FUNDING AND EFFECTIVENESS OF STAFF DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS IN THREE NORTH TEXAS SCHOOL DISTRICTS

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This dissertation study focused on three aspects of staff development in North Texas: 1) funding sources, 2) types of professional learning programs, and 3) teachers' views of the effectiveness of the funded programs. Qualitative data came from interviews with nine district administrators concerning funding sources and how those resources enhanced teacher skills. Quantitative data came from 1,277 responses from teachers regarding their background and perceptions about staff development.

Data from interviews with district administrators were diagrammed to depict elements of funding staff development and to reveal how resources were used to plan, implement, and evaluate staff learning. An analysis of interview data revealed that availability of grants, property tax rates, and student enrollment affected how districts funded staff development. Administrators reported that districts funded professional learning that was planned according to academic initiatives, met the needs of adult learners, and adapted to the changing needs of school communities. Both administrators and practitioners reported that time was a lacking resource critical to developing staff knowledge.

Practitioners reported that sufficient opportunity to collaborate with colleagues about learning initiatives was more valuable than teaching materials. Teacher questionnaires were analyzed for possible relationships between participant variables and responses concerning knowledge about funding constraints and professional development experiences. Data revealed that practitioner experience and graduate

degrees were not related to teachers' use of knowledge about financial constraints to more efficiently implement learning from staff development. Participants did not perceive professional learning differently than peers. Most teachers connected professional learning with improved teaching practices but a small percent attributed student achievement to their professional learning. The majority of teachers considered collaborative learning settings to elicit more personal professional growth than other formats.

The findings of the teacher questionnaire suggest that teaching practices could be impacted if participants gained more knowledge about district financial constraints when developing staff professionally. Therefore, future research about how districts share information concerning funding for professional learning is warranted.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Educational and public expectations generally associate developing teachers professionally with improved student performance. However, few people know how school districts fund professional learning for practitioners, or even if such ongoing educational training elicits better student capabilities (Miles, Odden, Fermanich, Archibald, & Gallagher, 2004). The recent freeze of funding for the Texas Permanent School Fund (PSF) Bond Guarantee Program (BGP) and the slumping market economy demonstrate difficulties that Texas school districts have in financially supporting basic and supplementary educational programs (Scott, 2009). By extension, local education agencies (LEAs) must assume responsibility for understanding and administering funds that are designated to improve student achievement. Administrators and practitioners who respect and familiarize themselves with district financial decisions regarding professional learning might be more inclined to implement new knowledge in classrooms, thus enhancing the impact that professional development has on student learning.

Regardless of the degree of knowledge educators have concerning funding for staff development, more practitioners enhance their career knowledge through professional development opportunities than other sources such as journals or educational texts (Everton, Galton, & Pell, 2000). For this reason, districts must capitalize on chances to develop educators' professional knowledge and to ensure that staff experience quality trainings that are based on researched practices. Administrators and practitioners who know what attributes constitute effective staff development can accurately reflect on the quality of professional learning they experience. It is difficult for administrators to document the effectiveness of professional learning because educators are typically not required to provide classroom evidence of professional learning (Mayer, Mitchell, & Macdonald, 2005). District and school administrators should hold teachers accountable for documenting professional growth that comes from staff development. In this way, educators can reflect upon the effect of professional learning experienced and tailor behaviors in ways that elicit better student academic outcomes. Thus, participants who understand funding, delivery, and monitoring standards for staff development can self-regulate how professional learning translates to meeting student needs.

Statement of Purpose

The present qualitative study had three purposes. The first purpose was to determine sources of funding for staff development in three North Texas school districts. The second purpose was to describe the types of funded professional development the districts provided teachers. Professional development opportunities considered in the present study included educators collaborating concerning focused goals, mentor and mentee relationships, presentations or conferences, group book studies, and online learning sessions. Finally, this study examined how teachers viewed the effectiveness of staff development that the funds supported. For the purposes of this research, effective staff development denoted professional learning that influenced teachers in making positive pedagogical changes so that student learning was enhanced. I intended the present study to provide practitioners with knowledge of general guidelines that districts followed concerning staff development efforts to improve student success. Students may ultimately benefit from this study since the findings are useful for teacher understanding of funding processes and effective professional learning practices for school districts. Through such understanding, teachers are more likely to respect the financial constraints within overall educational budgets and therefore potentially alter pedagogy to ensure that daily teaching practices are efficient. This study concludes with recommendations for districts concerning funding processes for staff development and for documenting evidence of participants' implementation of professional learning so that students benefit.

