2004

Program Assessment Of A Suburban School District's Literacy Leaders Paradigm

Howard B. Schechter
Seton Hall University

PROGRAM ASSESSMENT OF A SUBURBAN SCHOOL DISTRICT'S LITERACY LEADERS PARADIGM

BY

HOWARD B. SCHECHTER

Dissertation Committee

Mary Ruzicka, Ph.D., Mentor
Charles P. Mitchel, Ed.D.
John Dunay, Ed.D.
Judith Moran, Ed.D.

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the
requirements of the Degree of Doctor of Education
Seton Hall University

2004

ABSTRACT

PROGRAM ASSESSMENT OF A SUBURBAN SCHOOL DISTRICT'S LITERACY LEADERS PARADIGM

The purpose of this study was to assess the impact of the Literacy Leaders paradigm as implemented in a selected suburban school district. The Literacy Leaders model, consisting of a volunteer cadre of classroom teachers, purported to revitalize literacy teaching and learning in the district's elementary schools through the empowerment of teachers as instructional leaders. The focus of the study was the impact of the Literacy Leaders model on teacher effectiveness, teacher professional development, and teachers' leadership skills.

The data in this study were collected from (1) interviews with the district's elementary school principals (2) focus groups comprised of Literacy Leaders and (3) a survey of the district's elementary school classroom teachers. The questions that comprised the interviews, focus groups and survey elicited participants' responses and reflections relevant to the impact of the Literacy Leaders model on teacher effectiveness, teacher professional development and teachers' leadership skills. The researcher developed the questionnaire, entitled Literacy Leaders Perception Survey.

The results of the study included: (1) Principals, Literacy Leaders and classroom teachers agreed that the Literacy Leaders model positively impacted on teacher effectiveness. (2) Principals, Literacy Leaders and classroom teachers agreed that the Literacy Leaders model positively impacted on teacher professional development. (3) Principals, Literacy Leaders and classroom teachers agreed that the Literacy Leaders model positively impacted on the development of teachers' leadership skills. (4) The

success of the implementation of the model appeared to be directly related to the amount of support or lack of support of the building administrator.

Recommendations for action included: (1) The Literacy Leaders paradigm should be expanded to the middle schools and high school. (2) District professional development funds should be allocated to support the Literacy Leaders model in terms of increasing the knowledge base of the Literacy Leaders and developing their leadership skills. (3) The Literacy Leaders paradigm should be replicated to include other content areas in alignment with the district's curricula goals and objectives.

The results of the program assessment indicated that the Literacy Leaders model, in concept, design and implementation, might be replicable in other districts.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Thank you to Dr. Mary Ruzicka for her expertise, patience and support in bringing this dissertation to fruition. I would also like to thank the other members of my committee: Dr. Charles P. Mitchel, Dr. Judith Moran, and Dr. John Dunay for their encouragement and valued input.

My sincerest appreciation to Larry Bryan and Mary Jane Collett, two inspirational educators, whose vision and courage contributed to the design and implementation of the Literacy Leaders model.

My heartfelt thanks go to Rita Gish, Barbara Lockhart, Ellen Sharlow, and Angela Bender for their assistance and smiling patience when I needed technical support.

I would also like to thank my cohort friends at Seton Hall University for their laughs and fortitude during the entire doctoral experience.

The talented, extraordinary staff of John A. Forrest School, "The Place to Grow," continues to be my greatest source of professional inspiration and pride as we daily create magic for the students in our charge.

Last, but certainly not least, I acknowledge with pride and gratitude the cadre of Literacy Leaders, past, present and future, whose expertise, professionalism, passion and courage have ignited a spark that created a fire in a suburban school district.

DEDICATION

To my wife Sheryl, my soulmate, my best friend, my partner through life. Thank you for not letting me "give up", for standing by my side through good times and difficult times, for nurturing me as well as my dream.

To my wonderful children, Michael, Allison, and Andrew who bring me joy every day of my life.

To my parents, Thelma and Jack Schechter, whose love, encouragement and pride will always be a blessed memory.

To my mother-in-law, Gloria Bring, whose unwavering support and confidence in my abilities meant so much to me as I pursued my studies.

To all my family and friends who have shared this journey, I dedicate this study.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES

Table

Page

Chapter I

INTRODUCTION

Who are the instructional leaders in the nation's public schools? Are they chief school administrators, building principals, consultant experts, or are they teachers? Effective instruction is tied inexorably to effective leadership. Who provides the leadership is an ongoing challenge for public education in terms of initiating change within the constraints of a budget-wary constituency and standards-driven state and federal mandates.

In the development of its Literacy Leaders model, a suburban school district in Northern New Jersey initiated a professional development paradigm that focuses on the classroom teacher for expertise and leadership. This paradigm shift may be significant in the context of traditional sources of instructional leadership.

Prior to the 1980s, the concept of the effective school leader focused chiefly on the skills of the principal to manage his or her school with business-like efficiency akin to the industrial model of the early 20th century. Viewed in the context of a top-down management paradigm, change was initiated and monitored by the school administrator with minimum input from teachers, parents, or students. In the early 1980s the concept of instructional leadership emerged with the principal assuming primary responsibility for a school's academic success. Weber (1989) identified the five main functions of instructional leadership as: defining school mission, promoting a positive learning climate, observing and giving feedback to teachers, managing curriculum and instruction, and assessing the instructional program. By the end of the

be viewed in the context of the political, social and economic influences that traditionally drive reform agendas in our country. While "reading", "writing" and "rithmetic" have been upheld as core educational values, teacher training in literacy was not a priority until the latter part of the 20th century.

Butts & Lawrence (1953) offered an historical overview of the evolution of teaching within the social and economic context of American culture. During the 17th and 18th centuries, housewives and widows, who comprised the greater part of the teaching population, were barely literate themselves. Working out of their kitchens, these women, also known as "dames," taught simple literacy skills to a handful of neighborhood children for a small fee. In fact, teaching barely qualified as an occupation requiring special training or lengthy preparation and therefore included among its ranks itinerant adventurers, drifters, and chronic malcontents and misfits who failed at other enterprises.

With the advent of the "common schools" in the early 1800's, the feminization of teaching coincided with the burgeoning male labor force required in the fields or in urban factories. Utilizing women helped alleviate the teacher shortage because they were more readily available and their services could be secured for half or even one third of the pay of men. Women predominantly taught students in the younger grades, offering little more than the rudiments of literacy instruction that they themselves had received as common school pupils. Since males who entered the teaching profession predominantly taught the upper grades and were expected to have expertise in specific disciplines, their professional profile was held in greater esteem. The result was an almost exclusive monopoly of men in educational leadership roles

who knew little about quality literacy instruction in the elementary schools.

Throughout most of the 19th century, teachers in rural and urban schools aimed at little more than fostering rote learning. A widespread perception at the time held that teaching, as a profession, was neither sufficiently complex nor intellectually challenging to justify any sort of special preparation. As private and pubic schools grew in number and influence, there was a call for states to assume the cost of teacher training. Reluctant to assume responsibility for yearlong teacher training, many states nonethleless offered summer teacher institutes, the predominant forum for teacher training throughout most of the 19th century. Rather than focusing on pedagogy, the summer teacher institutes addressed strategies for maintaining decorum and teaching morality. These summer institutes evolved into the workshops and district conferences on which teachers today come to rely on for their in-service education.

In the latter half of the 19th century, state-sponsored "normal schools" were established for the purpose of qualifying teachers for employment in the elementary or common schools. For over a half century, popular skepticism surrounded the utility of the normal schools and the belief that teacher education was a bona fide discipline to be studied apart from liberal arts. Even as the normal schools evolved into 4-year state teachers' colleges and universities in the 20th century, many states did not require teachers to have a bachelor's degree. As late as 1931, only 20% of elementary teachers had college degrees and few states had licensing standards for teacher certification. Local school districts had primary responsibility for prescribing guidelines for curriculum. Few districts provided opportunities for teachers to participate in pedagogical training activities.

The 1957 launching of the Russian Sputnik satellite sent shockwaves through the public education system. Fashionable as it was during that period to blame public education for not preparing the country for the challenges of Cold War competition, the race to "catch up" to the Russians resulted in closer scrutiny of teacher education programs. A Harvard University study entitled "The Education of American Teachers" acknowledged the need for colleges and universities to better prepare teachers for the "profession" of education (Conant, 1963).

With acknowledgment that public school education needed to be prioritized in terms of students' acquiring requisite workplace readiness skills, federal and state funding of education was inexorably tied to student achievement in reading and mathematics. How best to teach reading and writing became the focal point of methods courses in the universities and in student teaching experiences in the classrooms. Attempting to respond proactively to the criticism of American education detailed in critical reports such as *A Nation at Risk* and *Crisis in the Classroom*, the federal government issued a plethora of guidelines that targeted literacy improvement among underachieving students. From Chapter/Title 1 through *No Child Left Behind*, federal funding prioritized the improvement of literacy skills. As such, school districts around the country scrambled to engage their teachers in quality literacy professional development experiences. Many of the literacy initiatives were pre-determined by district administrators with little or no input from classroom teachers. Whether implementation of a specific approach to literacy learning (e.g. whole language or balanced literacy) or adoption of a whole school

reform model (e.g. Success for All), literacy professional development has become an integral component of district staff development programs.

An obvious characteristic of staff development for educators in the 1990s was its variety (Houston, 2000). More than the after-hours courses prevalent in the 1960s and 1970s, staff development encompassed diverse activities including action research, peer review, and case study analysis. Even the change in terminology from "staff development" to "professional development" signaled a change in thinking about instructional leadership. As the role and responsibilities of the principalship were redefined, the integral role of the teacher as leader became more prominent (Chirichello, 2003). As professional development transitioned from "top down" administrative mandates to teacher-initiated priorities, teacher leadership paradigms such as the Literacy Leaders engaged the classroom teacher in professional development experiences that were tailored to their daily work lives in the classroom.

The development of the Literacy Leaders model mirrored the changing focus of teacher professional development in the 1990s. During the 1995-96 school year, selected teachers in a suburban district's elementary schools met on an infrequent basis after school in an informal "Literacy Network" whose focus was professionals engaging in dialogue about literacy instruction. Sharing strategies and initiatives, the teachers appreciated the opportunity to learn from each other and to engage in professional reflection. The Literacy Network paved the way for the development of the Literacy Leaders paradigm. A "grass roots" initiative that grew from teachers' interests in collaborative learning, the Literacy Leaders model was developed and implemented in the district's elementary schools in September 1997.

The purpose of the Literacy Leaders model is to strengthen teacher professional development within the district while improving the literacy learning of students. Teacher volunteers from each of the elementary schools collaborate on professional development, curriculum development and staff development experiences. With district and school-based support, the Literacy Leaders model purports to revitalize literacy teaching and learning in the district's elementary schools.

Literacy Leaders meet once monthly after school in a workshop setting. Agendas of the meetings focus on collegial learning, reflections on the successes and challenges of turnkey training and the development of leadership skills and styles. The Literacy Leaders set goals and objectives for their own professional development while sharing their expertise with their peers. A plethora of literacy initiatives has been implemented in the district's elementary schools as direct result of support from the Literacy Leaders (see Appendix A).

The Literacy Leaders, in their leadership roles, need to develop positive rapport with their principals, supervisors and fellow teachers. The Literacy Leaders are supported by the district's central administration who provide no recompense other than a commitment to recognize the group as knowledgeable learners whose "voice" is valued in terms of district decision-making regarding literacy teaching and learning.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this program assessment is to explore the impact of the Literacy Leaders paradigm on teacher effectiveness, teacher professional development, and teachers' leadership skills in a suburban school district.

Statement of the Problem

Increasing teacher effectiveness in order to increase student achievement is an ongoing challenge for school districts throughout the United States. Toward that end, professional development of teachers needs to be prioritized in the public schools. Nonetheless, reductions in federal and state funding formulas have resulted in sweeping budget cuts that include reductions in funds allocated for teacher professional development. In addition, traditional in-service training for teachers is problematic. One-day workshops offered by curriculum consultants are too general, providing minimal one-on-one support for the classroom teacher.

In its avowed commitment to quality and continuous improvement, a suburban school district in Northern New Jersey has developed and implemented an innovative professional development model based on teacher empowerment. The Literacy Leaders initiative, comprised of a cadre of volunteer participants, utilizes a "teachers teaching teachers" paradigm to increase teacher effectiveness. How well the model increases teacher effectiveness through teacher-led professional development will be the focus of this program evaluation.

Research Question

How does the Literacy Leaders paradigm impact on teacher effectiveness, teacher professional development and the development of teachers' leadership skills?

Definition of Terms

For the purpose of this study the following terms and operational definitions will be used:

Literacy. Literacy is the ability to think and access knowledge for thinking and communicating. In this study, literacy refers to students' abilities to listen, speak, read, write and view. Literacy is also recognizing one's own purposes for communicating (through print or nonprint, verbal or nonverbal means) and being able to use one's own resources to achieve those purposes (New Jersey Language Arts/Literacy Curriculum Framework, 2002).

Literacy leader. A Literacy Leader is a participant in the Literacy Leaders model developed in a selected suburban school district. According to the model, a Literacy Leader is a teacher who volunteers to participate in professional development experiences that impact on his or her effectiveness as a teacher and the development of his or her leadership skills

Teacher effectiveness. Teacher effectiveness refers to teaching behaviors that have a positive impact on student learning, behavior and attitudes. For the purpose of this study, teacher effectiveness will be measured by (a) an analysis of responses on the Literacy Leaders Perception Survey that focus on teacher effectiveness (see

Appendix B) and (b) responses to questions about teacher effectiveness posed during administrators' interviews and Literacy Leader focus groups.

Teacher professional development. Teacher professional development refers to experiences that expand teachers' knowledge base and/or skills as effective teachers of literacy. For purposes of this study, teacher professional development will be measured by (a) an analysis of responses on the Literacy Leaders Perception Survey that focus on teacher professional development (see Appendix B) and (b) responses to questions about teacher professional development posed during administrators' interviews and Literacy Leaders focus groups.

Teachers' leadership skills. Teachers' leadership skills empower teachers to impact change on their students, on their organization and on their peers. For the purposes of this study, leadership refers to the profile of the Literacy Leaders in developing school and district-based staff development initiatives whose object is the improvement of literacy instruction. The leadership profile of the Literacy Leaders will be measured by (a) an analysis of responses on the Literacy Leaders Perception Survey that focus on leadership skills (see Appendix B) and (b) responses to questions about teachers' leadership skills posed during administrators' interviews and Literacy Leader focus groups.

Elementary school. An elementary school is a school in the school district comprised of students in Grades K thru 5.

Limitations of the Study

1. Teachers who are identified as Literacy Leaders have volunteered to participate in the Literacy Leaders model.

2. The study's sample will not include teachers whom the researcher evaluates in his capacity as principal of one of the elementary schools in the district.

3. This study will not explore the impact of teachers' participation in the Literacy Leaders model on student achievement in literacy.

Significance of the Study

The district's Literacy Leaders paradigm may signal a change in traditional teacher in-service programs:

1. Since participation in the model purportedly increases teacher effectiveness, in- service opportunities should focus on the process of collaboration and teacher empowerment rather than on specific content and product.

2. Prioritizing in-district talent rather than outside sources for teacher professional development, the Literacy Leaders model may provide cost-effective, quality opportunities for district- wide literacy renewal.

3. By developing the leadership skills of teachers, the Literacy Leaders model may support administrators in other school renewal initiatives based on collaborative leadership.

4. The Literacy Leaders model, in concept, design and implementation, may be replicable in the middle schools and high school as well as in other school districts.

Chapter II

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

The Literacy Leaders model represents a shift from the "principal as instructional leader" paradigm to teacher-empowered collaborative leadership. Related literature will be reviewed as it pertains to three components of the Literacy Leaders initiative that purportedly result in effective teaching: (a) teaching effectiveness, (b) teacher professional development, and (c) teachers' leadership skills.

Teacher Effectiveness

Related literature and research studies have focused extensively on characteristics of effective teachers of literacy with particular focus on indicators and/or qualities of effective literacy instruction in the elementary grades. An International Reading Association (2000) position statement enumerated characteristics of knowledge and practice that excellent teachers of literacy share including a belief that all children can read and write, a variety of ways to teach reading, use of flexible grouping, continual assessment of student progress, ability to provide strategic help, management of classrooms with a high rate of student engagement, a strong content and pedagogical knowledge and high expectations for student achievement. The education reform movement in Kentucky supported literacy instruction characterized by child involvement, interaction and exploration (Bredekamp, 1987, as cited in Cantrell, 1999) as opposed to systematic skills instruction that was teacher centered and skill-based. Instructional practices of

exemplary teachers included ongoing assessments of student learning, wide use of children's literature, flexible grouping of students for instruction, open-ended writing activities, student self-evaluation of writing, and specific skills instruction tailored to individual needs.

Literature based on the studies of experts from Australia, New Zealand, and England, from where "whole language" literacy instruction emanated, underscored the role of the classroom environment and the proficiency of teachers in addressing individual students' needs. Focusing on the elementary school, Cambourne (2000) offered insights based on 9 years of classroom "anthropology." In addition to indicators detailed in the previously mentioned studies, Cambourne added indicators of a literate classroom environment including furniture arrangements, print-rich displays, a diversity of reading and writing open-ended questions, clearly communicated expectations, classroom routines and events that occur in authentic settings, and a plethora of individualized teaching strategies. Research commissioned by the Teacher Training Agency in England (Wray, Medwell, Fox, & Poulson, 2000) detailed effective teaching practices demonstrated by teachers in the primary grades. Among the practices were maximum pupil engagement, a combination of whole class, group and individual teaching, developmentally appropriate task content, maximum teacher-pupil interaction, use of a wide variety of reading materials, extensive modeling of classroom behaviors, and explicitness of directions.

Block, Oakar, and Hurt (2002) found that a continuum of expertise exists among effective teachers of literacy from pre-school through Grade 5. Observational data in this research study indicated that 44 categories of grade-specific expertise

could be collapsed into six domains of expertise that vary by grade level. In addition, the researchers discovered that the majority of highly effective teachers frequently displayed grade-specific talents. The research implied that careful attention should be given to the selection of a teacher who possesses the qualities of literacy expertise that best complements particular grade levels. The study did not address how teachers were to acquire their grade-level expertise other than to suggest that that they needed to stay current about the latest research-based practices.

Extensive research has focused on effective literacy teaching in the primary grades (kindergarten, Grade 1 and Grade 2). Pressley et al. (1996) surveyed outstanding primary level teachers who reported that effective literacy instruction involved the creation of literate classroom environments, modeling and teaching of both lower order and higher order comprehension processes, extensive and diverse types of reading (guided reading, shared reading, and independent reading), teaching the writing process and extensive monitoring of student progress. Wharton-McDonald, Pressley & Hampston (1998) observed first grade teachers who varied in their effectiveness in promoting literacy. The most effective teachers engaged their students through excellent classroom management, high expectations, holistic teaching of skills, individualized support and contextual integration of reading and writing with content area learning. The findings of Wharton-McDonald et al. (1998) were replicated in a study conducted by Pressley et al. (2001) that identified the teaching behaviors and characteristics that distinguished the most effective literacy teachers from the least effective literacy teachers. This research focused on the role of the effective teacher in responding to individual student needs while encouraging

students to self-regulate their learning. The study reported that while effective literacy instruction is comprised of a complex interaction of components, how to develop more effective first-grade literacy teachers remained a challenge.

