Elem Navigator - 3-5 math cadre Science <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 4-5 Science PD - FOSS initial training Walkthrough Window (Sept 10-28)	-New WELPA,; DIBELS, and Math Nav, and DRA -CAST Meeting	-K-2 Reading Foundations follow-up (SH Literacy Coach) -ELA CCSS 5-6 Sharing Staff Meeting (9/18) DIBELS: Using DIBELS results, Karen and SH instructional coach will co-facilitate a data session w/primary teachers to inform next steps. Primary Staff Meeting (9/25) DIBELS: Using DIBELS results, Karen and SH instructional coach will co-facilitate a data session w/primary teachers to inform next steps.	Staff Meeting (9/18) Grades K-2: Use of math trajectories for tiered intervention Math Navigator-Intermediate Grades 3-6 Review expectation for implementation and best practice Staff Meeting (9/25) GR 3-5 Math Cadre: Cadre member shares with all staff new learning/information from cadre meeting with all staff via PLC or other venue.
Oct	Literacy <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - CCSS ELA 5-6 Math <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - K-2 CCSS Science <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Kinder Sci - Elem Sci Cadre 	-RBA/MBA testing window:	Staff Meeting (10/9) Revisit the lit/writers workshop instructional models, specifically: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Success criteria/student <u>self-reflection</u> & • Guided reading groups Develop next 4-6 weeks of instruction for lit/writing workshop via PLCs. Unpack upcoming standards for a unit; identify and intentionally plan lessons w/ success criteria. Principal Effective Ed: 2 hours offered to develop a <u>deeper understanding of guided reading and self-reflection</u>	Staff Meeting (10/30) (*Use CCSS Book on Math CCSS PLCs) Revisit the math instructional model, specifically: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Success criteria/ student <u>self-reflection</u> • Use of Manipulatives in the Classroom Develop next 4-6 weeks of instruction for math via PLCs. Unpack upcoming standards for a unit; identify and intentionally plan lessons w/ success criteria.

Year At-A-Glance PD Plan DRAFT

No meetings on: a workshop or late arrival day or conference day. No meetings 5 days prior to conferences

- ✓ 5 principal directed days
- ✓ 27 hours Principal Effective Ed (+3 Open House)

Month	District PD	Data Analysis	School Focus 1: Reading/Writing/SIOP	School Focus 2: Math/SIOP
Nov	Literacy <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - CCSS ELA 5-6 - 3-4 Lit Cadre - Language Follow up 		<p>Staff Meeting (11/6) Revisit the instructional models, specifically guided reading &:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conferring <p>Develop next 4-6 weeks of instruction for lit/writing workshop via PLCs. Unpack upcoming standards for a unit; identify and intentionally plan lessons w/ success criteria. Principal Effective Ed: 2 hours offered to develop a deeper understanding of conferring and guided groups.</p> <p>11/20 Revisit the instructional model, specifically:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Building Background Knowledge • Questioning Strategies <p>Principal Effective Ed: 2 hours offered to develop a deeper understanding of building background knowledge. *Writing Workshop Revisit: 1st Quarter Writing Assessment scored collaboratively *Raikes Foundation Brain Research Workshop (PEE)</p>	<p>-3-5 Math Cadre: Teacher lead takes back learning from math 3-5 cadre information with all staff via PLC or other venue.</p> <p>Develop next 4-6 weeks of instruction for math via PLCs. Unpack upcoming standards for a unit; identify and intentionally plan lessons w/ success criteria.</p> <p>11/13: <u>Building Background</u> knowledge in Mathematics:</p> <p>Principal Effective Ed: 2 hour offering to develop a deeper understanding of building background knowledge in math</p>

Year At-A-Glance PD Plan DRAFT

No meetings on: a workshop or late arrival day or conference day. No meetings 5 days prior to conferences

- ✓ 5 principal directed days
- ✓ 27 hours Principal Effective Ed (+3 Open House)

Month	District PD	Data Analysis	School Focus 1: Reading/Writing/SIOP	School Focus 2: Math/SIOP
Dec	Literacy <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Handwrite w/o tears Math <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - K-2 CCSS 		Staff Meeting (12/4) Revisit the lit/writers workshop instructional models, specifically (prior areas) plus: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Vocabulary Building</u> within the model Principal Effective Ed: 2 hours offered to develop a deeper understanding of vocabulary building.	Staff Meeting (12/18) Revisit the preferred PSSD Math Model focus on <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Vocabulary Building</u> within the model Principal Effective Ed: 2 hours offered to develop a deeper understanding of vocabulary building
Jan	Literacy <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - CCSS ELA 5-6 - Language Follow Up - 3-4 Lit Cadre Math <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 3-5 Princ/Int Cadre - K-2 CCSS Science <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Elem Cadre -Walkthrough Window	-New WELPA, WA Kids for K; DIBELS, and Math Nav, and DRA - CAST Meeting (1:1 approach) CAST Meeting Release Time	OV staff will use DIBELS to and how to inform next steps Jan 11 Revisit the lit/writers workshop instructional models, specifically (prior areas) plus: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Questioning strategies during conferring, guided groups and mini lesson</u> Principal Effective Ed: 2 hours offered to develop a deeper understanding of questioning strategies Jan 25: Use of Assessment to inform instruction <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Target TBD Writer's Workshop and Collaborative Scoring	OV staff will use Navigator data to inform next step Jan 18 Revisit the preferred PSSD Math Model focus on: <u>Questioning strategies</u> during mathematical discourse Principal Effective Ed: 2 hours offered to develop a deeper understanding of questioning strategies in math Jan 25: Use of Assessments to inform instruction <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MBA?
Feb	Literacy		Revisit the lit/writers workshop instructional	- Revisit the preferred PSSD Math Model