Context

This study was based on the idea that school districts are obligated to fund staff development opportunities for educators so that teachers continually develop professionally and better meet student academic needs. Over the past several decades, educational research has documented financial constraints that school districts face regarding providing students with appropriate educational programs and increasing pupil achievement. Jones (2001) urged educators to consider what attributes constitute an adequate education. He asserted that sufficient educational programs and appropriate student learning opportunities are intangible concepts involving complex funding components.

Umpstead (2007) also pondered the often subjective educational understanding of what provides students with an adequate education. She noted that federal courts deemed state finance systems sufficient based on their ability to provide a notable adequate education, and she wrote that states agree on common meanings of the phrase, *adequate education*. States consider adequate educational programs to be those with enough resources to achieve the desired outcomes of student achievement. According to Umpstead, adequate educational programs combine teacher training and curricular materials inputs with funding of teacher professional learning opportunities that are needed to strengthen educational practices.

Educational experts often target practitioners within the educational program as human resources who must develop professionally so that students can achieve improved student learning outcomes. A search of the ProQuest electronic database revealed that 4,356 dissertations have been written about staff development, in general, since 1970 (accessed October 5, 2009). Another search conducted regarding what resources school districts need for staff development produced fewer results, 1,980, for the same time span. The number of dissertations published since 1970 pertaining to school district problems with staff development is still less, 711. According to Garet, Porter, Desimone, et al. (2001), thorough research exists about suggested practices for implementing quality staff development programs. However, limited information is available about the resources districts need to sustain and elicit student achievement through teacher learning. This dissertation aims to strengthen the database of educational research on district staff development programs by examining how three school districts funded, implemented, and evaluated professional learning for educators.

Background

Three suburban school districts in north Texas were qualitatively reviewed for the present study. The districts were referred to anonymously as District A, B, and C in order to conceal identifying information. I targeted these school districts for study based on student populations exceeding 15,000 and geographic proximity to one another.

District A is located north of Dallas. During the 2009-2010 school year, it served 17,500 students, covered 29 square miles, and contained 20 campuses. This district predicts that it will increase enrollment by 8% each year through 2019. District A earned a Recognized rating from the Texas Education Agency (TEA) for student standardized achievement during the 2008-2009 school year. This district publicizes its mission as providing every student, in every location, engaging work every day. The district believes that every child deserves the highest quality education, that employees should be held accountable for each student. Additionally, the district asserts that a sense of community should be facilitated within the schools. District A believes that students and faculty need to develop as good citizens and competent leaders.

District B is slightly larger than District A, encompassing just over 53 square miles in northwest Dallas County. Because the boundaries of school districts in Texas do not directly coincide with city borders, students from five cities compose the district population. The 26,170 students enrolled in District B during the research period were spread among 43 campuses. District B earned an Academically Acceptable rating with the TEA for student standardized performance during the 2008-2009 school year. The mission of this district includes committing all resources to guiding each student in learning and graduating as responsible, passionate, life-long learners. Additionally, the mission of District B includes developing learners as complex thinkers and effective communicators who respect the global interdependence of communities. District B asserts that the political and societal success of the nation depends upon individual communities accepting responsibility for providing students with a quality education. In this district, diversity among students strengthens the learning environment, and students are assured a nurturing, safe atmosphere. District B declares that people need to know and respect that individuals learn at different rates and at various capacities. In this district, everyone is a teacher and a learner. The district's mission reveals a commitment to cultivate people physically, mentally, socially, and emotionally through learning.