Related research also points to a relationship between teachers' participation in collaborative research and teacher effectiveness. Munro (1999) posited that teacher knowledge about learning may also have an impact on teacher effectiveness. Monitoring instructional changes implemented by teachers participating in collaborative reflective study about the learning process, the researcher observed changes in effective teacher behaviors as well as changes in student performance. Henson (2001) studied the impact of teachers' participation in a research initiative on personal teaching effectiveness. Qualitative interview data supported the overall positive impact of teacher collaboration on teachers' self-perceptions about their instructional effectiveness.

In light of the highly qualified teacher standards associated with No Child Left Behind mandates (as cited in Pearson, 2003), reform in literacy instruction may be related to teacher effectiveness. The related literature suggests that effective teaching goes hand in hand with an ongoing commitment by teachers to acquire a deep and broad professional knowledge. The South Carolina Reading Initiative (SCRI), a multi-year professional development model, is predicated on expanding teachers' knowledge base through their interaction with expert literacy coaches. Instead of focusing on a specific reading program, the South Carolina State Department of Education is taking the bold step of improving the instructional effectiveness of their reading teachers (Morgan et al., 2003).

The extent of research related to the effectiveness of literacy instruction underscores the value of collaboration and reflective study in developing teacher leaders. The research appears to indicate that effective teachers, with focused professional development, may also become effective teacher leaders.

Teacher Professional Development

Although there is consensus in related literature about the significance of professional development and its impact on instructional effectiveness, research studies underscore the challenges of identifying a model that develops teacher leaders.

According to Haycock (1999), school wide improvement needs to be placed in the context of a collaborative culture that prioritizes problem solving. Learning about the processes of collaborative program planning and team teaching need to be the focus of professional development. She further indicated that professional development in collaborative program planning and team teaching allows teachers to develop ownership of any innovation, an essential component of teacher leadership.

Since most teachers are not taught leadership skills in their teacher preparation programs, professional development opportunities need to focus on teaching teachers how to become leaders (Buckner & McDowelle, 2000). Teachers need to learn how to become empowered in terms of decision-making, professional growth, status, self-efficacy, autonomy and impact on school life (Rinehart, Short, Short, & Eckley, 1998). Regular opportunities for self-examination and reflection are critical components of the professional development of teacher leaders (Burns & Snow,

1999). The collegiality of teacher leaders is reinforced by intense professional development that entails the training, sharing, and experiences that confront teacher trainers on a daily basis (Baumgartner, 2000).

As part of a general approach to professional development, the learning community of adults in the school also needs to be strengthened. Not only will teachers become more proficient leaders but the school also becomes a place that supports good teaching and effective leadership (Caine & Caine, 2000).

Typical professional development workshops do not result in improved teaching practices. Resources devoted to workshops presented by charismatic experts are disconnected from teachers' everyday practices. Feiler, Heritage, and Gallimore (2000) point to the efficacy of the teacher-leader as one way to provide ongoing professional interactions with staff focusing on specific teaching and learning issues. Pertinent to this teacher-leader role is the need for the teacher leader to engage in his or her own professional development as well as leadership training on how to be a better leader.

Robb (2001) called for a redefinition of professional development for teachers that focused on "professional study" rather than "staff development." According to Robb, well-crafted inquiry-based professional study, which includes both inquiry and choice on the part of teachers, creates a more positive context for continued learning. Rather than offering simplistic recipes for success in pre-planned workshops, she insists that professional study be based on the particular context of each school and the diverse needs and interests of the teachers. Her research confirms the role of

teachers as intellectual practitioners who effect change through inquiry and learned practice.

Clement and Vandenberghe (2000) studied the impact of two workplace conditions, autonomy and collegiality, on elementary school teachers' professional development. Qualitative data based on teacher interviews confirmed variants of collegiality ranging from informal "storytelling" to "joint work" on yearlong planning projects. The study also confirmed the teachers' need to be autonomous within their school setting, deciding for themselves when to participate in collegial activities. The researchers additionally pointed out the significant role the organization plays in creating an environment that challenges teachers to be reflective and to engage in collaborative learning. The researcher did not identify a model for professional development, focusing instead on the willingness of teachers to avail themselves of opportunities for professional growth. Conducted in Flemish elementary schools in Belgium, this study's focus on challenges to collaborative learning may be culturally biased.

Promoting program ownership may be an essential component of professional development for teacher leaders. Reading Recovery, an early intervention literacy program, requires its teacher leaders to participate in ongoing professional development experiences. District teacher leaders develop their skills in collaboration with other teacher trainers in the district before sharing their expertise with site-based Reading Recovery teachers in individual schools. The ongoing professional development of teacher leaders is the heart of Reading Recovery's success (Smith-Burke,1996). In Community School District 2 in Manhattan, the

Professional Development Laboratory (PDL) is a collaborative teacher development program that promotes collegiality and provides an environment in which new and experienced teachers can update skills, learn and practice new instructional strategies, and share classroom techniques with each other. An evaluative program study indicated that the vast majority of participating teachers expressed satisfaction with the PDL experience, making changes in their classroom management, their teaching methodologies and their attitudes (New York City Board of Education, 1993). Similarly, teachers participating in professional development schools identified feelings of pride and satisfaction for the career enhancement, increased confidence and professional growth resulting from their leadership roles (Lecos et al., 2000). These studies appear to indicate that participation in professional development activities that are intrinsic to a specific program result in increased teacher satisfaction and program success.

Morris, Chrispeels and Burke (2003) posited that the impact of teacher professional development is doubled when teachers participate in professional networks outside of their schools and then share that knowledge in the context of collegial interactions within their buildings.

The implication of the related literature is that professional development programs are essential to the effectiveness of teacher leaders. Professional development needs to be earmarked toward expanding the knowledge base of teacher leaders while at the same time reinforcing their leadership skills.

Teachers' Leadership Skills

Related literature relevant to the development of teachers' leadership skills focuses on the evolving status of teacher leaders as change agents and their willingness to assume a leadership profile. In addition to enumerating the plethora of leadership skills that characterize successful teacher leaders, the literature underscores the obstacles that discourage teachers from stepping forward to assume the leadership mantle. Research studies utilizing a case study approach offer insight into the dynamics of collegial interactions as well as profiles of effective and ineffective teacher leaders. The literature indicates that although teacher leadership is critical to educational reform, there isn't consensus on how to best develop teachers' leadership skills within the context of a specific leadership paradigm.

Silva, Gimbert and Nolan (2000) identified three waves of teacher leadership. In the first wave, teacher leadership was traditionally viewed as an opportunity for individuals to leave their classrooms to assume administrative and supervisory roles. By promoting teachers to higher salary positions, this first wave of teacher leadership focused on maintaining an efficient educational system (Evans, 1996). As effective managers who advanced the efficiency of the bureaucratic structure, teacher leaders were expected to acquire their own skills for entry into leadership positions. In its second wave, teachers were viewed as instructional leaders akin to principals. Positions such as curriculum developer, subject specialist, staff developer, and program coordinator were created to acknowledge the leaders' expertise in instructional knowledge. Skills for second wave teacher leaders focused on acquiring

new knowledge and leading peer in-service opportunities. The third wave of teacher leaders worked within the classroom setting to improve instruction by participating in activities that promoted a re-culturing of their schools. These teacher leaders chose to initiate change by working with students and peers on powerful learning experiences that resulted in enhanced student performance (Sergiovanni, 1996). For these teachers, leadership skills focused on collegial interaction, collaborative problem solving and successfully navigating educational organizations including but not limited to his or her perceived professional relationship with the building principal. In light of the ever-evolving role and profile of teacher leaders, the related literature has only begun to emerge (Silva & Gimbert, 2000).

Research studies that focus on teacher leadership skills signal the challenges associated with teachers assuming leadership profiles within their school building. Keedy (1999) examined teacher instructional leadership profiles within the small group dynamics of collegial groups. Data results indicated that facilitator practical knowledge and support of the principal emerged as factors that influenced teacher leadership development. Requisite leadership skills included providing technical support to group members, maintaining task orientation, encouraging teacher professional growth, and modeling inquisitiveness as a thinker and learner. Data also revealed that colleagues' perceptions about the teacher leader's professional rapport with the principal were a mediating effect upon the efficacy of the facilitator's leadership. Conley and Muncey (1999) focused on the seemingly contradictory roles that teachers assume as leaders and team members. Based on interviews with teacher leaders, data indicated that those who emphasized leadership in their collegial

relationships perceived themselves as mentors in their work with other teachers. In contrast, those who emphasized teaming prioritized collegiality and reciprocity in their work with other teachers. These research studies have implications in terms of identifying a professional development model that target the development of leadership skills in teacher leaders.

Literature related to the development of teachers' leadership skills indicates that effective teacher leadership is often linked to effective principal leadership. Principals who create school environments based on risk-taking and reflective practice recognize teachers' expertise and support their role in critical decision making. The key to empowering teacher leaders lies in the empowerment of building principals (Short, 1998). Principals create structures that facilitate a collaborative vision about where the organization wants to go, what it wants to be and what it wants to do for students. The principals who exert most influence on their teachers recognize that leadership is dispersed across an entire school rather than located a single individual (Harris, 2002). Toward that end, principals seek to develop teacher leadership skills by supporting structures that model and engage teachers in reflective inquiry, collaborative learning, and critical decision-making. Principals who encourage and enlist teachers as leaders leverage their own success on that of their teachers (Barth, 2001). The implication of related literature is that if teacher leadership is crucial to the health and performance of a school, principals are crucial to the health and performance of teacher leaders. In order to effect substantive school and/or district renewal, the literature suggests that an effective teacher leadership

model needs to incorporate the development of principals' leadership skills as much as the development of teachers' leadership skills.

Program evaluation studies of prominent teacher network projects underscore the challenges of developing effective teachers through collaborative leadership initiatives. Research studies focusing on the California Subject Matter Projects, Vermont's Portfolio Assessment Program and Critical Friends Groups provide insight into the dynamics of the teachers teaching teachers paradigm.

Pennell and Firestone (1996) utilized a case study approach to evaluate the California Subject Matter Projects (CSMPs) and the Vermont Portfolio Assessment Program. The purported long-term goal of these network projects was statewide systemic reform based on a constructivist approach to teaching and learning. Both of these programs depended on teacher leaders to promote the changes associated with program implementation. Data collected from semi-structured interviews indicated that teachers' philosophical beliefs drawn from their years of experience in either traditional or constructivist settings determined how amenable they were to instructional changes inherent in each of these statewide projects. Because of the voluntary nature of their participation, teachers in the California Subject Matters Projects expressed a greater commitment to instructional change than did those in the Vermont Portfolio Program who were pressured to participate because of state mandates to implement a new assessment system. The significant role of administrators in supporting teacher leaders was affirmed in both case studies especially in terms of providing time for teachers to engage in collaborative inquiry. Other intervening variables that influenced program implementation were time for

planning, stipends for teacher training and acquisition of curriculum materials to support constructivist teaching. The program evaluation researchers commended both initiatives for prioritizing the development of teachers' leadership skills while bemoaning the fact that state-driven policy initiatives drove the creation of the teacher networks. The research findings suggest that framing educational reform in the context of top down state mandates minimizes the influence of teacher leaders in effecting substantive instructional changes.

Dunne, Nave and Lewis (2000) completed a 2-year program evaluation of Critical Friends Groups (CFGs), a teacher leadership program commissioned by the Annenberg Institute's National School Reform Faculty (NRSF). The study focused on the impact of teacher participation in Critical Friends Groups on professional development and on changes in classroom instruction. Based on a comparison of responses to selected items on a Professional Climate Survey completed by 628 teachers, the researchers reported statistically significant differences for all items reported between those teachers who participated in Critical Friends Groups and those teachers who did not.

Survey items focused on professional engagement, opportunities for collaboration, adaptation of instruction to students' needs, expectations for students' success, support from the administration and the level of influence of district, and state policies on decisions about instructional content and pedagogy. The Critical Friends Group program evaluation affirmed the positive impact of participation in a teachers helping teachers model on changes in practices aimed at improving students' learning. In addition, participation in the teacher coaching model resulted in positive

engagement in teaching and learning with a concomitant positive impact on classroom instruction based on greater expectations for student success and adaptations to students' varying instructional needs. In terms of professional development, the study noted the positive effect of learning in a trustful environment among supportive colleagues. Analysis of data obtained from interviews of teachers who participated in Critical Friends Groups and those who did not, underscored the influence of the building principal on the success of the collaborative groups. In schools where changes in teachers' thinking and practice occurred, principals were publicly supportive of the CFGs and were CFG members themselves.

The Professional Climate Survey, the instrument used in the Critical Friends Group evaluative study, measured respondents' perceptions about learning and teaching. Although the study appears to correlate respondents' positive responses to their participation in Critical Friends Groups, the research study does not evaluate the program itself, especially in terms of its impact on the development of teachers' leadership skills. The external validity of this study may also be questionable since two of the researchers are co-directors of the National School Reform Faculty, the professional development unit of the Annenberg Institute.

The aforementioned review of literature and research related to teacher effectiveness, teacher professional development and teachers' leadership skills provides substantive criteria for evaluation of a teacher leadership model and its purported impact on effective teaching.

Chapter III

METHODOLOGY

Type of Study

This ethnographic qualitative research will focus on the Literacy Leaders paradigm in terms of its impact on the culture of teaching, learning and leadership in the elementary schools.

Prior to implementation of the Literacy Leaders model, renewal of literacy instruction was dependent on professional development offered by out-of-district consultants. Essentially, professional development consisted of an amalgam of two opportunities:

One-day on-site workshops, presented by staff development "experts", were offered to the entire teaching staff once or twice yearly. These short-term experiences were both costly to the district and limited in terms of long-term impact on instruction. Teachers basically enjoyed time away from their classrooms only to return to their usual instructional routines the next day. Without time for reflection or collegial planning, the impact of these one-day workshops was minimal at best. Moreover, the cost of acquiring the extended services of the expert presenters was cost-prohibitive to the district.

One-day off-site workshops were offered to interested staff on a first-come first-served basis. Participation was limited to selected individuals who attended generic presentations offered by staff development organizations. Teachers would invariably attend these workshops by themselves and received little, if any, implementation support upon return to their schools. Cost-prohibitive and non-specific to the needs of individual

teachers, these one-day off-site seminars and in-service workshops did not provide a springboard for school and/or district literacy renewal.

In contrast, the basic tenet of the Literacy Leaders paradigm, teachers teaching teachers, represents a paradigm shift for professional development in the district. As teachers assume responsibility for their own teaching and learning, they purportedly also develop leadership profiles that may result in the revitalization of the district's literacy focus.

For purposes of this program assessment, the district's elementary school Literacy Leaders, classroom teachers and administrators engaged in collaborative, self-critical inquiry that comprised the basis for an assessment of the Literacy Leaders initiative.

Subjects and Schools

Voluntary participants in this study included the following populations:

#1. Grade K-5 classroom teachers from five of the six elementary schools in the district who completed the Literacy Leaders Perception Survey were participants (n = 80). The classroom teachers from the researcher's elementary school were not included in the sample. Teachers, both male and female, ranged in age from less than 25 years old to more than 50 years old. They taught students in grades K-5 and had a range of experience from less than 1 year to more than ll years.

#2. Elementary school principals in the school district who were interviewed by the researcher (n = 6) were participants. The researcher, who is also one of the district's principals, was not included in the sample.

#3. Literacy leaders from the district's elementary schools (n = 25) who participated in focus groups (see Appendix A: Literacy Leaders Job Description), were also participants.

Methods

Questionnaire

The population of classroom teachers completed the Literacy Leaders Perception Survey (see Appendix B). Developed by the researcher, the Literacy Leaders Perception Survey was pre-tested to determine face and content validity. Based on the feedback obtained from a jury of experts comprised of a retired Assistant Superintendent, a middle school principal, a Supervisor of Social Studies and two retired elementary teachers, the survey was revised to ensure that it accurately measured the impact of the Literacy Leaders model. Domain items were revised for clarity and succinctness. In addition, survey items were revised to ensure that respondents interpreted the statements as intended by the researcher.

The questionnaire consisted of 20 items that respondents completed in approximately 10-15 minutes. Items were organized so that they were easy to read and easily understood. Brief, clear instructions were provided in bold type. Items were grouped in a logical sequence with easier items at the beginning and more challenging ones at the end.

Table 1

Questionnaire Framework

Domain	# of Questions	Item #
Grade Level	1	Part I – Item 2
Gender	1	Part I – Item 3
Age	1	Part I – Item 4
Years in Education	1	Part I – Item 1
School-Specific Information	1	Part I – Item 5
Professional Development	5	Part II – Items 1,2,4,6,9
Teacher Effectiveness	5	Part II – Items 5,7,11,12,15
Leadership Skills	5	Part II – Items 3,8,10,13,14

A letter was personally addressed to staff and sent via inter-office mail informing the teachers of the purpose of the questionnaire, how they might benefit from their participation and expressing gratitude for their anticipated participation (see Appendix C). A key statement in the initial letter and in the actual questionnaire attested to the confidentiality, anonymity and voluntary nature of each respondent's participation.

The researcher, with the permission of the building principal (see Appendix D), distributed the surveys at a faculty meeting. Respondents returned the surveys to the researcher's home school via inter-district mail. A concluding statement on the questionnaire thanked teachers for their participation and offered them an opportunity to receive the results of the research study. With the building principal's permission, the

researcher placed copies of the letter of solicitation and questionnaire in the mailboxes of absentee teachers.

Interviews

The researcher, in an individual face-to-face encounter, conducted a structured interview with the population of elementary school principals. The interviews were scheduled in each principal's office at his or her convenience (see Appendix E).

The structured interview incorporated many of the same closed-form questions indicated in the above questionnaire. A significant difference in the wording of the items reflected the principals' perspective (see Appendix F). Their input based on observations of teacher and student interactions comprised a source of secondary data for the study. The structured interview also included simple probing questions that encouraged the interviewee to add details to his or her responses.

Table 2

Interview Framework

Domain	# of Questions	Question #
Teacher Professional Development	2	3,4
Teacher Effectiveness	2	2,7
Teacher Leadership Skills	2	5,6
School-Specific Information	2	1,8

Interview steps included scheduling an appointment, sending an agenda of questions, asking permission for audiotaping and having the principals sign an informed consent form. After the interview, a typescript was sent to each principal for his or her review, approval and permission to include in the final research report. Confidentiality, anonymity and the voluntary nature of participation were assured.

Focus Groups

The researcher conducted two focus groups each consisting of 7 to 10 Literacy Leaders. Literacy Leaders reflected on their roles in terms of perceived successes and challenges.

The focus groups were specialized group interviews comprised of a representative sample of Literacy Leaders who volunteered to participate in the focus groups. After school, in one of the district's elementary schools, the researcher conducted two focus groups, each consisting of 7 to 10 participants. A letter of solicitation requesting participants' voluntary and anonymous participation was sent in advance to each of the district's Literacy Leaders The letter also requested participants' permission to audiotape the focus group session to facilitate transcription of notes by the researcher (see Appendix G). As per Institutional Review Board protocol, participants signed an informed consent form at the interview. Questions ranged from initial broad inquiry queries to more specific questions that encouraged participants to reflect on perceived successes and challenges in their roles as Literacy Leaders. Questions were conceptualized to address the impact of the Literacy Leaders paradigm on teacher

effectiveness, teacher professional development and teachers' leadership skills (see Appendix H).