Year At-A-Glance PD Plan DRAFT

No meetings on: a workshop or late arrival day or conference day. No meetings 5 days prior to conferences

- ✓ 5 principal directed days
- ✓ 27 hours Principal Effective Ed (+3 Open House)

Month	District PD	Data Analysis	School Focus 1: Reading/Writing/SIOP	School Focus 2: Math/SIOP
	- CCSS ELA Gr 5		models, specifically (prior areas) plus: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Real World Connections</u> Principal Effective Ed: 2 hours offered to develop a deeper understanding of real world connections in literacy	focus on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Real World Connections</u> Principal Effective Ed: 2 hours offered to develop a deeper understanding of real world connections in mathematics
Mar	Literacy <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Language follow up - 3-4 Lit Cadre Math <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 3-5 Cadre - K-2 CCSS Science <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Elem Cadre -Walkthrough Window		Revisit the lit/writers workshop instructional models, specifically (prior areas) plus: <u>Self-Reflection</u> Principal Effective Ed: 2 hours offered to develop a deeper understanding and an increase of strategies using self- reflection Writer's Workshop and Collaborative Scoring	Use preferred MATH instructional models highlighting: <u>Self- Reflection</u> Principal Effective Ed: 2 hours offered to develop a deeper understanding and an increase of strategies using self- reflection
April	Literacy <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - CCSS ELA 5-6 - 3-4 Lit Cadre 	CAST Meeting Time	Emphasizing Key Vocabulary within literacy model Principal Effective Ed: 2 hours offered to develop a deeper understanding and increase strategies around vocabulary building in the classroom	Emphasizing Vocabulary within preferred PSSD Math model Principal Effective Ed: 2 hours offered to develop a deeper understanding and increase strategies around vocabulary building in the classroom
May			Revisit the use of questioning strategies with the PSSD literacy workshop model, guided groups and intervention groups Principal Effective Ed: 2 hours offered to develop a deeper understanding and increase strategies	Revisit the use of Questioning Strategies within the preferred PSSD math model and intervention groups Principal Effective Ed: 2 hours offered to develop a deeper understanding and

Year At-A-Glance PD Plan DRAFT

No meetings on: a workshop or late arrival day or conference day. No meetings 5 days prior to conferences

- ✓ 5 principal directed days
- ✓ 27 hours Principal Effective Ed (+3 Open House)

Month	District PD	Data Analysis	School Focus 1: Reading/Writing/SIOP	School Focus 2: Math/SIOP
			around questioning strategies	increase strategies around questioning strategies
June		-New WELPA, WA Kids for K; DIBELs, and Math Nav, and DRA - Use DIBELs to inform next steps	Data Analysis Writer's Workshop and Collaborative Scoring	Data Analysis

Appendix O

Professional Development Planning Checklist

Time: ☐ 60 minutes ☐ 90 minutes ☐ 2 hour ☐ 2.5 hours ☐ 3 hour ☐ 6 hour ☐ Other: ____

Content/Program Area: ☐ ELA ☐ Math ☐ Inclusive Ed ☐ ELL ☐ Data ☐ Other

Plan and Level: ☐ High Support Schools ☐ Enhanced Schools ☐ Elem ☐ Middle ☐ High

Audience: ☐ Principal ☐ Gen Ed Teacher ☐ Special Ed Teacher ☐ ELL Teacher ☐ Other: ____

Title: _____

Topic: _____

Brief Description of PD:

--

PD Preparation

PD Planning Checklist Items	Yes	No	Not Required	Comments
Has an agenda for the PD session been developed, reviewed and approved by direct supervisor at least 5 days prior to the session?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Have the learning targets and success criteria been identified for the PD?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
How will a sense of urgency (The Urgency of Now) be developed at the opening? (Use of data, stories, case studies...)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Are the shifts of the CCSS for ELA and Math used as a context for the application of effective instructional strategies?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Does the structure of the PD make explicit the connections to the CEL5D Instructional Framework?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Does the PD plan make explicit connections to PLCs?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Does the PD plan make explicit scaffolding to meet the needs of all learners, including ELLs and Inclusive Education students?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Does the PD include at least two models (demonstration, videos) to illustrate main concepts and strategies of focus?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Does the PD agenda include appropriate time for participant engagement, to include reflection against the success criteria?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Is there ample time allotted for the PD to ensure that all content can be sufficiently addressed?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Logistics:				
Have you reserved space? Have you specified room arrangement needs if using the Boardroom or a school location space?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	

Have you completed proper paperwork for staff development in creating the course?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Have you arranged for sign in sheets? (Note: Need original sign-ins for clock hours and for the funding sources.)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Have you completed the sub request form?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Have you arranged for any needed materials for participants – supply buckets, flipcharts/pens, etc.?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Do participants need to be reminded of any details... date, location, materials to bring...?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
After the session:				
Post training materials on Curriculum Center.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Provide follow-up email to participants with any instructions for follow-up implementation tasks.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Review participant feedback for refinement; debrief with co-presenters.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	