The third district in this study, District C, was experiencing rapid growth in its student population during the study period. Located north of Dallas, this district has grown between 12% and 30% annually since 2000. Students from four cities and two counties converge in District C. The district student population for the 2009-2010 school year was just under 34,000. During the 2008-2009 school year, District C earned a Recognized rating from TEA for student performance on standardized tests. District C is the largest of the three districts studied. It encompasses 75 square miles and contains 46 campuses. District C stated that providing students with unique learning opportunities through an environment supporting strong relationships with parents and the community was important. District C commits itself to enabling students to continue learning and to achieve aspirations beyond experiences in the school system.

Additionally, District C believes that learners are unique and must be treated with fairness and respect. This district contends that integrity, creativity, and an imaginative spirit are critical for maximizing learning opportunities. Furthermore, District C believes that all individuals should be challenged and encouraged while functioning in a safe learning environment. This district asserts that student educational experiences ought to be improved upon always and the relationships that members of the educational community develop with one another heighten academic experiences.

Research Questions

The following research questions were used to learn more about the processes for funding, implementing, and evaluating (through teacher views) the effectiveness of staff development programs for educators in Districts A, B, and C.

1. In what ways do three Texas school districts fund professional development for instructional improvement?
2. How do three Texas school districts use funds to develop staff professionally?
3. What are teachers' views on the effectiveness of staff development in three Texas school districts?

These questions were answered qualitatively and quantitatively through a process described briefly in the following section on research methodology.

Methodology

For the purposes of this study, I contacted and obtained permission from three school districts located on the northern outskirts of Dallas. In order to answer Question 1 and to determine how the three school districts funded professional development, I interviewed the chief financial officer in each district. The interview consisted of five questions for which I audio taped responses. Following the individual interviews, I transcribed the answers by hand to establish patterns amongst interviewee responses

(Corbin & Strauss, 2009). Immediately afterwards, transcripts were repeatedly read and codes were created from participant replies. The questions that I asked the chief financial officers during the interviews are described in Chapter 3 of this study.

To answer the second research question, I interviewed the assistant superintendents of learner services and directors of professional development in each of the districts. I asked all three officials identical questions. Each interview was audio taped and participant responses were transcribed and coded to ascertain patterns in administrator replies. The specific questions that I asked the assistant superintendents of learner services and district directors of professional development are discussed in Chapter 3.

I answered Question 3 by evaluating electronic survey responses from teachers in Districts A, B, and C. Teachers received a hyperlink that connected participants to the electronic questionnaire consisting of 15 questions. Within the 15 questions, respondents rated their understanding of the funding processes that districts used to implement professional development for practitioners. I sought teacher insight for evidence that professional learning impacted student success and that accountability measures were linked to professional learning that educators experienced. The survey also asked participants to rate the degree that having access to more resources, such as time to collaborate and additional instructional materials, impacted teachers successfully implementing professional learning. Still, through the survey, I sought participant input about modes of professional learning that teachers believed impacted student success most. Overall, the purposes of the electronic survey were to determine if practitioners perceive professional learning to positively affect student success, and to understand how they confirm these perceptions. The survey questions are discussed further in Chapter 3.

Definition of Terms

In an effort to standardize how readers interpret this study, I noted intended meanings of educational terms and phrases that arose throughout the chapters.

Educational effectiveness was a phrase used in this study to describe ideal professional learning opportunities for teachers. Garet, Porter, Desimone, et al. (2001) and Guskey (2003) declared that the effectiveness of professional development is a lucid concept upon which few researchers agree. Guskey (2003) reiterated that effective professional development denotes career learning that guides practitioners to attain the ultimate educational goal, improved student outcomes. Guskey specified that educators consider growth in learner outcomes open-mindedly. He believed that professional development is effective when it facilitates better assessment results, grades, behavioral outcomes, attitudes, attendance percentages, and participation rates. Guskey claimed that effective professional development consisted of three general characteristics. Thus, quality professional learning needs to be based on rigorous research, attuned to context variables such as teacher credentials and economic status, and based in local contexts to promote collegial support.