Table 3

Focus Group Framework

Domain	# of Questions	Question #
Teacher Professional Development	2	2,3
Teacher Effectiveness	2	4,6
Teacher Leadership Skills	2	5,7
School-Specific Information	2	1,8

Data Analysis

Responses to the 15 domain items on the Literacy Leaders Perception Survey, which utilizes a Likert scale, were tallied and analyzed using descriptive statistics. A frequency distribution of grouped data was constructed to identify the range of responses relevant to teachers' perceptions about participation in the Literacy Leaders paradigm and its impact on professional development, teacher effectiveness and the development of leadership skills. The mean of the survey responses provided information about the degree of teachers' perceptions. Analysis of the "Comments" sections on the survey also provided insight into respondents' rationale for their Likert scale ratings.

In terms of the structured interviews and focus groups, anecdotal vignettes and quotations were intertwined with interpretive narrative to provide insight into the context of the responses of the administrators and the Literacy Leaders. The researcher coded participants' responses according to the domains of teacher effectiveness, teacher professional development and teacher leadership skills. Follow-up probing questions identified similarities and differences between the perceptions of the administrators and those of the Literacy Leaders. Data obtained from the structured interviews and focus groups were compared and contrasted with data obtained from teachers' responses on the Literacy Leaders Perception Survey to compare the perceptions of the principals and Literacy Leaders with those of the classroom teachers.

Findings of this research were communicated to the Superintendent of Schools, to the district administrative team (consisting of principals and subject supervisors) and to the district's Literacy Leaders. Findings provided insight into the impact of the Literacy Leaders paradigm on professional development, teacher effectiveness and the development of teachers' leadership skills in the suburban school district.

Chapter IV

PRESENTATION OF THE DATA

The purpose of this research is to explore the impact of the Literacy Leaders initiative on teacher effectiveness, teacher professional development and teacher leadership skills in a selected suburban school district.

This chapter presents the findings of the study based upon the analysis of the collected data concerning the perceptions of elementary school teachers and administrators relevant to the Literacy Leaders model. The data are derived from interviews with the district's elementary school principals, from focus groups comprised of a sample of Literacy Leaders, and from the Literacy Leaders Perception Survey administered to elementary school classroom teachers.

Interviews

The preliminary interview process began with a letter to the Superintendent of Schools that requested permission to conduct research in the district (see Appendix I). The correspondence included a description of the study and an assurance of confidentiality and anonymity for the participants.

Initial contact with the building principals was made through written communication (see Appendix E). Out of the 6 elementary school principals in the district, 5 participated in the interview. (The researcher is the principal of the sixth elementary school and was not a subject in this study.) Since 2 of the current principals had served in their positions for less than 1 year, the researcher contacted the previous 2 principals who recently retired. One agreed to participate in the study;

the other one was not available. The time and location of the interviews were scheduled at the principals' discretion via telephone conversation. All of the principals agreed to allow the researcher to tape record the sessions that were each approximately 30 minutes in duration. Each of the participants received a copy of the interview typescript for his or her review prior to including the data in this study.

The interview data were obtained from the responses of principals to eight questions regarding the Literacy Leaders initiative in each of their schools: (a) How did you select the Literacy Leader(s) in your school? (b) What expertise in literacy instruction does your Literacy Leader(s) demonstrate? (c) How have the Literacy Leaders influenced teaching in your school? (d) How have the Literacy Leader(s) shared their expertise with other classroom teachers in your school? (e) How do the other classroom teachers in your school perceive the Literacy Leader(s)? (f) How has the Literacy Leaders model impacted on the development of the leadership skills of the Literacy Leaders? (g) Do you consider the Literacy Leaders initiative to be valuable to literacy renewal in your school? Why or why not? (h) In what ways might the Literacy Leaders initiative be modified to better meet the needs of your staff?

A structured interview incorporating each of the aforementioned questions yielded qualitative data that was then categorized and organized according to each of the responses given by each of the interviewees. The data were then charted to assess the similar and different perspectives among the interviewees with regard to each of the eight questions. The results highlight the similarities and differences in

perceptions among the elementary school principals regarding the Literacy Leaders initiative. The data will be presented in three ways. First, tables will present each of the eight questions separately, with the related perceptions offered by each interviewee, categorized in a table to underscore where similarities and differences in responses may exist, as well as any recurrent themes or patterns. Second, below each table will follow a statement highlighting the salient finding(s) according to the frequency of occurrence of each response. Finally, following the statement, a typescript of each interviewee's response to the question will be presented for the purposes of clarification and interpretation.

Table 4

Interview Question 1: How did you select the Literacy Leader(s) in your school?

(N= 6)

R	I	#	%
Someone who had a good knowledge base/a passion for literacy	A,B,C D,E,F	6	100%
Someone who was looking to learn	A,E	2	33%
Someone who knew how to construct a classroom	A	1	17%
Someone who was respected by the other teachers	A,B,E,F	4	67%
Someone who could turnkey expertise	A,B,D,E,F	5	84%

Note. R= Response, I= Interviewee, # = Number of Responses, %= Percentage of Responses

As shown in Table 4, all of the interviewees agreed that Literacy Leaders should have a good knowledge base or a "passion" for literacy. Someone who could turnkey his or her expertise (5 out of 6 responses) and someone who was respected by the other teachers (4 out of 6) were identified as selection criteria by a majority of the principals. Two principals identified "looking to learn" as one of the determining attributes for selecting a Literacy Leader. One principal stated that knowing how to "construct a classroom" was an additional consideration.

> Principal A: I hope to find a teacher who has a good understanding of literacy, knows how to construct a classroom, invites children to read throughout the curriculum- it's somebody who's looking to learn, and looking to work- not only with primary children but upper elementary and not only learning how to read but to inspire kids so that eventually they would have a love of reading. I have a small school-only two classes on each grade. We try to have a collaborative type of environment. I would like the teacher to be one who is respected by the other teachers, who feels comfortable going into other classrooms, not being critical, but sharing what they know.

> Principal B: I explained what the process was and allowed people to volunteer. Once they volunteered I then determined whom I would like to see be a Literacy Leader based on their qualifications. First of all, they had to have passion for literacy. Second, I wanted someone who I thought could turnkey it in my building. That was another issue- whether somebody would be respected by other members of the staff. Passion and whether they would be respected were the two major components.

> Principal C: I would make a selection based on teachers' knowledge of the literacy program, how involved they are personally with what's going on. Actually, the teachers selected are excellent. They have the background; they have the commitment and the focus on what we're trying to do.

> Principal D: First of all, we opened it up to the entire faculty. The ones who initially came forward had a high interest in literacy and were pretty much spearheading the development of literacy in our school. After that, as those people came back and stated to talk to other teachers, more faculty wanted to get involved. Literacy growth in our school has increased so much more as a result of the Literacy Leaders bringing back and sharing what they learned with the rest of the faculty.

Principal E: Primarily, it's a self-selection process with the opportunity being available for teachers. Those who are very motivated in the area of literacy tend to step forward and want to be more knowledgeable themselves and are therefore available to make a larger impact on the school. I can invite someone to consider his or her participation in the Literacy Leaders group. I have not done that recently because I have had willing and able people step forward.

Principal F: I think first, I would want to have people, who going in, would have a fairly substantial knowledge base on teaching integrated reading/writing, literacy, balanced literacy types of approaches. I would think that I wouldn't want to use people who are weaker teachers for whom it would primarily be a staff development initiative. I also want to choose people who had interpersonal skills in terms of working with other people who would be able to serve in a turnkey kind of a role. Often there are dynamics in grades between teachers. I wouldn't want to have people who would be seen as people who are trying to compete but people who are really willing to share.

Table 5

Interview Question 2: What expertise in literacy instruction do your Literacy Leader(s) demonstrate? (N=6)

R	I	#	%
Understands that children read at different rates	A	1	17%
Tries to assist children in making connections between reading and their own lives	A	1	17%
Alternates large and small group instruction	A,E	2	33%
Demonstrates a strong connection between reading and writing	A	1	17%
Acquires new ideas based on her participation in meetings	A	1	17%
Expertise, a depth of knowledge, in at least one area of literacy E.g. visual literacy	B	1	17%
Expertise in differentiated instruction	C,E	2	33%
Knowledge of thinking	D	1	17%

R	I	#	%
Expertise in writer's workshop	D	1	17%
Expertise in reader's workshop	D	1	17%
Expertise in guided reading	D	1	17%
Offered instructional strategies that reflect the district's literacy focus	C,E,F	3	50%

Note. R= Response, I=Interviewee, # = Number of Responses, % = Percentage of Responses

The information in Table 5 reflects the variety of responses relevant to the principals' perceptions about their Literacy Leaders' demonstrated areas of expertise. Half of the principals cited their Literacy Leaders' role in offering instructional strategies that reflected the district's literacy focus (3 out of 6). The only area of expertise stated by more than one principal was differentiated instruction (2 out of 6).

> Principal A: This year I have one teacher involved with the Literacy Leaders. She's in the fifth grade setting. She understands that children read at different rates, that they have a different level of understanding, that she tries to challenge students to do better than they can, and with literacy in fifth grade she tries to help them make connections. When they read a book in class, they try to make connections to their own lives so that it becomes real to them. She understands that they need to be in the big group because they learn from one another. Yet I see her taking skills groups where she will work with small groups of kids. They do teacher to student and they do peer to peer. So I also see her having kids who have a higher level working with a child who doesn't. There's a strong connection between reading and writing. I know my Literacy Leader enjoys going to the meetings, brings those ideas back to the faculty meetings. She belongs to the International Reading Association. She's one that's always looking to learn. She did action research this year, pulled teachers from different grade levels. They're sharing their research with all the Grade K-5 teachers.

Principal B: What was most critical was that they acquire an in depth in knowledge in specific areas of literacy. I couldn't say they became experts in everything but I could say that when one became involved, for example, in visual literacy- an area in which they formerly had peripheral knowledge became an expert in specific areas. Then they shared their expertise with other teachers and because they knew so much about one area, people started to respect them more. In fact, one teacher, who I thought needed to gain respect from the staff because she lacked focus, because she knew a lot about something in depth, changed people's opinions about her.

Principal C: All of the training they've received- they've had a number of workshops this year and I am assuming in the past- they have a good foundation. They also seem to buy into the program very strongly. They seem to be the ones that if you walk into their classrooms at random opportunities, they are working on our district focus. They are more with differentiated instruction; they are more focused in that direction than the teacher who has not had this training. Keeping in mind that my staff is more veteran, it's a harder road to cross when you give them something new- so I think that the teachers teaching teachers model is a valuable one.

Principal D: They demonstrate more and more knowledge of reading, writing, listening, speaking, viewing and definitely thinking. Thinking has become a major blanket over the entire initiative. They know reader's workshop, writer's workshop, guided reading; they demonstrate these literacy components in the classroom and share it with each other.

Principal E: First, I think they have a perspective, that's renewed and refreshed, about what good quality literacy instruction includes. Beyond that, I see pedagogical influences from their participation, instructional strategies that are refined and embellished to better reflect the entire overview of the literacy movement in our school district emerge from that model and through that collaboration. So I see, in summary, a more effective instructional approach and an overall understanding of what the literacy instructional pieces might be, how it all comes together. There are among my Literacy Leaders, a tendency to want to refine the language arts/literacy teaching piece. The Literacy Leaders' participation and collaboration allows that refinement to happen and there are critical elements of instruction that are brought forth through that collaboration.

Principal F: I think that at least two of them are able to really differentiate and handle small group instruction and learning centers and do multiple tasks in the classroom to really individualize better. I also think they have a clearer overview of the different components of literacy and are probably less skill-based than many of the other teachers.

Table 6

Interview Question 3: How have the Literacy Leader(s) influenced teaching in your school? (N=6)

R	I	#	%
Primary grade teachers rely less on the textbook	A	1	17%
Teachers have acquired expertise in Literacy Leaders' areas of strength	B,E	2	33%
Stimulated discourse about literacy	B	1	17%
Initiated change through good, personal rapport with colleagues	C,E	2	33%
Led faculty meetings and workshops	D	1	17%
Assisted teachers in assessing and managing pupil growth	E	1	17%
Not to a great degree	F	1	17%
Assisted teachers in integrating literacy into content areas	F	1	17%

Note. R= Response, I= Interviewee, # = Number of Responses, % = Percentage of Responses

As shown in Table 6, principals offered a variety of responses concerning how their Literacy Leaders' have influenced teaching in their schools. Two principals stated that other teachers have acquired expertise in those areas in which the Literacy Leaders demonstrate expertise (2 out of 6). Two principals alluded to the personal

rapport that enabled the Literacy Leaders to initiate change (2 out of 6). One principal stated that the Literacy Leaders have not influenced teaching to a great degree.

> Principal A: She shared her action research project at faculty meetings. I think she's trying to get the primary teachers to understand that they are not confined to the textbook, that they can use the textbook as a core while using their own experiences with literature that they have and pull in ideas from the curriculum on their own. I guess have them branch out beyond what the typical books might be.

> Principal B: Other staff members in their classrooms picked up the Literacy Leaders' areas of expertise. I also think that another perspective was that besides being knowledgeable in an area, it started some discourse in the building about literacy. That discourse was very valuable because people started to communicate. Then other people got involved in study. Take guided reading, for example. It stimulated an active interest that stimulated discourse that then stimulated some kind of study.

> Principal C: I think when they were selected originally, whoever selected them was very wise in selecting the informal leaders of the building, the people who really have the good rapport with everyone else. If you and I get along well and I have a new idea, you are going to probably buy into it more readily. I think they were the informal leaders and were non-threatening to the other people. It really was people that the other teachers felt comfortable with in terms of going to for new ideas and suggestions. Whereas if I went in to go in and try the same thing, it would be a little more difficult because I'm perceived in a different role than the teachers.

> Principal D: One of the things that I have implemented over the past few years was a change in the format of our faculty meetings. Rather than just dealing with "adminstrivia" or "educationese", I've asked the Literacy Leaders to make the major portion of faculty meeting a workshop. They bring their materials in; they show what they've done; they videotape some of the things they've done with kids. This mutual sharing and the way they approach topics has been very valuable.

> Principal E: The teaching in the particular Literacy Leaders' classrooms has been affected greatly. There have been refinements in their instructional technique; there have been overall concerns about assessment and managing of pupil growth in those particular classrooms. Beyond the classrooms, there's an interest level that has been piqued and sparked by those literacy leaders because what they do is exciting and they are excited by their work. They share with their colleagues in spontaneous and energetic ways and that allows the strategies that are being built and used to be transferred in a non-structured manner from

colleague to colleague.

Principal F: Not to as great a degree as I would have liked to have seen. Probably in the lower grades, K-3, they had a stronger impact but that's probably in conjunction with some other initiatives and training that's been done through other programs and staff development initiatives. I think, at least in my own building, the practice in Grades 4 and 5 is pretty much a skill-based, compartmentalized type approach to literacy instruction- a lot of whole group instruction, a lot of skills practice, a lot of drill. I think the writing tails off significantly at the 4th and 5th grade level even though one of the Literacy Leaders is a fifth grade teacher. I think that's probably a factor in terms of how I view the school in terms of literacy instruction. I certainly wouldn't lay it on the Literacy Leaders because it's certainly one initiative that's voluntary in nature I probably would have selected a different person- well, I don't know- I mean based on the teachers that I have in grades 4 and 5, I don't know of a person who might better have served in that role. In fairness to the teacher who is doing it, I think that she is making a good faith effort to implement a lot of the strategies. She is reaching out to integrate into other subject areas- she also teaches health- she's looking to do thematic and interdisciplinary work in that area. I think her own practice has been positively impacted. I'm not sure what the impact has been on other people.

Table 7

Interview Question 4: How have the Literacy Leader(s) shared their expertise with other classroom teachers in your school? (N=6)

R	I	#	%
Visited colleagues' classrooms	A,C	2	33%
Shared professional literature with other teachers	A	1	17%
Through word of mouth, spontaneous interactions	B,E	2	33%
Sharing at staff meetings	B,C,E,F	4	67%
Conducted study groups	D	1	17%
Informal meetings before and after school	D	1	17%
Dissemination hasn't been at the point that it should be.	F	1	17%

Note. R= Response, I= Interviewee, # = Number of Responses, % = Percentage of Responses

As shown in Table 7, a majority of the principals responded that the Literacy Leaders share their expertise at staff meetings (4 out of 6). Multiple responses include "visiting colleagues' classrooms" (2 out of 6) and spontaneous, word-of-mouth sharing (2 out of 6). One principal responded that dissemination of information hasn't been at the point that it should be.

> Principal A: She shared instructional books that she thinks are effective. We are limited by the availability of prep periods. She's worked with her teacher next door. When she has a prep, she'll go into that teacher's class. She's invited by that teacher to come into her class; we've had student teachers. We've allowed the student teacher to teach while the Literacy Leader goes in to observe another class. We are trying to do more of that. She's sharing professional literature with them. I think those are the two areas in which she has had the most impact. And she shares with parents somewhat.
>
> Principal B: Some through word of mouth where they just talked about it with other staff. Every other staff meeting was a sharing of information whether it was from literacy leaders or something else. Then when people expressed an interest, we would meet with them separately. I think it was first through scheduled formal meetings and then informal ones.
>
> Principal C: They've shared ideas at faculty meetings; they've gone into each other's classrooms, formally and informally. We try to do a lot of grade level discussions. Certainly, modeling lessons. They go into classes in a very non-threatening, supportive way. When you go in and tell a teacher that "You are doing a good job. Maybe we can help you do something that you are having trouble with"- that has been excellent.
>
> Principal D: Many of them are taking extra classes; they are going to college. Most of them have participated in our community in-service workshops. Many of them have been leaders in that area. They conduct study groups in the school. They meet at varied times after school or during the lunch hour to talk about literacy. Literacy is one of the major topics in the teachers' room. Literacy talk is constant in the building.
>
> Principal E: I've already alluded to the spontaneous interactions and exuberance but that's not the primary way of sharing. During grade level meetings and faculty meeting times, often time is set aside for the Literacy

Leaders to make reports and updates and provide information and handouts for the staff at large. This information is given in the spirit of helpfulness and it is accepted in a real positive way too. Of course it always depends upon the skill of the person making the presentation and the way that person is perceived by others. But the perception in the school is positive, for the most part, and the person, making the presentation understands how to keep it positive. It works very well.

Principal F: I have to say that I haven't put in place a formalized model for sharing. Most of it has been on an informal basis- through grade level meetings, though working on some interdisciplinary pieces together, but there hasn't been enough cross-grade-I don't think they have had much contact with teachers who are not on the same grade. They also haven't showed initiative in terms of saying, "We have this piece and we'd like to share it". So I would say that the dissemination hasn't been at the point that it should be.

Table 8

Interview Question 5: How do the other classroom teachers in your school perceive the Literacy Leader(s)? (N=6)

R	I	#	%
Some feel comfortable seeking out the Literacy Leaders if they have a specific question.	A,B	2	33%
Some more experienced teachers don't feel the Literacy Leaders should be telling them what to do.	A,E,F	3	50%
Some staff members don't want to get involved.	B,D	2	33%
I don't think any staff members are negative.	B,C	2	33%
Some view the Literacy Leaders as people from whom they can learn.	D,E,F	3	50%

Note. R= Response, I= Interviewee, # = Number of Responses, % = Percentage of Responses

As shown in Table 8, there is a range of other classroom teachers' perceptions relevant to the Literacy Leaders. While half of the principals stated that some teachers view the Literacy Leaders as "people from whom they can learn" (3 out of 6), half of the principals also stated that some experienced teachers "don't feel the Literacy Leaders should be telling them what to do" (3 out of 6). Two principals stated that some teachers approach the Literacy Leaders when they are seeking an answer to a specific question (2 out of 6) while others do not want to get involved at all with the Literacy Leaders (2 out of 6). With the exception of Principal C who didn't believe that any member of her staff had a "negative" perception, each of the other principals alluded to the continuum of positive and negative perceptions that their classroom teachers had concerning the Literacy Leaders.

> Principal A: It's an interesting question. I think they would feel comfortable looking to them if they have a specific question. However, some of the more experienced teachers feel they know as much as the Literacy Leaders and they don't feel those people should be telling them what to do. Yet I know if they have a problem or concern, they do tend to go to them. Not as much as I would like. The younger inexperienced teachers, I will suggest that they go to that teacher. Sometimes they don't want to expose their areas of weakness to me but they'll feel more comfortable with a colleague. The other teachers feel overwhelmed many times. They are involved in a number of other areas. I have somebody on the math committee who can't be on both math and literacy. It's an issue of time. They feel if their kids are succeeding, that their test scores are good- they haven't gotten any complaints-why fix what isn't broken- that kind of attitude.

> Principal B: I think well. I don't think they were hostile- the staff looked to them as knowing something they wanted to share. I think there were some staff members who stayed away because they didn't want to get involved. I don't think any staff members were negative toward the Literacy Leaders. I think that had to do with the open environment and the environment that we had developed for them to share. Our teacher meetings were more of a sharing session than it was someone getting up to just talk. Because of that, people shared other ideas besides the Literacy Leaders. They just became part of the sharing. You can't

put people up there as if they were the experts, especially in front of colleagues who were at the same level of teaching. A trustful environment was established as a precursor to the Literacy Leaders sharing their knowledge.

Principal C: Because the literacy leaders are the informal leaders of the school anyway, the rest of the staff seems to buy into their support. I find that the primary grade teachers seem to be more on board than the fourth and fifth grade. But that seems to be a natural thing. I don't think they perceive the Literacy Leaders any differently than the math leaders and technology leaders. It's a person working towards an expertise. I think the main reason why the primary teachers have bought into it is that they have received in-depth literacy training whereas the upper grades are just now receiving training- for example, guided reading. The more that I get to learn about these different initiatives myself, the more accepting they will be. Now that they know me better also, I am not as threatening as I was last year at this time. I think it's working out very well. I don't see any resentment at all.

Principal D: It appears that we've all been "inoculated" with the idea of improving literacy- the state mandates, the Core Curriculum Standards in language arts/literacy. It's the key to success in the elementary school. We've even gone so far as to focus on mathematics literacy. Teachers view the Literacy Leaders as people with some expertise from whom they can learn. There's a collaborative effort here to learn more in the literacy area. In terms of how the other teachers view the Literacy Leaders, there may be some who are a little suspicious about jumping on the bandwagon. They go cautiously. We have programs that come and go all of the time. There are those that are just reluctant to move too fast but they are moving that way. We also use the Literacy Leaders to work with these people. We have a continual bombardment of literacy in our school and I think that helps.

Principal E: My sense is that there are those who genuinely see that a professional has invested time and energy to becoming adept and skilled in a particular area and they respect it and they see that person as someone who can be a guide and influence in their own work. There are those who wouldn't choose to do that collaboration themselves, and -- this is a projection- in order to justify their non-involvement they reflect it as being unnecessary or maverick in the behavior of their colleagues. And there are those who look at it as a vehicle for them at some future date and they study it and look at that model as a professional growth technique.

Principal F: I'm not sure, being new, what all the dynamics are between the teachers in the faculty. I think generally, it's a faculty that's pretty supportive of each other but I think they're very isolated in their practice. I don't think there's very much sharing going on regardless. In some grades, I think it's built more on personal relationships than really built on any shared perceptions. I think in the case of the more capable Literacy Leader, there's some professional jealousy.

> I'm not sure what the dynamics are between one of the teachers and the other teachers- this is just my personal feeling- there is some professional jealousy and without a more formalistic staff development process, maybe even a resistance to trying something different. On the other side, thinking of the same teacher, one very positive development has been the introduction of extensive nonfiction reading into the fifth grade. The teacher did it as a collaborative observation and I supported it with a set of leveled texts. The grade is now going to broaden that experience into science, social studies, health and other science areas- next year it's going to be a grade wide initiative so I would say that based on a combination of the Literacy Leader piece, the collaborative piece and the willingness to share, it's been a positive development in which the Literacy Leader played a major role

Table 9

Interview Question 6: How has the Literacy Leaders model impacted on the development of the leadership skills of the Literacy Leaders? (N=6)

R	I	#	%
Literacy Leaders are becoming more comfortable presenting before their colleagues.	A	1	17%
Speak with more confidence because of their expertise	B	1	17%
Developed teachers' leadership potential by providing them with expertise.	B,C,D,E,F	5	84%
One Literacy Leader assumed an administrative role in another district.	D	1	17%

Note. R= Response, I= Interviewee, # = Number of Responses, % = Percentage of Responses

As shown in Table 9, the overwhelming majority of the principals believe that participation in the Literacy Leaders initiative has provided their Literacy Leaders

with areas of expertise that have developed their leadership potential (5 out of 6). The principal who did not believe that participation in the initiative has developed her Literacy Leaders' leadership potential, believes that her leaders were more comfortable presenting before their colleagues (1 out of 6). One principal alluded to the fact that one of his school's Literacy Leaders left the district to assume a leadership role as an administrator in another public school system (1 out of 6).

> Principal A: I feel that that this has been one of the areas that I have worked on since I've been here. I certainly can't be everything to everybody. I try to empower the teachers and have them hone their skills. This particular Literacy Leader, one year, piloted doing literacy in both classes. She felt that was her strength. She discovered that the paper work involved was too much to do. I think that the staff is beginning to share more at faculty meetings whereas they never did that before. They were a little threatened before by the fear that other teachers would think who were they to stand up in front of the group. But now that I've had somebody do something on the ESPA, something on technology, literacy kind of came naturally. It definitely impacts positively. We have a long way to go.

> Principal B: Each of the three people in my building who were Literacy Leaders had problems in being a leader. I think one had a lack of confidence in her abilities. The other two really didn't take a leadership role before. I think there was a change in that when they spoke, they spoke with more confidence. And I believe they spoke with more confidence because they knew their material. And I think that's what makes the difference in speaking about something at a leadership level and not speaking about something at a leadership level. Because they were knowledgeable, they were able to talk about it in a way that people listened. By going through this process, it allowed them to feel that they were becoming expert in something.

> Principal C: I feel when they feel more secure in what they are doing, that brings out their leadership qualities. You can't lead somebody without any knowledge base. To use the fourth grade as an example, I was getting a lot of hesitancy "I don't know anything (in reference to guided reading)." But now, with only two days of training, they feel stronger. When you are assigned a role such as Literacy Leader, and you're able to get the background and training you need to lead people, then that strengthens your leadership qualities overall.

> Principal D: As you know, we lost one of our outstanding Literacy Leaders to a leadership role in another district. She's being considered for an administrative role in that district. As people become knowledgeable about a specific area and

you give them the opportunity to share that information with others, there is an automatic assumption of leadership that occurs. There's nothing better than expertise to give you the opportunity to shine, to lead and guide other people in a specific way. There's a built-in component of having leadership potential when you get involved in an initiative like this.

Principal E: When we provide opportunities for a teacher to operate in a particular venue, the teacher is either going to grow in that area or the teacher is not going to be successful and reject that whole involvement because it is frustrating. My Literacy Leaders have stepped up and, quite frankly, it's a model for other things I do outside the literacy package. When a teacher is a leader, a peer leader, and it's shown to be a non-threatening but useful collaboration to the other staff members- I do the same thing in technology, the same thing in mathematics, on a more rigorous level, as we begin to implement the new program, because it seems to be an effective and non-threatening way for information to come from another, even more credible source, than the principal. Colleague to colleague sharing, with useful information being presented, seems to be effective. The principal has to steer and provide forum and also be the instructional leader of the school. But there is a special kind of credibility that comes from a teacher telling a teacher how it is that this works, how it is that this can be structured, how it is that children learn in this particular kind of environment, and what actually to do as a practitioner to make learning more effective. Principals also do those things but the credibility factor is great when teacher- to- teacher peer modeling is going on.

Principal F: I don't know. That's a good question. I think that all the people who are involved have leadership ability - I think even administrative potential should they choose to pursue that. There may be an avenue through the process here to help them develop that potential. It may be something for me to look at next year. I can't really say what the impact of the Literacy Leaders has been on those skills The skills have probably developed here in the context of the building where they are working but the Literacy Leaders' experience probably has given them tools to apply and use.

Table 10

Interview Question 7: Do you consider the Literacy Leaders initiative to be valuable to literacy renewal in your school? Why or why not? (N=6)

R	I	#	%
Yes, but realistically it needs to be expanded because the time element holds it back.	A	1	17%

R	I	#	%
Yes, it got us into a research mode as we studied literacy.	B	1	17%
Yes, it focused us on literacy learning and instruction.	B,D,E	3	50%
Yes, the peer-teaching-peer model is an effective way to promote literacy renewal.	C,D,E	3	50%
Yes, but its voluntary nature has limited dependability unless large numbers decide to participate.	F	1	17%

Note. R= Response, I= Interviewee, # = Number of Responses, % = Percentage of Responses

As shown in Table 10, all of the interviewees agreed that the Literacy Leaders initiative is valuable to literacy renewal in their schools. Nonetheless, the context for their affirmative responses varies. The most frequent reasons offered are that the initiative has focused the schools on literacy learning and instruction (3 out of 6) and that the peer-teaching-peer model is an effective way to promote literacy renewal (3 out of 6). Two affirmative responses were offered with disclaimers. Principal F believes that the model has limited dependability unless more teachers participate and Principal A decries the lack of time afforded to teachers who participate in the initiative.

> Principal A: Theoretically it should be. I believe in the purpose of the literacy initiative. On paper it seems like it should be something that's moving the district. The realistic part is that I have a teacher with a couple of periods a week, half of which she uses to do her own planning. The time element holds it back. But I definitely think it's a valuable process that shouldn't be disbanded but I'm wondering how it can be expanded.

Principal B: I thought it was very valuable. It did two things for us- one, it focused us on literacy with relevant discussion- focus on informed information rather than just opinion-it wasn't make believe. "This is what research said." Second, it got us into a research mode- people began to go out and study something. People began to study about other things including literacy; we talked a lot about research- the necessity to have information that was research-based with some validity.

Principal C: Oh, absolutely because as I said, teachers are more receptive to their peers- even the concept that we do most of our training in-district, whenever possible, with our own people- That's a wonderful ability we have. Using people that are considered peers, not supervisors- that's valuable. And this building, in particular, needs some renewal.

Principal D: The initiative has been very valuable. We have done more with literacy because we have had a concentration on it. We are more sensitized to he needs of children in this area and the value of literacy to the development of children in the elementary school. In my opinion, literacy is the key factor to education. As a result of this model, teachers interact with each other. They have an opportunity to go elsewhere, visit other buildings and talk to their colleagues in the district. They share information, attend workshops and network with each other. It has had a tremendous impact on the literacy program in our district.

Principal E: Absolutely, "yes". The Literacy Leader model and initiative has helped to create not just school awareness, but a district culture where the exchange of meaningful ideas about literacy learning and literacy instruction is valued and carried forward. It's been a benchmark of teacher empowerment. Teachers have been "notched up" to a level where what they have to say about their craft, about their work, to one another is now respected at a different, higher level by teachers. I think it is very valuable. I think literacy instruction has advanced, in part, due to the Literacy Leaders initiative, in part due to the initiative of individual teachers who have also done good things. But I think those good things have been nurtured by the Literacy Leaders in my school.

Principal F: I say, "yes" because I think that in the absence of any district wide, formal initiative at the elementary level, it provides important resources for teachers who want to improve their practice and who want to take risks and experiment. I think that's something which is lacking and in the absence of that, it's a very important piece. I think any time you can give teachers a staff development opportunity and a chance to share and talk, it's a very important piece. And the fact that people want to do it on a voluntary basis is significant. But the down side is that anything that is voluntary has limited dependability unless large numbers decide to participate.

Table 11

Interview Question 8: In what ways might the Literacy Leaders initiative be modified to better meet the needs of your staff? (N=6)

R	I	#	%
Provide more time for the Literacy Leaders to collaborate with colleagues	A	1	17%
Provide some sort of formal compensation for the Literacy Leaders	A	1	17%
Involve the administrator more in the model	B,E,F	3	50%
Provide more learning workshops for the Literacy Leaders in school or after school	C,F	2	33%
I can't think of anything we can do better.	D	1	17%
Rotate the Literacy Leaders to get more teachers involved.	E,F	2	33%

Note. R= Response, I= Interviewee, # = Number of Responses, % = Percentage of Responses

In terms of how the Literacy Leaders initiative might be modified to better meet the needs of teachers, Table 11 indicates that administrative involvement in the model is the most frequent response (3 out of 6). Other multiple responses include rotating the Literacy Leaders within a school to get more teachers involved (2 out of 6) and offering more learning workshops for the Literacy Leaders (2 out of 6). One

principal requested more time for her teachers to collaborate while one principal believes that the model is fine as it is.

> Principal A: Time, time, time! If there's a way that we can release them when they are having a world language period-could something be built in! -if we can do some kind of incentive to come in early, a half-hour in the morning, do work, or have teacher groups come in as part of the contract-we have such a strong teachers' union! It doesn't have to be much compensation- at least they feel they're getting something- at least to lead it. To do the paperwork, make sure that people are doing what they're supposed to be doing-and still have the volunteer portion- but I always hear that it's time-no time to get together- and we're always looking to find creative ways for that to happen.

> Principal B: I am not sure there is a better way. I think, however, the administrator has to be involved in the process. When the administrator doesn't have some knowledge, some active involvement, some commitment to the initiative, that creates a problem. You could have a turnkey operation but if the administrator doesn't provide the environment for sharing, it doesn't work. That's really critical. I would say that if this program were to be successful, the building itself has to be committed to the program. Literacy Leaders shouldn't go out on their own simply because there has to be a Literacy Leader in each building. There should be some discussion with the staff- "Why are we doing this?" "What is our commitment when they come back?"- So that we all become a community of learners. -Not just three people going out to do something. I would have a commitment at different levels including the principals as well as the teachers. That's the process that would probably make it more effective.

> Principal C: What I would like to see them have, and maybe we can do that this year, is to do some in-house workshops- after-school, Monday workshops, with just one grade level. I would like to see that happen with the Literacy Leaders also. A lot of it is shared information. They talk a lot about wanting to collaborate- so I think some of the ideas the third grade and fourth grade got this year from the leaders is a good crossover for next year.

> Principal D: I think we're on the right track the way we're doing it now. At the moment, I can't think of anything we can do better. It's well done, well thought out, well set up and the teachers are very much interested in the initiative and enjoy participating. In terms of my role, I consider myself an "assistant" to the teachers. I believe in empowering teachers to do their job. I then try to back off so that they can do what they have to do- any assistance I can offer, I try to be there to help them.

> Principal E: That's an interesting question. First of all, I think that the number of participants and the particular participants need to rotate somehow because the same person can't always be the resident expert but should be joined by others

who are new, and because they are new, refreshing leaders in the initiative. So I'm looking to have additional Literacy Leaders- first of all, literacy is such an important area of our instructional program that the number that I have is too few to impact on the staff effectively. I need some in various and different assignments, lower grade, upper grade, primary educators and such, so that there can be a more congruent communication from the assignment level to the concept and the pedagogy of Literacy Leaders. I am certainly interested in continuing the leadership model in our school and so, if no one comes to me early on, I'll have to make it an agendized item for an early discussion with staff that I need to have volunteers. If I don't have key individuals who are willing to step forward, I'd be very interested in a forceful suggestion- not so much an assignment-" I really need you to do this." "Would you please step forward and represent our school and make a contribution as a Literacy Leader?" Then I'd also probably add," I think you already have a good understanding of the literacy model and I'd like you to refine what you know and share with staff."

Principal F: I would like to see extended opportunities for more people to participate. Initially, some people may have held back - you know there's a benefit in one's own training and one's own practice- but that doesn't really serve the expectation that they become turnkey people- but I think that the training and the exposure and the interaction is important- it may be helpful to extend the opportunity to participate in a level one, level two configuration. Maybe the true leaders will become more active-one of the real issues at the elementary level is time. The likelihood that people have time that overlaps and even a little time after school- it really becomes very fragmented- but maybe if there was an entry-level piece for more teachers, it might make it easier to participate. The initiative needs some monitoring and consideration by me. If the principal gives attention to something, people think it's important. Maybe a piece of a faculty meeting or a grade level meeting should include discussion and sharing as a regular agenda item. It's probably something I need to think about.

Focus Groups

The preliminary focus group process began with a letter to the Superintendent of Schools that requested permission to conduct research in the district. The correspondence included a description of the study and an assurance of confidentiality and anonymity for the participants.

Initial contact with the Literacy Leaders who participated in the focus groups was made through written communication (see Appendix G). Out of the 24 Literacy Leaders in the district, 12 agreed to participate. Two focus groups comprised of 6 Literacy Leaders each were scheduled after school in the district office conference room. Limiting each group to 6 participants resulted in a free flow of conversation that maximized each Literacy Leader's participation. Each of the participants agreed to allow the researcher to tape record the sessions that were approximately 35 minutes in duration. Each of the focus group participants received a copy of the focus group typescript for his or her review prior to including the data in this study.

The focus group data were obtained from the responses of the Literacy Leaders to eight questions regarding their participation in the Literacy Leaders initiative: (a) Why did you choose to participate in the Literacy Leaders initiative? (b) How has participation in the Literacy Leaders initiative influenced your knowledge base about literacy? (c) What professional development experiences have you participated in as a result of your involvement in the Literacy Leaders initiative? (d) How has participation in the Literacy Leaders initiative influenced your effectiveness as a teacher? (e) How has participation in the Literacy Leaders initiative developed your leadership skills? (f) What specific successes have you experienced in your role

as a Literacy Leader in your school? (g) What specific challenges have arisen in terms of your effectiveness as a Literacy Leader in your school? (h) In your professional opinion, how can the Literacy Leaders model be improved to better serve your needs and those of the teaching staff?

Each of the focus group discussions was highly interactive and all subjects fully participated. It was evident from the strong opinions offered during the discussion that the Literacy Leaders were passionate about their participation in the initiative. The qualitative data obtained from the focus groups were categorized by the researcher according to recurrent themes or patterns. The data will be presented in two ways: (a) each of the eight questions will be presented with interpretive narrative statements that identify recurrent themes prevalent in both focus groups and (b) following the summary statement, a typescript of each focus group's discussion relevant to the question will be presented for the purposes of clarification and interpretation.

Question 1: Why did you choose to participate in the Literacy Leaders initiative?

The majority of the responses to this question underscored the volunteers' wish to learn from each other in a collegial support model. They expressed feelings of isolationism before their participation in the Literacy Leaders program. The teachers unanimously voiced positive statements regarding the opportunity to engage in collaborative learning with their peers. Additional reasons for participating in the Literacy Leaders initiative included the opportunity to learn more about literacy and the impetus of an administrator to participate.

Focus Group 1.

Leader 1: The Assistant Superintendent of Schools suggested it to me. He thought it was something I would enjoy because I had a focus of literacy in the classroom. He knew I would like to participate in some sort of support group in literacy. He steered me toward this.

Leader 2: My experience was similar. The Assistant Superintendent of Schools was going around to the elementary schools at that time, asking who was interested. I was definitely interested because that was my focus in the classroom as well. I wanted to learn more about literacy so that was why I joined. I needed the support of my colleagues.

Leader 3: We had started an initiative informally, the Literacy Network. We met rather informally in my classroom. We felt the benefit. We enjoyed each other's company as well as hearing what other people did. We did learn and grow. We felt it was very worthwhile and it took off from there.

Leader 4: I had a Special Ed. focus prior to this and I was going to be involved in the inclusion model so I felt it was important to learn what was out there as far as literacy with regular students and not just the programs that were offered in Special Ed.

Leader 5: I had just completed the Columbia University teachers' model over the summer and this was somewhat of an extension of that. We took the energy that was there, the lessons that we learned, and adapted them with each other. We were able to talk about what was working practically and what needed to be modified. We basically became our own workshop extension of that program.

Leader 6: I just wanted to learn more. I wanted to learn all the new things that were going on. I was out of graduate school- that was finished. I just wanted to make sure that I was getting all the newest things that were out there.

Focus Group 2.

Leader 7: I chose to participate in the leadership initiative because it provides me with a great opportunity to exercise my expertise in a turnkey fashion to my colleagues, from close bonds with the teachers I work with and from great discussions on literacy and how to make myself a better teacher in terms of reading and writing.

Leader 8: I wanted to find another network of teachers with whom I could learn and share at the same time and not to be alone in my classroom.

Leader 9: As a librarian, since literacy is my business, I felt it would be good to know more about what the teachers are doing in their classrooms so that I could be a helper and have the materials available and understand what is changing with literacy and literature.

Leader 10: When I came to this district, I was excited about a lot of the literacy initiatives that were here, - I actually was jealous the first year because I used to hear about the great things that they were talking about in the Literacy Leaders group, When the opportunity to join came up, I joined not only because I had things to share but I also had things I wanted to learn from my colleagues.

Question 2: How has participation in the Literacy Leaders initiative influenced your knowledge base about literacy?

The Literacy Leaders, as a group, maintained that they have increased their knowledge base about literacy as a result of their participation in the Literacy Leaders initiative. Discussion focused on opportunities to attend out-of district workshops and conferences that were not offered to regular classroom teachers. In addition, they cited the workshops they presented to each other during monthly meetings and in-service days as valuable resources for increasing their knowledge base about literacy. One of the leaders reminded the group that during the first 2 years after the inception of the Literacy Leaders model, the leaders spent the majority of their time learning rather than sharing their expertise. Many leaders again mentioned collegiality as their primary resource for learning. One participant stated "having conversations and the ability to enthusiastically exchange ideas with other colleagues broadened my knowledge base." Another leader underscored the fact that prior to her involvement with the Literacy Leaders, she had no one with whom to share her workshop experiences. She stated that the Literacy Leaders meetings offered her "a place to share" and "colleagues to go to as a resource."

Focus Group 1.

Leader 4: For me it would be collegiality. I learned from the participants but it also opened the door to workshops and conferences that I would not have been aware of had I not been a Literacy Leader. I wasn't aware of their existence.

Leader 5: I think it also gave you a way to feel more comfortable taking chances with work in your classroom and with activities. If you wanted to try something out, there were people who were also willing to take those chances and do something a little differently and then that leads to other things. "This worked and so go to this step". "This wasn't so great-so let's backtrack and ask why." Literacy Leaders directed me to the Bureau of Education Research that presents a lot very of specific, practical workshops and hands-on efforts that you can bring right into the classroom. A lot of them have a strong literature base throughout grade levels. So it was a way to blend the research with the practicality of the activity.

Leader 2: I really felt that I wanted to increase my knowledge, and again with the collegiality and everybody around- I was in the Literacy Leaders from the beginning. In the beginning we really worked two years learning. For instance, the writer's notebook was new to me at that point. It also opened the door for me to go to Columbia, to go to the institute- all the things that were available- both workshops and institutes and the actual learning that took place when our colleagues presented specific instructional programs- whether it was writer's notebooks or Junior Great Books or a lot of literacy initiatives.

Focus Group 2.

Leader 11: By getting ideas about different approaches from the workshops held at the meetings. They gave me the courage and the knowledge in addition to what I had, to go back and try these new ideas and strategies in the classroom. I think we all have the knowledge but the initiative - the "oomph"- to go back and do it- that it's O.K. to try something new and I think the Literacy Leaders provide a very supportive way to go back into the classroom and become a better teacher.

Leader 12: I got into it because I felt isolated in the classroom. There weren't bonds, relationships with other teachers- I was at the middle school at the time- I spent two years in New York City where there was a lot more staff development- a lot more going out to workshops- here I knew I needed more-so I was reaching out from my own base to increase my own knowledge and comfort level- and beyond that, to make bonds and relationships with other people- the idea of turn keying coming later on- I wasn't afraid of that- but it wasn't what I wanted to start doing right off the bat. I feel much less isolated now.

Leader 9: Being a librarian is different from being a classroom teacher. I listen and very often I hear discussion about trying new things- I don't have that ability to teach like other classroom teachers- I am really a facilitator. I didn't know what other people were doing-people dropped off their kids and then picked them up- so I was really isolated. The Literacy Leaders group has made a very big difference for me- I do feel a connection- I am able to see what other teachers do- all different thoughts and ideas- then I can help my colleagues with materials or try the new ideas myself- that makes a big difference.

Leader 7: There's just one other point I would like to make. It was wonderful to be in a group of people who have been rejuvenated and are as enthusiastic as I am about teaching. This group set apart those who were here for the paycheck and those who are committed to the profession. Having conversations and to be able to enthusiastically exchange ideas with these people was a true benefit- and that's how it broadened my knowledge base-I was able to have those conversations and to relate and to expand on a level that was more acceptable to where I am.

Leader 12: And those conversations- they grew over time as we developed that common language. I have been in Literacy Leaders since the first year- we knew that was one of our goals- to develop that common language and it's really happened. Now it's beyond just opening the door and saying "I'm going to share, build a relationship with that teacher, put our classes together- whatever." Now it comes out of that common language, working toward a shared vision of literacy, and a shared vision of things that we want our students to do.

Leader 8: At the beginning, when I first started teaching, I felt very passionate, and I still do, about literacy- but I used to go to a book and read new things in a book- Shelly Harwayne, Lucy Caulkins- I'd read about something, I'd go to workshops but I had no one, when the workshop was over, or when I was done reading a passage in the book, if I still had questions to ask- I had no one to ask those questions - I'd go back to my room, try it and then things wouldn't work-I needed someone to ask- so the Literacy Leaders enabled me to have a place to go, a resource- I can't have Lucy Caulkins sitting next to me, but I have my colleagues as a resource- for me it's helped continue my passion, to make it more exciting- or otherwise you get turned off.

Question 3: What professional development experiences have you participated in as a result of your involvement in the Literacy Leaders initiative?

Discussions reflected the dual nature of the Literacy Leaders' professional development experiences. First, the leaders enumerated some of the many literacy

workshops and seminars they had attended consistent with increasing their literacy knowledge base. Among the workshops identified were balanced literacy, accountable talk, Columbia University Writing and Reading Institutes, expository writing, poetry, visual literacy, Junior Great Books, curriculum mapping, word walls, content area literacy, and critical thinking. Second, the leaders identified professional development experiences they facilitated consistent with their turnkey responsibilities. Among the workshops they presented were visual literacy, writing process, Junior Great Books, guided reading, portfolio assessment, and accountable talk. Some of the workshops were offered on-site in their elementary schools; others were presented during district in-service days. One of the Literacy Leaders commented on the fact that her new position, District Literacy Specialist, had evolved out of her Literacy Leader experiences. In her role as a staff developer, she is responsible for the literacy professional development of elementary school teachers throughout the district.

Focus Group 1.

> Leader 1: My whole position, District Literacy Specialist, is a by-product of Literacy Leaders. We were sent o so many workshops and institutes, providing us with such a strong sound foundation that now I provide professional development to the district in my role as literacy specialist.
>
> Leader 5: It also gave a chance to become more proactive when the professional development network started here in the district. The literacy leaders are often the presenters and they are the ones who are the turnkey trainers. That becomes a face and a name to say-"This is a resource". You say, "I need your support. I heard that you do this. Is there something we can do together?" You become connected with a lot of people whom you would not have ordinarily met because of that outreach. I find that am called on consistently by my colleagues in that capacity.

Leader 3: I recall the time we had a 5-day Literacy Leader workshop. We definitely increased our base knowledge because of that experience. It enabled us to become more knowledgeable Literacy Leaders.

Focus Group 2.

Leader 12: Tons, tons…

Leader 11: When I did The Fighting Ground, another literacy leader helped- he gave me material when I tried to get away from the anthology to bring more literature-based material into the classroom-and making it come alive for the children-I got a lot of great ideas from my colleagues.

Leader 12: We did the Junior Great Books workshop, we conducted district in-service, accountable talk workshops- going way back, we went to New York to attend a workshop on balanced literacy. Most of us have attended one or both of the summer writing institutes at Columbia University – and then as we started to do that-we began to investigate our own topics, become experts and attend our own workshops-I've given workshops on expository writing, writer's workshop, on poetry, accountable talk
(Other leaders added- visual literacy, guided reading, picture books)

Leader 7: The Literacy Leaders then, in later days, has evolved into a forum for informal workshops- we do the workshops for each other.

Question 4: How has participation in the Literacy Leaders initiative influenced your effectiveness as a teacher?

All of the Literacy Leaders in the focus groups maintained that their effectiveness as teachers had increased as a result of their participation in the initiative. In addition to identifying specific instructional strategies, focus group members identified their newly acquired skills in diagnostic assessment. Once again they reiterated that the collegiality of the group resulted in their taking more risks in their classrooms. One focus group member stated that her participation in the Literacy Leaders group had assisted her in reshaping the curriculum she teaches and

how she delivers instruction to her students. Another leader shared that participation in the Literacy Leaders group had changed her way of teaching to the extent that "when I walk in the classroom, it's like I have a whole new career."

Focus Group 1.

Leader 4: It has given us ideas to take the risk of using new programs, new approaches to things that prior to this, we might have said, "Well, he doesn't understand anything he reads." Yet we've come up with ideas, with strategies to use with specific readers that have shown to be effective. As a teacher I can use those more and more comfortably and more frequently because I have been exposed to them as a Literacy Leader.

Leader 1: In terms of assessment, many teachers go by their instincts. You perceive a learner to have particular strengths and deficiencies but you actually don't know. Once you give the assessment, you have a clearer idea of who that child is as a learner. Without Literacy Leaders, I don't think we would have focused on diagnostic assessment as much as we do in the district right now.

Leader 2: I feel it has influenced my effectiveness tremendously. I had been an elementary teacher for 19 years- I had been through the grades. My passion was literacy. Focusing on literacy gave me the impetus to move to the middle school as a language arts teacher. I am the person to whom people come on the grade level. That's because I not only have many years of experience but I came in as a literacy person. Now I focus only on literacy and the Literacy Leaders have been a wonderful tool for me. I think I've become a better teacher as a result. One of my colleagues and I are working on developing a guided reading program for the upper grades. This is very different for the middle school and we are gradually introducing it to our colleagues and we are trying out ourselves first.

Focus Group 2.

Leader 11: By integrating literature into the curriculum and making the academic areas come alive, by integrating reading and writing into social studies and science. What I really felt beneficial was being exposed to different workshops that everyone went to- they planted a seed- the Literacy Leaders gave me exposure to new ideas.

Leader 8: The visual literacy workshop was phenomenal- every year I do that know.

Leader 10: Along the line of visual literacy, during my read-aloud with my second graders, we used visualization-We read <u>The Secret Life of the Underwear</u>

Champ –we also visualized during our 100th day recognition- we predicted, by reading the 100th page of the book, what was going to happen based on what was read before. Then I read the book and they visualized the section and talked about what their pictures told- the children were so much more involved in the book- I had seen this done in another Literacy Leader's class- it was something that I learned as a result of talking about visual literacy –it's something I will continue to do because it worked so well and the children became so involved in the literature.

Leader 8: It's broken down the walls- we're allowed to share. I remember when I first started, everyone closed their doors- no one wanted to share- that's why I especially remember why I wanted to join this group

Leader 7: I have found that undoubtedly I've become a more effective teacher through this group. Way back when, this group exposed me to essential questioning, curriculum mapping, balanced literacy, word walls and all of that good stuff- which I pursued on my own and asked for help and support from the group- it has reshaped the curriculum as I teach it and how I deliver instruction to my children as well.

Leader 10: I've incorporated a lot of strategies that I've learned from my participation in this group. It's very exciting-it's changed my way of teaching. When you walk in the classroom, it's like you have a whole new career.

Question 5: How has participation in the Literacy Leaders initiative developed your leadership skills?

The majority of leaders maintained that participation in the Literacy Leaders initiative had developed their leadership skills. All felt that their increased knowledge base had given them confidence in terms of sharing and/or presenting information to their colleagues. One leader remarked, "Having learned so much from Literacy Leaders and offering presentations after school and on in-service days, the experience has certainly developed my leadership skills." Several of the leaders measured their emerging status as leaders within their schools by the increasing number of times that colleagues approached them for ideas and/or suggestions.

Another leader bluntly affirmed, "we've been asked all along to be turnkey trainers- that's our job."

Focus Group 1.

Leader 4: Because we've been so involved as a group, we're been asked to present at workshops and therefore, that's a perfect example of leadership skills. The position I hold now, literacy specialist, evolved from the literacy leaders. We are resources to extend the initiative that the district has decided will be the focus. We are here to present new ideas in literacy, model new ideas and are a resource for teachers throughout the grade levels. Having learned so much from Literacy Leaders and doing presentations after school and on-in-service days, the experience has certainly developed my leadership skills.

Leader 2: We've been asked all along to be turnkey – that's our job. We come to the meetings, we learn more about literacy, we go back to share. It just can't remain in our small group- it has to go to the rest of the staff. It's our job to disseminate our knowledge to other teachers using a turnkey method. We could offer information through workshops or very informally. That's the way you start to become known as a resource for the teachers. Informal ways included introducing something in my class and then people would hear about it. Then we presented at a faculty meeting- even at lunch tables-people would start to talk- that's the informal way.

Leader 3: I found that people would just approach me and say, "I'm having trouble doing this", or "How can I do that better in the classroom?"- Very informally, they look to you as a leader even though you haven't presented at a faculty conference. They feel you have the latest knowledge.

Leader 6: You've also said (to Leader #3), that you've come to be known as the literacy teacher so a lot of parents, particularly those whose children are having trouble, request this particular teacher because they feel she is really good at literacy instruction.

Focus Group 2.

Leader 7: It's enabled us to take risks and present things to one another. Within the forum of the group and by ourselves- on our planning time, if we can make ourselves available, our colleagues may ask us to demonstrate lessons and give advice, to help them troubleshoot something- it has put us in the position of being a leader.

Leader 9: I've been doing the same thing for a long time and this year I've decided to branch out –I'm going to the middle school- being in the Literacy Leaders has given me more of a feeling of being part of a group- I listen more

than act- being in the group has made me feel that I can do more things, pursue other things in my career- for example, knowing that another teacher in the elementary school is also moving to the middle school next year; I've approached him and we've decided on a mutual PIP- bringing read-alouds to the sixth grade- I'm really excited about that because I want to do something more.

Leader 10: And I've been doing the instructional level spelling program since I've been in this particular school- when I moved to another school, I continued to do the program- there were a couple of teachers who expressed an interest in doing it also- specifically, one of the teachers in first grade has actually started to do instructional level spelling because of my ability to share and to talk about it. I believe I was instrumental in her thinking that it was a viable way to go.

Leader 12: I think there's something cyclical that happens- as you increase your knowledge and experience through these activities, and you are then called upon to demonstrate and share that knowledge with other people- they begin to see you as a leader, perceive you as a leader in that area - you see yourself as a leader. Then you increase that as you increase the experience and knowledge you have - that perception that other people have of you- then they call on you to "Show me this. What's this thing that you're doing that you're working on in your classroom," and you see yourself that way and you want to do more.

Question 6: What specific successes have you experienced in your role as a Literacy Leader in your school?

Discussion was animated as the leaders proudly identified successful experiences in their schools and in the district. One of the leaders, whose position had evolved into District Literacy Specialist, credited the Literacy Leaders initiative for a radical change in the learning environment of classrooms throughout the district. According to her, "The entire look of classrooms is different; we don't see the teacher standing in front of the classroom. The format of lessons has changed into a reading/writing workshop. Anyone walking through the halls will realize that this isn't what was going on 5 years ago." Other leaders pointed to their successes in

introducing curriculum mapping, integrated reading/writing into the content areas, guided reading and the Grade 5 exit project.

Three of the leaders underscored the ripple effects of Literacy Leader initiatives in motivating colleagues across the content areas. One leader maintained that differentiated instruction found its voice in the Literacy Leaders movement. "Other teachers, who are content-driven, are now taking on responsibility for the literate child, instead of just the literacy teacher." Another leader credited the Literacy Leaders for facilitating teachers' readiness to adopt a new district math program that relies heavily on a workshop approach to instruction. One leader, whose focus in sharing sessions was the integration of critical thinking skills in the content areas, was elated that her school had adopted her initiative as a school wide goal for the upcoming academic year.

Focus Group 1.

Leader 1: The whole look of the language arts period is different because of what we're doing. When we walk through the halls, we don't see the teacher standing in front of the classroom. There are a lot of things going on. It's more or less a reading/writing workshop. Anyone walking through the halls can say, "This isn't what was going on five years ago."

Leader 4: The curriculum-mapping piece is another initiative that has come out of the Literacy Leaders that has been very successful. We are now integrating reading, writing and the content areas as opposed to before where there was just a block for reading time. Perhaps that time was focused on either novel study or decoding but not necessarily pulling in that comprehension and writing piece that flows into the other subjects. That has been a huge success based on what we've been talking about.

Leader 1: Balanced literacy in the district as a whole- we are integrating the five strands of literacy within a workshop. With that connectedness, kids can make more meaning from the context. It's not skills in isolation. It's not just loving literacy- it's everything together.

Leader 6: Learning all those new ideas from the different workshops we've attended- for instance, guided reading, reading workshop- that's all been implemented in the classroom. There's also the whole idea of accountable talk. Having children being accountable for what they're talking about- we've developed a rubric that the children work on- in the third grade the rubric focuses on the child as the leader of an accountable talk session.

Leader 5: I think the whole process has made reading and writing more accessible for the students at every level- they don't have to be the "scholar" writer and they don't have to be the struggling student who has an aide or support- even the middle child can access something and hold onto that as a lifeboat to the next level. Differentiation found its voice in this program because the reading, the writing and the literature extend everywhere. There are teachers, who are not a part of Literacy Leaders, who have taken to collaboration. It's content area teachers as well as language arts teachers-everybody is taking on responsibility for the literate child, instead of just the literacy teacher.

Leader 1: And teachers are starting to see connections across curricula areas. A teacher told me today that she is looking forward to the new math program because its structure is similar to the reading workshop. Now the teachers are comfortable with a math workshop because they are accustomed to a reading workshop. They have had a positive experience.

Leader 2: Another specific example- today we were finishing up an interdisciplinary unit between social studies and my language arts class and the children were giving persuasive speeches. We had narrowed the competition down to nine finalists- the whole "house " went down to the auditorium- we had judges who were completely impartial- of the two winners, one was a Special Ed. Child and one was a very low level child. It just shows how differentiation has worked thanks to our differentiated literacy focus.

Leader 1: That whole unit piggybacks on the fifth grade exit project that is another byproduct of the Literacy Leaders. A while ago Literacy Leaders were asked to investigate a program in South Brunswick, New Jersey where the kids were reading and researching particular subjects- a culmination of all the skills we teach in literacy. We were excited, talked about it among the Literacy Leaders, decided to pilot it in our schools and then eventually the district adopted the concept of an exit project. Since we have three feeder schools for each of our middle schools, the children are coming with similar experiences. The special education student didn't just "come up with" the speech in the last three weeks- he's already experienced the activity in fifth grade. As long as Literacy Leaders are alive and people are talking, there is more continuity and consistency in literacy in the district.

Focus Group 2.

Leader 10: We've had faculty meetings at our school where the Literacy Leaders have presented information and training. I shared an action research initiative on developing critical thinking skills and I was able to present that to the faculty. It actually ended up becoming a school goal with additional training scheduled for next year. It's been an exciting thing to take the training I've received in Literacy Leaders and use it as a springboard for initiatives in my school.

Leader 11: I really believe that when you take away certain knowledge from a Literacy Leaders meeting, it has a domino effect. One of my colleagues is integrating literature into the content areas- now she's incorporating it into computers and Power Point, a research paper- it was phenomenal. Not only did she take something from me as Literacy Leader, she went one step further- now I've learned something from her- it's a give and take situation.

Question 7: What specific challenges have arisen in terms of your effectiveness as a Literacy Leader in your school?

Discussion centered on three specific areas: time, teacher resistance and administrative support. First and foremost, the leaders were unanimous in their dismay that they did not have enough time to meet with colleagues. Other than using their preparation periods or their time before or after school, the Literacy Leaders did not feel that they had enough time to accomplish all they wanted to do. Moreover, they reiterated the necessity for administrators to schedule literacy blocks that would enable teachers to implement on a daily basis, the plethora of balanced literacy strategies. Secondly, they expressed frustration with colleagues who continued to be resistant to change and who even, in some cases, had demonstrated resentment toward the Literacy Leaders. Several of the leaders expressed their frustration in direct language-""You can lead a horse to water but you can't make him drink." They acknowledged that some of the veteran teachers were resentful in terms of the

Literacy Leader's role-"Who are you to tell me what to do?" The leaders underscored the fact that they needed to "tread very carefully" in their roles in order to effect change in their buildings. Lastly, the majority of leaders decried their lack of administrative support. As one leader stated, "The administrator definitely affects the environment of the school. If the administrator is not an advocate for change, that, in turn, affects how other teachers perceive your role."

Focus Group 1.

Leader 6: Time. Time is a big thing. If you really want to share your knowledge and you have a responsibility to your classroom and you want to share with teachers, how do you find the time to do all that? There never seems to be enough time- you use your prep time, after school or times in between- there's never enough time.

Leader 5: As you go higher in education at the middle school level, scheduling seems to be an issue. A lot of schools are on the old junior high kind of model – "ring the bell and then you move on." There has to be a renewed commitment every year, a reminder, that it is important to have a block schedule for literacy. It's important to give teachers time to collaborate and work together- to have team time so that they can talk about developing ideas. A lot of time can be wasted if schedules aren't set to support the efforts of the Literacy Leaders.

Leader 2: I found when I was in a school with only two Literacy Leaders, I sometimes found there were people who wanted to learn but there were also many teachers who just didn't want to learn- who really had no interest in what you wanted to say and who almost resented you because you were the Literacy Leader. I didn't push it on them; the more other people started talking about things we were doing, the more they started coming around- and all of a sudden the most reluctant of them would come up to me and say, "Do you have some of those books?" or "Can you give me some information about this or that?" When I moved to the middle school level, scheduling seemed to be a challenge. Scheduling was set up as if we were in high school. It was almost against the philosophy that we were learning about in Literacy Leader meetings in terms of how to run a reading/writing workshop in an extended block of time – and now administration (it took awhile)- allows us to teach reading because we have a double period in an appropriate block schedule.

Leader 1: In terms of the role of administration, teachers need release time- to see what's going on in other classrooms. Administration should take on some of

the responsibility of seeing that teachers are freed up so that they can see good teaching in practice.

Leader 3: A common planning time is necessary. Scheduling is difficult but we need a common period to get together. We are also getting a new principal in my building. That concerns me because we don't know what the new administrator's focus will be- literacy may not be a priority. In this case, we will have to be proactive- there are a lot of Literacy Leaders- six or seven- in my building- I am sure we will be able to approach the new principal. I guess I really have a wonderful support system so I am sure that we will be able to continue doing what we are doing. What I like about the Literacy Leaders initiative is how it is non-threatening- that anyone can join- there is a positive hum about Literacy Leaders in my building.

Focus Group 2.

Leader 8: The administrator definitely affects the environment of the school. I think if the administrator himself or herself lacks a knowledge of literacy, is not an advocate of literacy, then he or she is not going to make literacy a goal for the school- and that in turn, affects how other teachers accept the knowledge you have. That's a great challenge- what I've found, in my experience with my administrator, networking works better when I work one-on-one with a colleague. Some people don't realize what the possibilities are- they get set in their ways or they're struggling. I don't want to put myself "on" people- if someone wants to learn something...

Leader 7: That's another one of the challenges too- you can lead a horse to water, but you can't make him drink. No matter how you're out there as a Literacy Leader, no matter how you are modeling and doing and putting all your things out, if another teacher doesn't want to do it, especially within their time constraints, or for whatever reason they may have, it's not going to happen.

Leader 10: There are teachers who are set in their ways and they're not interested in change...

Leader 12: If your world is small and you're not exposed to anything, it's easy to stay small.

Leader 10: But you also become a threat to them. If you are interested in growing and talking and you want to share, some people look and say, " Oh, look at her. She thinks she knows it all." It becomes an unmeant criticism of their approach.

Leader 9: And they are not doing as well as they could be doing...

Leader 8: They say they've been teaching all these years and "Who are you to

come and tell them..."

Leader 12: Is that the insecurity of every individual or is that a specific insecurity inherent in teachers and teaching because they go into their classrooms and shut the door and they are supposed to be purveyors of all knowledge? – They are somehow supposed to know it all.

Leader 8: You have to tread very carefully in your role as a Literacy Leader.

Leader 10: Sometimes you'll just walk, with something's that's really worked, into the teachers' room and you say, "I just have to tell somebody."

Leader 9: It's the excitement you have. If you have an excitement, and you show something-it looks like it's wonderful and other people see it...

Leader 10: It's got to be in a non-threatening way. It's got to be-"I would like to share this rather than, "Oh look what you should be doing."

Leader 7: I worked with a man who was working for 25 years in the same room, teaching the same grade for 25 years- and it was exactly like that- when I came on board, I was a total threat. He was badgering-, totally not nice- but after gentle exposure and he sees my success and he sees how well it works, he turned around and he started asking me for things.

Leader 12: You also let the students' work speak for itself. I start getting into genre studies- my kids are doing writer's workshop, the writing they are putting across, the variety of genres they are doing, is out there- and I'm showing that- and people are seeing that- whether it's in the hallway or parents being invited in for celebrations- and you contrast that with the person next door who isn't doing anything new and is still providing only picture prompts for their students' writing- I think the teacher has to see that- and the teacher has to make his own peace with that -because it is a bit of bringing the horse to water.

Question 8: In your professional opinion, how can the Literacy Leaders model be improved to better serve your needs and those of the teaching staff?

The leaders' recommendations for improving the Literacy Leaders model reflect the challenges they specified in their prior discussion. Time continued to be their highest priority. Toward that end, the support of administration in scheduling more time for collaboration, in supporting their role in the building and in being

advocates for change in literacy instruction, were identified as essential components of the Literacy Leaders model. In addition, allocation of monies to support continued study was also recommended. Other leaders wanted to see their ranks swell with the inclusion of more Special Education and ESL teachers. Another leader recommended that, with administrative support, Literacy Leaders should be assigned as mentors to new teachers. As a concluding statement in Focus Group 2, one leader underscored the powerful impact of the Literacy Leaders in "providing leadership, staff development and training in a budget-conscious manner as well as improving enthusiasm and professionalism."

Focus Group 1.

Leader 2: Time, time- I went on a visitation to another building to a teacher whose assignment was two grades below mine and it was one of the most effective and important afternoons I found in the development of my guided reading program- to see someone's program in action- I think we need more time to intervisit, more time to intervisit within our own buildings- but we will need the support of administration.

Leader 5: I also think that new teachers in the building should be assigned a mentor to connect with a Literacy Leader. I think that would give them a colleague to grasp onto, ask questions and get a perspective about where he or she is going. Having a literacy person connected to someone new on a more formal basis would provide support in the language arts area.

Leader 4: I think it would also be interesting to pull from ESL into the Literacy Leaders because there appears to be a gap. The ESL piece is important to instruct children not only in ESL but also in the reading and writing areas. If we had mentors, or had the ESL teacher in the initiative, that would benefit the children.

Leader 6: And also Special Ed.- We don't have much representation now from Special Ed. I don't know if those teachers feel that the initiative doesn't have anything to offer them.

Leader 2: That's interesting because my Special Ed. teacher works hand in hand with me in the classroom. She's very interested.

Leader 5: I think the Literacy Leaders initiative would be a gift to the Special Ed. Population- there are ways to access all areas of the curriculum.

Leader 3: I work closely with the Resource Center teacher in my school. She comes into my classroom for novel studies and writer's workshop. She seeks out my advice and I in turn, seek out her advice.

Leader 6: I think another thing we need is money. The district needs to support us- give us some more money to attend workshops so that we can learn new ideas to share with others.

Leader 3: I feel we've made such strides in literacy as a result of this program. When the district was looking for a new reading series, every Literacy Leader had a different idea- we would have rather ordered leveled books than a new anthology (interruption).

Leader 1: But because of the influence of the Literacy Leaders, we are now ordering leveled books and the district is moving towards guided reading. I think now the Literacy Leaders are being looked at in terms of policy-making.

Leader 6: I think there is still concern about those teachers who are not willing to move. That's one of the reasons why they went with the more traditional series. The Literacy Leaders are perceived as risk-takers.

Leader 3: I'm known as the teacher who does her own thing because I don't "follow the book".

Leader 1: As far as where the district is going, when we selected a new reading series, there was a mix of opinions- traditional and those of the Literacy Leaders. The district went with the traditional approach, selecting an anthology along with leveled books to support guided reading; now, three years later, the district has said that guided reading works without the anthology and we are now continuing to provide resources to teachers that are more aligned with the philosophy of the Literacy Leaders. Our voice was heard.

Focus Group 2.

Leader 7: Time-absolutely-I think if a Literacy Leader is to be effective, there needs to be an extra time frame built into his or her schedule or common planning time with other grade levels for interclass visitations- maybe to be responsible for an aspect of literacy within the school and make that that person's job –time to share at meetings…

Leader 10: I think a formalization of the model in the sense of becoming a part of the district program rather than being an adjunct - an add-on for people who want to do something.

Leader 7: The way it is, it's like preaching to the converted. All of us are together- we know this and we're getting better at it- but what about the other two-thirds of the population?

Leader 10: You need something- or otherwise it's in the teachers' room or in the hallway- the people whom you want to get to, are not there to hear you- there needs to be some formal part, where like it or not, they have to listen

Leader 12: When you formalize the model however, (like the Literacy Specialists, former Literacy Leaders with formal out-of-the classroom positions), all of a sudden they've been assigned very different priorities- like test preparation- I'm not so sure formalizing the model is the way to go- a little bit more time, a little bit more money.

Leader 7: I think other teachers would access the Literacy Leaders much more willingly if there was a set block of time-I feel so guilty when I have to ask my colleague to do something in my classroom because he has to give up his prep period to come and assist me- and that's really not right- so if there were a built-in block or drop-in time....

Leader 8: But the only reason you want to do that is because you have an administrator who allows this freedom. I can only speak for my school, but I definitely think it goes on in the other schools- if you're not seen as somebody important then what you have to say is not seen as important either. The resistance is always there. Even the literacy specialists-there is resistance- I hear, "I don't want this person in my room- who is she to tell me what to do?"

Leader 8: But the bottom line is that if the boss says that you need to do something and you want your job, then you do it.

Leader 7: I think the Literacy Leaders, in this day and age of budget constraints and how boards work, is the perfect answer to solve the growing concerns and needs of education today. We provide all the leadership, staff development and training in a budget-conscious manner as well as improving enthusiasm and professionalism.

Questionnaire

Procedures for Data Collection

The preliminary questionnaire process began with a letter to the Superintendent of Schools that requested permission to conduct research in the

district. The correspondence included a description of the study and an assurance of confidentiality and anonymity for the participants.

With the permission of the building principal, the researcher distributed the Literacy Leaders Perception Survey to classroom teachers at a faculty meeting that was held in each of the participating elementary schools. Five of the six district elementary school participated in the survey. One elementary school did not participate because the researcher is the building principal. Teachers received a letter of solicitation that served as their informed consent form prior to completing the questionnaire. Neither the researcher nor the building principal was present while the teachers completed the self-administered survey. Teachers returned their surveys to the researcher's school via district mail, a procedure previously approved by the Superintendent.

From a potential total of 70 classroom teachers, 43 teacher questionnaires were received for a 61% response rate. According to Babbie (1999), a response rate of 50% provides an adequate sample for purposes of data analysis and reporting. Thus, the 61% response rate was acceptable for the purposes of this study.

Presentation of Survey Responses- Part I

Demographic Data Profile

Table 12 presents demographic data profiling the classroom teachers who responded to the questionnaire. As shown in Table 12, responses to Question 1 indicated that the majority of classroom teachers had 11 or more years teaching experience. Responses to Question 2 indicated that the teachers represented a range of

grade assignments from kindergarten through fifth grade. Responses to Question 3 indicated that the overwhelming majority of teachers who responded to the questionnaire were female as there was only one male respondent. Responses to Question 4 indicated that the most frequently reported age of the respondents was over 50. Responses to Question 5 indicated that 40 out of 43 respondents knew the name of their school's Literacy Leader(s), a relevant statistic in terms of the information that was elicited from statements in Part II of the questionnaire.

Table 12

Survey Responses-Part I

Question 1				
How many years have you worked as an elementary school teacher?	1 year or less	2-5 years	6-10 years	11 or more years
	3	6	10	24

Question 2						
What grade are you currently teaching?	K	1	2	3	4	5
	4	6	6	9	8	10

Question 3		
What is your gender?	Male	Female
	1	42

Question 4							
What is your age?	Under 25	26-30	31-35	36-40	41-45	45-50	Over 50
	2	7	5	6	6	4	13

Question 5		
Do you know the name of your school's Literacy Leader(s)?	Yes	No
	40	3

Presentation of Survey Responses-Part II

Coding of the Data

Statements 1 through 15 in Part II of the questionnaire were coded based on a 6-point scale. One was equal to strongly disagree, 2 equaled moderately disagree, 3 equaled disagree slightly more than agree; 4 equaled agree slightly more than disagree; 5 equaled moderately agree; 6 equaled strongly agree.

Presentation of the Data

Each of the 15 statements in Part II will be presented with a frequency distribution, mode, median, mean and standard deviation. Frequency groupings will be calculated in percentages that indicate "Disagree" responses (scaled responses of 1-3) and "Agree" responses (scaled responses of 4-6). Survey items will then be grouped to reflect cumulative responses to domain items that focus on teacher effectiveness, teacher professional development and teacher leadership skills. A mean response and frequency distribution will be calculated for those domain items. Cumulative frequency groupings for those domain items will also be calculated.

Table 13

Survey Responses – Part II

Statement	SD	MD	DSMA	ASMD	MA	SA	Total Resp	Mode	Mdn	M	SD.
S1. The Literacy Leaders have expertise in literacy instruction.	0 0	1 2.3	0 0	5 11.6	17 39.5	20 46.5	43	SA	MA	5.3	Min. Var.
	Total Percent of Disagree Responses 2.3			Total Percent of Agree Responses 97.6							
S2. The Literacy Leaders attend more professional development workshops than I do.	0 0	2 4.7	4 9.3	3 7.0	12 27.9	13 30.2	34	SA	SA	4.9	Min. Var.
	Total Percent of Disagree Responses 14.0			Total Percent of Agree Responses 58.1							
S3. The Literacy Leaders are willing to share their knowledge with me.	1 2.3	1 2.3	1 2.3	5 11.6	8 18.6	27 62.8	43	SA	SA	5.3	Min. Var.
	Total Percent of Disagree Responses 6.9			Total Percent of Agree Responses 93.0							
S4. The Literacy Leaders collaborate with me.	5 11.6	1 2.3	4 9.3	4 9.3	10 23.3	19 44.2	43	SA	MA	4.6	Int. Var.
	Total Percent of Disagree Responses 23.2			Total Percent of Agree Responses 76.8							
S5. The Literacy Leaders have influenced a change in my teaching.	4 9.3	0 0	4 9.3	8 18.6	13 30.2	14 32.6	43	SA	MA	4.1	Min. Var.
	Total Percent of Disagree Responses 18.6			Total Percent of Agree Responses 81.4							

Statement	SD	MD	DSMA	ASMD	MA	SA	Total Resp	Mode	Mdn	M	SD
S6. The Literacy Leaders should facilitate professional development experiences for the staff.	1 / 2.3	0 / 0	3 / 7.0	6 / 14.0	14 / 32.6	19 / 44.2	43	SA	MA	5.1	Min. Var.
	Total Percent of Disagree Responses 9.3			Total Percent of Agree Responses 90.8							
S7.The Literacy Leader(s) are valuable sources of information.	2 / 4.7	2 / 4.7	2 / 4.7	5 / 11.6	17 / 39.5	15 / 34.9	43	MA	MA	4.8	Int. Var.
	Total Percent of Disagree Responses 14.1			Total Percent of Agree Responses 86.0							
S8. The Literacy Leaders have time to share their expertise.	9 / 20.9	13 / 30.2	5 / 11.6	9 / 20.9	3 / 7.0	2 / 4.7	41	MD	MD	2.8	Max. Var.
	Total Percent of Disagree Responses 62.7			Total Percent of Agree Responses 32.6							
S9. The Literacy Leaders have assisted me in implementing a balanced literacy program in my classroom.	7 / 16.3	3 / 7.0	2 / 4.7	5 / 11.6	12 / 27.9	10 / 23.3	39	SA	MA	4.1	Max. Var.
	Total Percent of Disagree Responses 28.0			Total Percent of Agree Responses 63.8							

Statement	SD	MD	DSMA	ASMD	MA	SA	Total Resp.	Mode	Mdn	M	SD.
S10. The Literacy Leaders should have more opportunity to facilitate professional development experiences.	0 0	1 2.3	2 4.7	9 20.9	11 25.6	19 44.2	42	SA	MA	5.1	Min. Var.
	Total Percent of Disagree Responses 7.0			Total Percent of Agree Responses 90.7							
S11. In my opinion, the Literacy Leaders initiative has benefited my school.	1 2.3	1 2.3	5 11.6	6 14.0	18 41.9	12 27.9	43	MA	MA	4.7	Int. Var.
	Total Percent of Disagree Responses 16.2			Total Percent of Agree Responses 83.8							
S12. The Literacy Leaders have made me a more effective teacher.	7 16.3	0 0	3 7.0	6 14.0	14 32.6	13 30.2	43	MA	MA	4.4	Int. Var.
	Total Percent of Disagree Responses 23.3			Total Percent of Agree Responses 76.8							
S13. In my opinion, the Literacy Leaders are viewed as instructional leaders in my building.	4 9.3	6 14.0	5 11.6	10 23.3	12 27.9	4 9.3	41	MA	ASMD	3.8	Max Var.
	Total Percent of Disagree Responses 34.9			Total Percent of Agree Responses 60.5							
S14. I seek out the assistance of the Literacy Leaders in planning my literacy instruction.	4 9.3	3 7.0	3 7.0	10 23.3	10 23.3	11 25.5	41	SA	MA	4.3	Max. Var.
	Total Percent of Disagree Responses 23.3			Total Percent of Agree Responses 72.1							

Statement	SD	MD	DSMA	ASMD	MA	SA	Total Resp.	Mode	Mdn	M	SD.
S15. The Literacy Leaders are valuable to literacy renewal in the district's schools.	1 2.3	0 0	0 0	8 18.6	12 27.9	22 51.2	43	SA	SA	5.2	Min. Var.
	Total Percent of Disagree Responses 2.3			Total Percent of Agree Responses 97.7							

SD= Strongly disagree (Frequency/Percent)
MD= Moderately disagree (Frequency/Percent)
DSMA= Disagree slightly more than agree (Frequency/Percent
ASMD= Agree slightly more than disagree (Frequency/Percent)
MA= Moderately agree (Frequency/Percent)
SA= Strongly agree (Frequency/percent (Frequency/Percent)

Mdn = Median
M = Mean

Standard Deviation (SD.): Min. Var.= Minimum Variability
Int. Var.= Intermediate Variability
Max. Var. = Maximum Variability

Based on the average mean responses and the total percent of agree responses, the data from this questionnaire indicated that respondents strongly agreed that Literacy Leaders have expertise in literacy instruction, that they are willing to share their knowledge, that they should facilitate professional development experiences for the staff, that they should have more opportunity to facilitate professional development experiences, and that they are valuable to literacy renewal in the district's schools.

According to Witte and Witte (1997), measures of variability are virtually nonexistent for qualitative data. The qualitative data from Table 13 showed that those statements with the highest total percent of agree responses demonstrated minimum variability among the responses suggesting strong consensus among the teachers in support of the Literacy Leaders initiative.

Based on the average mean response and the total percent of disagree responses, the data from this questionnaire indicated that respondents moderately disagreed that Literacy Leaders have time to share their expertise.

Data from this questionnaire also provided information relevant to the three components of the primary research question of this study: How does the Literacy Leaders paradigm impact on teacher effectiveness, teacher professional development and the development of teachers' leadership skills? A summary of survey responses relating to teacher effectiveness, teacher professional development and teacher leadership skills provided information relevant to the impact of the Literacy Leaders model.

Table 14

Summary of Survey Responses Relating to Teacher Effectiveness

(Survey Statements 5,7, 11,12 and 15)

(Mean Response = 4.7)

	#	%
Strongly Disagree	15	7.0
Moderately Disagree	3	1.4
Disagree slightly more than agree	14	6.5
Agree slightly more than disagree	33	15.3
Moderately agree	74	34.4
Strongly agree	76	35.3
Total	215	100.0
Total percent of disagree responses		14.9
Total percent of agree responses		85.0

Table 14 presents data that summarizes the responses of classroom teachers to survey statements 5, 7, 11, 12 and 15, domain items of the questionnaire, specified in Chapter III of this study, that relate to teacher effectiveness. Eighty-five percent of the respondents (n = 215) to statements relating to teacher effectiveness agreed that the Literacy Leaders initiative had a positive impact.

Table 15

Summary of Survey Responses Relating to Teacher Professional Development (Survey Statements 1,2,4,6, and 9)

(Mean Response=4.8)

	#	%
Strongly Disagree	13	6.0
Moderately Disagree	7	3.3
Disagree slightly more than agree	13	6.0
Agree slightly more than disagree	23	10.7
Moderately agree	65	30.2
Strongly agree	81	37.8
Total	202	94.0
Missing	13	6.0
Total	215	100.0
Total percent of disagree responses		15.3
Total percent of agree responses		78.7

Table 15 presents data that summarizes the responses of classroom teachers to survey statements 1,2,4,6 and 9, domain items of the questionnaire, specified in Chapter III of this study, that relate to teacher professional development. Seventy-eight point seven percent of the respondents to statements relating to teacher professional development agreed that the Literacy Leaders initiative had a positive impact.

Table 16

Summary of Survey Responses Relating to Teacher Leadership Skills

(Survey Statements 3,8,10,13 and 14)

(Mean Response = 4.3)

	#	%
Strongly Disagree	18	8.4
Moderately Disagree	24	11.2
Disagree slightly more than agree	16	7.4
Agree slightly more than disagree	43	20.0
Moderately agree	44	20.5
Strongly agree	63	29.3
Total	208	96.7
Missing	7	3.3
Total	215	100.00
Total percent of disagree responses		27.0
Total percent of agree responses		69.8

Table 16 presents data that summarizes the responses of classroom teachers to survey statements 3,8,10,13 and 14, domain items of the questionnaire, specified in Chapter III of this study, that relate to teacher leadership skills Sixty-nine point eight percent of the respondents (n = 215) to statements relating to teacher leadership skills agreed that the Literacy Leaders initiative had a positive impact.

Results of Data Analysis

Analysis of the collected data from the interviews, from the focus groups and from the questionnaire indicated that principals, Literacy Leaders and classroom teachers agreed that the Literacy Leaders initiative had a positive impact on teacher effectiveness, teacher professional development and teacher leadership skills. The data

also suggests that each of the stakeholders involved in this study expressed varying degrees of support for implementation of the paradigm in the district.

Chapter V

SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary of Research

The purpose of this study was to explore the impact of the Literacy Leaders model in promoting district-wide literacy renewal based on collaborative leadership and teacher empowerment. Based on data derived from interviews with the district's elementary school principals, focus groups comprised of Literacy Leaders and teachers' responses on the Literacy Leaders Perception Survey, findings were presented that focused on the model's impact on teacher effectiveness, teacher professional development and teacher leadership skills. The primary research question asked: How does the Literacy Leaders paradigm impact on teacher effectiveness, teacher professional development and teachers' leadership skills?

Findings Related to Teacher Effectiveness

Principals, Literacy Leaders, and teachers agreed that the Literacy Leaders model positively impacted on teacher effectiveness. By increasing the effectiveness of teachers in literacy, the model provides for the acquisition of skills, attitudes, and beliefs that create high levels of learning for all students (National Staff Development Council, 2001). In addition, teacher responses on the Literacy Leaders Perception Survey and the comments of Literacy Leaders during their focus groups, support Henson (2001) whose research underscored the overall positive impact of teacher collaboration on teachers' self-perceptions about their instructional effectiveness.

The plethora of instructional strategies that are the focus of Literacy Leaders' meetings, workshops and networking opportunities support the research of Cambourne (2000) and Wray, Medwell, Fox and Poulson (2000) regarding the instructional practices of effective teachers of literacy.

Table 17 presents data that represent high intensity responses from principals, Literacy Leaders, and classroom teachers relating to teacher effectiveness.

Table 17

Frequent High Intensity Responses Relating to Teacher Effectiveness

Interviews (Principals)	Focus Groups (Literacy Leaders)	Survey (Classroom Teachers)
Principals select teachers as Literacy Leaders whose passion for literacy and knowledge base of quality literacy instruction qualify them as exemplary models of teacher effectiveness.	The opportunity to engage in collaborative learning with colleagues increases teacher effectiveness.	The Literacy Leaders are valuable sources of information for classroom teachers.

Interviews (Principals)	Focus Groups (Literacy Leaders)	Survey (Classroom Teachers)
Literacy Leaders need to demonstrate expertise in strategies that reflect the district's literacy focus including differentiated instruction, reading and writing workshops and the ability to orchestrate large and small group instruction.	Participation in Literacy Leader training and networking activities increases the knowledge base of the Literacy Leaders.	The school-based Literacy Leader increases the teaching effectiveness of classroom teachers.
The Literacy Leader's impact on teacher effectiveness increases when the Leader has positive personal rapport with colleagues.	Participation in Literacy Leader turnkey training opportunities increases the teacher effectiveness of other classroom teachers.	

Findings Related to Teacher Professional Development

Principals, Literacy Leaders, and teachers agreed that the Literacy Leaders model positively impacted on teacher professional development. Data collected from this study supported the professional literature regarding the focus of quality professional development. In its concept and design, the Literacy Leaders model

supports Guskey (2003) who maintains that in order to have an impact on students, professional development must first have an impact on the teachers who are engaged in the professional development experience. The Literacy Leaders model, with its focus on collaborative study groups and reflective inquiry is consistent with the findings of Robb (2001) in redefining professional development from "staff development" to "professional study." Moreover, the ongoing professional development of the Literacy Leaders supports the research of Smith-Burke (1996) that aligned quality professional development of teacher leaders to the success of the Reading Recovery early-intervention program.

Table 18 presents data that represent high intensity responses from principals, Literacy Leaders, and classroom teachers relating to teacher professional development.

Table 18

Frequent High Intensity Responses Relating to Teacher Professional Development

Interviews (Principals)	Focus Groups (Literacy Leaders)	Survey (Classroom Teachers)
Literacy Leaders share their expertise with other classroom teachers.	The Literacy Leaders initiative enhances the professional development of the Literacy Leaders through their participation in district-in-service courses,out-of-district workshops and monthly networking meetings.	Literacy Leaders participate in more professional development experiences than most classroom teachers thereby acquiring more expertise in literacy.

Interviews (Principals)	Focus Groups (Literacy Leaders)	Survey (Classroom Teachers)
Collaborative learning increases as a result of Literacy Leaders turnkey training.	Literacy Leaders impact positively on the professional development of their colleagues as a result of their turnkey training.	Literacy Leaders are more than willing to share their expertise with colleagues.
	Literacy Leaders share their expertise with colleagues in their home schools in a variety of forums including but not limited to faculty meetings, grade meetings, one-on – one conversations, demonstration lessons and study groups.	
	Literacy Leaders share their expertise with colleagues in district wide training activities conducted during full-day and half-day district in-service opportunities.	

Findings Related to Teachers' Leadership Skills

Principals, Literacy Leaders, and teachers agreed that the Literacy Leaders model positively impacted on teachers' leadership skills. In seeking to improve instruction by participating in activities that promote a re-culturing of their schools, the Literacy Leaders reflect the third wave of teacher leaders cited by Silva et al (2000) in their research on teacher leadership. The Literacy Leaders model with its focus on "teachers helping teachers," affirms the positive program evaluation of the Critical Friends Groups (Dunne, Nave, and Lewis (2000). In addition, the voluntary nature of the Literacy Leaders initiative in impacting instructional change is consistent with the findings of Pennell and Firestone (1996) whose evaluation of the California Subject Matters Projects, highlighted the role of volunteerism as a change impetus as opposed to state-mandated calls for systemic reform.

Table 19 presents data that represent high intensity responses from principals, Literacy Leaders, and classroom teachers relating to teachers' leadership skills.

Table 19

Frequent High Intensity Responses Relating to Teachers' Leadership Skills

Interviews (Principals)	Focus Groups (Literacy Leaders)	Survey (Classroom Teachers)
Providing Literacy Leaders with expertise in literacy instruction instills them with confidence increasing their profiles as building leaders.	The increased knowledge base of Literacy Leaders gives them confidence in terms of their sharing their expertise with colleagues.	Literacy Leaders are viewed as instructional leaders in their buildings.

Interviews (Principals)	Focus Groups (Literacy Leaders)	Survey (Classroom Teachers)
Teachers perceive that the Literacy Leaders have something to offer thereby enhancing their profiles as leaders in the building.	Turnkey responsibilities associated with the role of the Literacy Leaders require the development of leadership skills.	Teachers seek out Literacy Leaders for assistance in planning their instruction.
	Literacy Leaders need to exercise diplomacy and restraint in networking with those staff members who are reluctant to change their teaching practices.	

In terms of Literacy Leaders exercising diplomacy in networking with their colleagues, the data supports the findings of Conley and Muncey (1999) regarding the seemingly contradictory roles that teachers assume as leaders and team members.

Miscellaneous Findings

Based on data collected from the Literacy Leaders Perception Survey, interviews and focus groups, the following findings are relevant to a program assessment of the Literacy Leaders model:

1. The success of the Literacy Leaders initiative appears to be directly related to the amount of support or lack of support of the building administrator. The Literacy Leaders maintained that if their building principals were not advocates for change, their role as Literacy Leaders was diminished. Moreover, in the point of view of the Literacy Leaders, the environment of the school was created, in great part, by the administrator. If the building principal was proactive in terms of advocating change, then the role of the Literacy Leaders was enhanced; conversely, if the principal was not viewed as supportive of teacher empowerment, the Literacy Leaders faced challenges in terms of assuming a leadership profile in the building. These findings support the research of Short (1998), Barth (2001), and Morris,Chrispeels and Burke (2003) who maintained that the key to empowering teacher leaders is the empowering of building principals.

Principals, for their part, agreed that their role in supporting their Literacy Leaders was essential to the impact of the initiative. One principal, who maintained that his Literacy Leaders had not impacted on instruction in his building, admitted that he needed to be more proactive in supporting his Leaders and in overseeing the initiative.

2. The Literacy Leaders need more time to accomplish their objectives as learners and as turnkey trainers.

Principals, Literacy Leaders, and teachers all underscored the lack of time allocated to the leaders to accomplish their objectives. Since the Literacy Leaders are also classroom teachers, their time is limited by the constraints of their own teaching responsibilities. It appears that the role of the building principal is integral in terms of

finding time in the master schedule for the Literacy Leader to network with colleagues. Based on data obtained from the Literacy Leader focus groups, it appears that some administrators were more creative than others in finding time for the Literacy Leaders to meet with staff, attend learning opportunities, and turnkey their expertise. Based on results obtained from the Literacy Leaders Perception Survey, teachers recognized that the Literacy Leaders do not have sufficient time to turnkey their expertise. Selected principals, in their interviews, while decrying the lack of time allocated to their Literacy Leaders, nonetheless looked to the Assistant Superintendent or Superintendent for assistance in ameliorating the situation.

3. The Literacy Leaders should be compensated for their participation in the Literacy Leaders initiative. Principals voiced support for some sort of formalized compensation for the Literacy Leaders at the building level. Selected principals advocated that the district provide per hour monetary compensation for the Literacy Leaders to network with colleagues before or after school. Others preferred that the district offer the Literacy Leaders a staggered work schedule that might provide compensation time for the hours they devote to Literacy Leader responsibilities. In selected comments on the Literacy Leaders Perception Survey, teachers expressed support for some sort of compensation for the Literacy Leaders since their participation in the initiative is totally voluntary. In focus groups, the Literacy Leaders voiced preference for compensation from their building principals in terms of time to cover their classes while they networked with teachers or offered demonstration lessons in their colleagues' classrooms. The Literacy Leaders suggested that the district's budget should include supplementary funds to provide for

the purchase of literacy-related classroom materials by the Literacy Leaders. They also supported the allocation of discrete professional development monies for the Literacy Leaders to attend out of-district courses or workshops.

Recommendations for Action

Based on data obtained from principals, Literacy Leaders, and teachers, the following are action recommendations regarding the Literacy Leaders model:

1. The Literacy Leaders program should be expanded to include the district's middle schools and high school in an effort to support district-wide literacy renewal.

2. District professional development funds should include allocations to support the professional development of the school-based Literacy Leaders. Professional development should focus on increasing the knowledge base of the Literacy Leaders as well as strategies to develop their leadership skills.

3. The Superintendent of Schools and the Assistant Superintendent of Education should continue to avow support for the Literacy Leaders initiative. Public support for the Literacy Leaders will enhance their profile in individual buildings and throughout the district.

4. Principals should devise a building plan for the Literacy Leaders to achieve their learning and turnkey training objectives.

5. To focus the learning and turnkey responsibilities of the Literacy Leaders, the district should develop and administer a needs assessment survey that will prioritize teachers' professional development needs in literacy.

6. Literacy Leaders should be assigned as mentors to novice teachers to facilitate quality literacy instruction consistent with the district's focus.

7. Principals should identify more than one Literacy Leader from each school. Multiple school-based Literacy Leaders will not only result in the expansion of turnkey experiences but will also provide a support network for building-based Literacy Leaders.

8. The Literacy Leaders model should be replicated with other content area subjects in alignment with the district focus. The district should consider developing Mathematics Leaders and/or Technology Leaders to advance the professional development of teachers as per the detailed goals and objectives included in the annual Quality Assessment Assurance Report that is submitted annually to the County Superintendent of Schools.

Recommendations for Further Research

Based on evaluation of the Literacy Leaders model, the following recommendations are made for further study:

1. A longitudinal study should be conducted to determine if student achievement is impacted by teachers' participation in the Literacy Leaders model.

2. A replication study should be conducted to determine the impact of the Literacy Leaders model in an urban setting.

3. A replication study should be conducted to determine the impact of the Literacy Leaders model in a secondary school setting.

4. A quantitative study should be conducted that analyzes whether the number of years of teaching experience impacts on the perceptions of classroom teachers relevant to the Literacy Leaders initiative.

5. A qualitative study should be conducted that evaluates the impact of a change in building principal on the implementation of the Literacy Leaders model.

Summary

In assessing a suburban school district's Literacy Leaders paradigm, this study examined its impact on teacher effectiveness, teacher professional development and teacher leadership skills. Qualitative data obtained from principals, Literacy Leaders and classroom teachers indicate that the Literacy Leaders model has positively impacted on literacy renewal in the district. Based on data collected in this study and acknowledging recommendations for action, the Literacy Leaders model, in concept, design and implementation, may be replicable in other school districts

References

Babbie, E. (1999). *The basics of social research*. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth Publishing Company.

Barth, R. S. (2001). Teacher leader. *Phi Delta Kappan, 82*(6), 443-449.

Baumgartner, A. (2000). Teachers as leaders: Notes from a leader who never planned to become one. *NASSP Bulletin, 84*, 23-26.

Blegen, M.B., & Kennedy, C. (2000). Principals and teachers, leading together. *NASSP Bulletin, 84*, 1-6

Block, C. C., Oakar, M., & Hurt, N. (2002). The expertise of literacy teachers: A continuum from pre-school to grade 5. *Reading Research Quarterly, 37*(2), 178-206.

Buckner, K.G., & McDowelle, J.O. (2000) Developing teacher leaders: Providing encouragement, opportunities, and support. *NASSP Bulletin, 84*, 35-41

Burns, M.S., & Snow, C.E. (1999). Reading and literacy: Teachers using reading research in classrooms. *Teaching and Change, 6*, 139-142.

Butts, R. F. C., & Lawrence A. (1953). *A history of education in American culture*. New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston.

Caine, G., & Caine, R.N. (2000). The learning community as a foundation for developing teacher leaders. *NASSP Bulletin, 84*, 7-14.

Cambourne, B. (2000). Conditions for literacy learning. *The Reading Teacher, 53*, 512-515.

Cantrell, S.C. (1999). Effective teaching and literacy learning: A look inside primary classrooms. *The Reading Teacher, 52*, 370-378.

Chirichello, M. (2003). The changing roles of principals. *Educational Viewpoints. 23*(1), 31-34.

Clement, M., & Vandenberghe, R. (2000). Teachers' professional development: A solitary or collegial adventure? *Teaching and Teacher Education, 16*(1), 81-101.

Conant, J. (1963). *The education of American teachers*. New York: McGraw Hill

Conley, S., & Muncey, D.E. (1999). Teachers talk about teaming and leadership in their work. *Theory Into Practice, 38*(1), 46-56.

Darling-Hammond, L. (1998). Teacher learning that supports student learning. *Educational Leadership, 55*(5), 6-11.

Dunne, F.,Nave, B., & Lewis, A. (2000). Critical friends groups: Teachers helping teachers to improve student learning. *Phi Delta Kappa International Research Bulletin, No. 28*, 1-7.

Evans, R. (1996). *The human side of school change*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Feiler, R., Heritage, M., & Gallimore, R. (2000). Teachers leading teachers. *Educational Leadership, 57*, 66-69.

Guskey, T. (2003). Scooping up meaningful evidence. *Journal of the National Staff Development Council, 24*(4), 24-29..

Harris, A. (2002). Improving schools through teacher leadership. *Education Journal,59*, 22-24.

Haycock, K. (1999). Fostering collaboration, leadership and information literacy: Common behaviors of uncommon principals and faculties. *NASSP Bulletin, 83*, 82-87.

Henson, R.K. (2001). The effects of participation in teacher research on teacher efficacy. *Teaching and Teacher Education, 17*(7), 819-836.

Houston, H. (2000). Staff development for education in the 90's. *Teachers College Record, 98*(1),

International Reading Association (2000). Excellent reading teachers. *Reading Teacher, 54*(2), 235-241.

Keedy, J.L. (1999). Examining teacher instructional leadership within the small group dynamics of collegial groups. *Teaching and Teacher Education, 15*(7), 785-799.

Lecos, M.A., Cassella, C., Evans, C., Leahy, C., Liess, E., & Lucas, T. (2000). Empowering teacher leadership in professional development schools. *Teaching and Change, 8*(1), 98-113.

Morgan, D.N., Saylor-Crowder, K., Stephens, D., Donnelly, A., DeFord, D.E., & Hamel, E. (2003). Managing the complexities of a statewide reading initiative. *Phi Delta Kappan, 85*(2), 139-144.

Morris, M., Chrispeels, J., & Burke, P. (2003). The power of two: Linking external with internal teachers' professional development. *Phi Delta Kappan, 84*(10), 764-767.

Munro, J. (1999). Learning more about learning improves teacher effectiveness. *School Effectiveness and School Improvement, 10*(2), 151-172.

Murphy, J. (1991). *Restructuring schools: Capturing and assessing the phenomena*. New York: Teachers College Press.

New staff development standards issued. (2001-2002, December/January). *Reading Today, 19*, 17-18

New York City Board of Education. (1993). *Professional development laboratory (P.D. L.)*. Brooklyn, NY: Office of Research, Evaluation, and Assessment. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 366 581)

Pearson, P.D. (2003). The role of professional knowledge in reading reform. *Language Arts, 81*(1), 14-15.

Pennell, J.R.F., & Firestone, W.A. (1996). Changing classroom practices through teacher networks: Matching program features with teacher characteristics and circumstances. *Teachers College Record, 98*(1), 46-76.

Peterson, K., & Deal, T.E. (1998). How leaders influence the culture of schools. *Educational Leadership, 56*, 28-30.

Pressley, M., Wharton-McDonald, R., Allington, R., Block, C.C., Morrow, L., Tracey, D., Baker, K., Brooks, G., Cronin, J., Nelson, E., & Woo, D. (2001). A study of effective first grade literacy instruction. *Scientific Studies of Reading, 5*(1), 35-58.

Rinehart, J.S., Short, P.M., Short, R.J., & Eckley, M. (1998). Teacher empowerment and principal leadership: Understanding the influence process. *Educational Administration Quarterly, 34*, 630-649.

Robb, L. (2001). Redefining staff development: A collaborative model for teachers and administrators. *Language Arts, 79* (1), 72-73.

Sergiovanni, T.J.(1994). *Building community in schools.* San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Sergiovanni, T.J. (1996). *Leadership in the schoolhouse: How is it different? Why is it important?* San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Short, P.M. (1998). Empowering leadership. *Contemporary Education, 69*(2), 70-72.

Silberman, C. (1970). *Crisis in the classroom.* New York: Random House

Silva, D.Y., Gimbert, B., & Nolan, J. (2000). Sliding the doors: Locking and unlocking possibilities for teacher leadership. *Teachers College Record, 102*(4), 779-804.

Smith-Burke, M.T. (1996). Professional development of teacher leaders: Promoting program ownership and increased success. *Network News,* pp.1-4, 13, 15.

Weber, J. (1989). Leading the instructional program. In S.C. Smith & P.K. Piele (Eds.), *School leadership: Handbook for excellence,* 2nd edition, (pp. 191-224). Eugene, Oregon: ERIC Clearinghouse on Educational Management, 1989. ED 309 504.

Wharton-McDonald, R., Pressley, M., & Hampston, J.M. (1998). Literacy instruction in nine first-grade classrooms: Teacher characteristics and student achievement. *The Elementary School Journal, 99,* 101-128.

Witte, R. S., & Witte, J.S. (1997). *Statistics (5th ed.).* New York: Harcourt Brace College Publishers.

Wynne, J. (2001). *Teachers as leaders in education reform.* ERIC Digest.(ED462376).

Wray, D., & Medwell, J. (2000). Professional development for literacy teaching: The evidence from effective teachers. *Journal of In-Service Education, 26*(3), 487-498.

Wray, D., Medwell, J., Fox, R., & Poulson, L. (2000). The teaching practices of effective teachers of literacy. *Educational Review, 52*(1), 75-84.

Appendix A

Literacy Leaders Job Description

Literacy Leaders Job Description

Wanted: Dynamic, self-motivated learners whose passion for literacy education drives personal professional growth while energizing collegial staff development

Positions: Two (2) tenured literacy leaders in each elementary school- one targeting the primary grades and the other targeting the upper grades. Literacy leaders should be recommended by their building principals for participation in this initiative.

Opportunities for literacy leader professional growth will include:

1. Attend after-school in-service literacy courses/workshops
2. Attend Literacy Leader meetings to be held after school at various sites throughout the district
3. Serve on a district professional development committee whose goal will be to plan training opportunities for colleagues related to literacy professional development
4. Act as liaison between the school and the district in terms of prioritizing needs and offering input into district policy decisions focusing on literacy
5. Plan and/or conduct summer in-serviced workshops for colleagues focusing on literacy instruction

Responsibilities of the literacy leader will include:

1. Provide turn-key training of literacy workshop and course experiences to colleagues
2. Present at least one faculty conference whose focus will be literacy instruction and student learning
3. Present at least one parent workshop focusing on literacy instruction and student learning
4. Plan schoolwide activities and/or celebrations showcasing literacy initiatives within the building
5. Attend monthly networking meetings with other literacy leaders

Appendix B

Literacy Leaders Perception Survey

LITERACY LEADERS PERCEPTION SURVEY

The school district is continuing to develop ways to strengthen the Literacy Leaders model and its impact on teaching, professional development and leadership.

Please take a few minutes to complete the questionnaire below. In Part I, the items are for data collection purposes only and in no way reflect the identity of the respondent.

In Part II, for each statement circle the number, on a scale of 1 to 6 that best expresses your point of view. Feel free to indicate a comment after any or all of the statements.

Thank you as always for your input.

Part I

1. How many years have you worked as an elementary school teacher?

   ____ 1 or less ____ 2-5 ___ 6-10 ____ 11 or more

2. What grade are you currently teaching? _____

3. What is your gender? _____ Male _____ Female

4. What is your age?

   ____ under 25 ____ 26-30 ____ 31-35 ____ 36-40

   ____ 41-45 ____ 45-50 ____ over

5. I know the name(s) of my school's Literacy Leader(s).

   ____ Yes ____ No

LITERACY LEADERS PERCEPTION SURVEY

Part II

Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with each statement below by circling the appropriate numeral:

1- Strongly disagree
2- Moderately disagree
3- Disagree slightly more than agree
4- Agree slightly more than disagree
5- Moderately agree
6- Strongly agree
N/A- Not Applicable

1. The Literacy Leader(s) have expertise in literacy instruction.
   1 2 3 4 5 6 N/A
   Comment:

2. The Literacy Leader(s) attend more professional development workshops than I do.
   1 2 3 4 5 6 N/A
   Comment:

3. The Literacy Leader(s) are willing to share their knowledge with me.
   1 2 3 4 5 6 N/A
   Comment:

4. The Literacy Leader(s) collaborate with me.
   1 2 3 4 5 6 N/A
   Comment:

5. The Literacy Leader(s) have influenced a change in my teaching.
   1 2 3 4 5 6 N/A
   Comment:

LITERACY LEADERS PERCEPTION SURVEY

1- Strongly disagree
2- Moderately disagree
3- Disagree slightly more than agree
4- Agree slightly more than disagree
5- Moderately agree
6- Strongly agree
N/A- Not Applicable

6. The Literacy Leader(s) should facilitate professional development experiences for the staff.
   1 2 3 4 5 6 N/A
   Comment:

7. The Literacy Leader(s) are valuable sources of information.
   1 2 3 4 5 6 N/A
   Comment:

8. The Literacy Leaders have time to share their expertise.
   1 2 3 4 5 6 N/A
   Comment:

9. The Literacy Leader(s) have assisted me in implementing a balanced literacy program in my classroom
   1 2 3 4 5 6 N/A
   Comment:

10. The Literacy Leader(s) should have more opportunity to facilitate professional development experiences.
   1 2 3 4 5 6 N/A
   Comment:

11. In my opinion, the Literacy Leader(s) initiative has benefited my school.
   1 2 3 4 5 6 N/A
   Comment:

12. The Literacy Leader(s) have made me a more effective teacher.
   1 2 3 4 5 6 N/A
   Comment:

LITERACY LEADERS PERCEPTION SURVEY

1- Strongly disagree
2- Moderately disagree
3- Disagree slightly more than agree
4- Agree slightly more than disagree
5- Moderately agree
6- Strongly agree
N/A- Not Applicable

13. In my opinion, the Literacy Leaders are viewed as instructional leaders in my building.

1 2 3 4 5 6 N/A

Comment:

14. I seek out the assistance of the Literacy Leaders in planning my literacy instruction.

1 2 3 4 5 6 N/A

Comment:

15. The Literacy Leaders are valuable to literacy renewal in the school district.

1 2 3 4 5 6 N/A

Comment:

Appendix C

Letter of Solicitation for Teachers

Howard B. Schechter
John A. Forrest School
10-00 Hopper Avenue
Fair Lawn, NJ 07410
201-794-5565

May 2003

Dear Teacher:

I am a doctoral student in the Executive Ed.D. Program in the College of Education and Human Services at Seton Hall University. My doctoral dissertation research is on the impact of the Literacy Leaders paradigm on teacher effectiveness, teacher professional development and teachers' leadership skills in the school district.

Purpose of the Research/Duration of Participation
I am requesting your participation in this research study to help evaluate the Literacy Leaders paradigm in the school district. Completing the enclosed survey should take approximately five to ten minutes of your time.

Description of Procedures
Teachers in the elementary schools of the public school system are requested to complete the *Literacy Leaders Perception Survey*. Please do not write your name on the survey or identify your school in any way. For your convenience, please return the survey in the attached envelope and return it by district mail to my attention. I would appreciate your completing the survey and returning it to me within one week.

Voluntary Nature
Please note that your participation is completely voluntary and you may withdraw from the study at any time. If you do not want to participate, you need only to throw the survey away. Discontinuing your participation will involve no penalty or loss of benefits to you at any time.

Anonymity
Please be assured that your anonymity will be protected. There are no codes or identifying information on the survey forms or return envelopes, so that your individual response will remain anonymous. The responses of all the teachers who complete the survey will be combined in the summary and presentation of the study. No individual teacher will be identified in the study.

Confidentiality
The data from the survey will be handled with strictest confidentiality and security. The research records will not be available to anyone but me, as the researcher, and the members of my dissertation committee. Upon completion of the project, the data will be

destroyed after three years according to the guidelines established by the Institutional Review Board of Seton Hall University.

Storage of Data
The information provided by you in the survey will be stored in a locked cabinet in my private home office.

Foreseeable Risks
There are no anticipated risks to you for participating in the study.

Expected Benefits
The results of this research may provide valuable data and feedback about the Literacy Leaders model that may assist the district in planning professional development activities and implementation of literacy initiatives. Evaluation of this program may indicate whether or not the model is replicable in the middle schools, in the high school or in other school districts.

Stress or Psychological Harm
If you become upset or experience undue stress while filling out the survey, please discontinue your participation immediately and seek out a family member, friend or professional counselor for assistance.

Alternative Procedures
No alternative procedures will be required for participants.

Contact Information
I am available to address any questions you may have about this study, your rights or your district's rights, in this research. You may contact me by telephone at 201-794-5565 or by e-mail at hschechter@msn.com. If you prefer, you may contact my mentor, Dr. Mary Ruzicka at 973-275-2723.

Taping
No video- or audio-tapes will be involved in this survey.

Informed Consent Form
As a participant in the study, this letter will serve as your copy of the Informed Consent Form as required by the IRB at Seton Hall University.

IRB Approval
This project has been reviewed and approved by the Seton Hall University Institutional Review Board for Human Subjects Research. The IRB believes that the research procedures adequately safeguard the subject's privacy, welfare, civil liberties, and rights. The Chairperson of the IRB may be reached at (973) 275-2977 or 313-6314.

Consent to participate is indicated by returning the enclosed survey to the researcher.

Thank you for your time and consideration in this matter.

Sincerely,

Howard B. Schechter

Appendix D

Letter to Principals Requesting Permission to Administer

Literacy Leaders Perception Survey

May 2003

Dear Principal,

I am currently a doctoral student working towards an Ed.D. degree in Educational Administration and Supervision at Seton Hall University. The focus of my dissertation is the impact of the Literacy Leaders program on teaching, professional development and leadership in the district's elementary schools.

With your approval, I would like to administer a brief questionnaire to your classroom teachers during a faculty meeting. The self-administered questionnaire, entitled *Literacy Leaders Perception Survey*, will require approximately 15-20 minutes of their time. Participation by your staff will be voluntary, anonymous and confidential as per the research protocol mandated by the Institutional Review Board of Seton Hall University.

I will be contacting you next week to arrange a specific date and time to administer the survey to your teachers.

Thank you so much for your support.

Sincerely,

Howard B. Schechter

Appendix E

Letter of Solicitation to Principals

Howard B. Schechter
John A. Forrest School
10-00 Hopper Avenue
Fair Lawn, NJ 07410
201-794-5565
hschechter@msn.com

May 2003

Dear Principal:

I am a doctoral student in the Executive Ed.D. Program in the College of Education and Human Services at Seton Hall University. This spring I am conducting research that focuses on the Literacy Leaders paradigm with the intent of completing my Dissertation in the fall.

The *purpose of my study* is to evaluate the Literacy Leaders paradigm in the school district in terms of its impact on teacher effectiveness, teacher professional development and the development of teachers' leadership skills.

I would like to take this opportunity to invite you to participate in a face- to- face interview with me that focuses on the Literacy Leaders model. The interview will consist of the enclosed questions that focus on the impact of the Literacy Leaders model on teacher effectiveness, teacher professional development and the development of teachers' leadership skills.

The interview will be audiotaped with your permission to facilitate my note-taking. After the interview, a typescript will be sent to you for your review, approval and permission to include in the final research report. *Participation in the interview should take approximately 45 minutes of your time.*

If you are interested in participating in the interview, kindly contact me by phone at 201-794-5565. In June 2003, I will call to arrange an appointment at your convenience for an interview in your office.

Please note that your participation is completely *voluntary* and you may withdraw from the study at any time. If you do not want to participate at any point in the study, you need only to discontinue the interview. Discontinuing your participation will involve no penalty or loss of benefits to you at any time.

Please be assured that your *anonymity* will be protected. There are no codes or identifying information in the study so that your individual responses will remain anonymous. The responses of all the principals who are interviewed will be combined in

the summary and presentation of the study. No individual principal or school will be identified in the study.

Once the interviews are completed, all findings will be securely locked and retained in my home office to maintain *confidentiality. Only the researcher and his mentor will have access to the data. The data will be kept for three years and then destroyed.*

This project has been reviewed and approved by the Seton Hall University Institutional Review Board for Human Subjects Research. The IRB believes that the research procedures adequately safeguard the subject's privacy, welfare, civil liberties, and rights. The Chairperson of the IRB may be reached at (973) 275-2977 or 313-6314.

Thank you for your time and consideration. I am looking forward to meeting with you.

Sincerely,

Howard B. Schechter

Appendix F

Interview Questions for Principals

Interview Questions for Principals

1. How did you select the Literacy Leader(s) in your school?
2. What expertise in literacy instruction do your Literacy Leaders demonstrate?
3. How have the Literacy Leader(s) influenced teaching in your school?
4. How have the Literacy Leaders shared their expertise with other teachers in your school?
5. How do the other teachers in your school perceive the Literacy Leaders?
6. How has the Literacy Leaders model impacted on the development of teachers' leadership skills?
7. Do you consider the Literacy Leaders initiative to be valuable to literacy renewal in your school? Why or why not?
8. In what ways might the Literacy Leaders initiative be modified to better meet the needs if your staff?

Appendix G

Letter of Solicitation for Literacy Leaders

Howard B. Schechter
John A. Forrest School
10-00 Hopper Avenue
Fair Lawn, NJ 07410
201-794-5565
hschechter@msn.com

May 2003

Dear Literacy Leader:

I am a doctoral student in the Executive Ed.D. Program in the College of Education and Human Services at Seton Hall University. This spring I am conducting research that focuses on the Literacy Leaders paradigm with the intent of completing my Dissertation in the fall.

The *purpose of my study* is to evaluate the Literacy Leaders paradigm in the school district in terms of its impact on teacher effectiveness, teacher professional development and the development of teachers' leadership skills.

I would like to take this opportunity to invite you to participate in a focus group of Literacy Leaders. Participants in each of the focus group will respond to the enclosed questions about the Literacy Leaders paradigm relating to teacher effectiveness, teacher professional development and teachers' leadership skills.

The focus group will be audiotaped with your permission to facilitate my note-taking. After the focus group, a typescript will be sent to you for your review, approval and permission to include in the final research report. *Participation in the focus group should take approximately one hour of your time.*

If you are interested in participating in the focus group, kindly contact me by phone at 201-794-5565. In June 2003, I will contact you to select one of two focus groups that will meet after school hours in the conference room at the district office.

Please note that your participation is completely *voluntary* and you may withdraw from the study at any time. If you do not want to participate at any point in the study, you need only to leave the focus group. Discontinuing your participation will involve no penalty or loss of benefits to you at any time.

Please be assured that your *anonymity* will be protected. There are no codes or identifying information in the study so that your individual responses will remain anonymous. The responses of all the Literacy Leaders who participate in the focus groups will be combined in the summary and presentation of the study. No individual teacher or school will be identified in the study.

Once the focus groups are completed, all findings will be securely locked and retained in my home office to maintain *confidentiality*. *Only the researcher and his mentor will have access to the data. The data will be kept for three years and then destroyed.*

This project has been reviewed and approved by the Seton Hall University Institutional Review Board for Human Subjects Research. The IRB believes that the research procedures adequately safeguard the subject's privacy, welfare, civil liberties, and rights. The Chairperson of the IRB may be reached at (973) 275-2977 or 313-6314.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Howard B. Schechter

Appendix H

Focus Group Questions for Literacy Leaders

Focus Group Questions for Literacy Leaders

1. What professional development experiences have you participated in as a result of your involvement in the Literacy Leaders initiative?

2. How has participation in the Literacy Leaders initiative influenced your effectiveness as a teacher?

3. How has participation in the Literacy Leaders initiative developed your leadership skills?

4. Why did you choose to participate in the Literacy Leaders initiative?

5. How has participation in the Literacy Leaders initiative influenced your knowledge base about literacy?

6. What specific successes have you experienced in your role as a Literacy Leader in your school?

7. What specific challenges have arisen in terms of your effectiveness as a Literacy Leader in your school?

8. In your professional opinion, how can the Literacy Leaders model b e improved to better serve your needs and those of the teaching staff?