I intended effective staff development to include those programs that consistently followed pre-established procedures and provided evidence of deriving student learning objectives better than practices that formerly existed. Another phrase requiring clarification was instructional innovations. For the purposes of this research, instructional innovations described general pedagogical strategies and content objectives that educators learned about through professional development programs. Finally, in the interest of varying word choice throughout this study, the phrases staff development, professional learning, teacher training, and in-service, referred to coordinated district efforts to develop educators' professional knowledge and capabilities.

There were some educational terms and acronyms mentioned throughout the present study. Common definitions of these terms are provided for the sake of consistency and ease in interpreting this study (Baker, 2009).

ADA. This acronym stands for average daily attendance and is the number of students in a school district who attend school regularly. State education agencies consider this number when providing districts with financial support to meet the costs of educating students.

ASF. This is an acronym for the Available School Fund. The ASF is a trust fund composed of annual deposits of dividends and interests that the state earns from public school funds. School districts receive funds from the ASF based on a per capita basis.

Decentralization. The process of restructuring bureaucracy in school districts to let individual campuses make decisions regarding spending funds for improving student achievement is called decentralization.

District revenues. This term refers to the money that state government agencies distribute to school districts. The amount of district revenue that the state disburses annually is based upon the ADA from the past school year.

Equalization policies. Equalization policies are the state policies that intend to lessen the disparities that exist among school districts in terms of revenues generated from property taxes.

FSP. This acronym stands for the foundation school program. The program consists of multiple formulas that analysts use to determine funds for Texas schools. There are three tiers in the FSP. First, the foundation formula guarantees that all school districts receive a certain amount of financial support if they impose a minimum property tax rate. Second, the formula assures that all school districts get a fixed amount of money for each cent of additional property tax imposed, that falls between a maximum and minimum range. Third, the FSP contains a recapture provision discouraging districts that are property wealthy from raising tax values above the maximum rate.

Funding formulas. Funding formulas are the mechanisms that states use to figure the amount of financial assistance provided to public school districts.

IHE. This acronym stands for institutes of higher education.

LEA. This acronym stands for the local education agency.

NPO. This acronym stands for nonprofit organizations.

Professional learning. Professional learning consists of organized district and educator efforts to enhance educator competency in meeting student academic needs. Examples can include but are not limited to independent or collaborative study and planning, workshops, online courses, courses for certification or graduate degrees, and mentor relationships.

PSF. This acronym stands for the Permanent School Fund. Texas is the only state using this fund. Districts cannot spend money from the PSF. However, it guarantees that bondholders will receive the interest and principal earned from bond elections.

SAHE. This is an acronym for the state education agency for higher education. This agency provides information about the state program for education, financial assistance related to education and research, as well as continuing education and career opportunities (US DOE, 2009). The SEA in Texas is the Texas Education Agency (TEA).

SEA. This is an acronym for the state education agency. This agency gives information to schools and state residents regarding research and technical assistance for educational matters (US DOE, 2009).

WSF. This is an acronym for a formula that calculates the cost of educating children with varying physical and academic needs. The formula is called weighted school funding. WSF allows site-based managers more control in spending educational funds. Districts consider WSF when distributing financial resources based on individual school needs (Baker, 2009).

Assumptions

I operated with several personal beliefs when conducting this research. One assumption concerned how participants behaved. It was believed that all participants interpreted the interview and survey questions in a manner that authentically represented my intent. Another tenet I held concerning this study was that district administrators did not alter systematic practices for funding, implementing, or evaluating staff development after learning of my intent to study the district. I made an assumption regarding the interview and teacher perspective responses. Accordingly, I assumed that the interview and survey participants answered the questions truthfully without supplementing answers based on what was believed I expected.

Delimitations

This portion of the chapter considers factors that restricted me from declaring that the findings from the study applied to all school districts across the nation. I recognized that findings from the present study only applied to three Texas public school districts. As public LEAs, the participating districts operated according to stipulations for the financial support that state governments provide public educational systems. Another delimitation of the study was that data were gathered from interviews and questionnaires at one point in time. I collected data in the middle of the school year. Thus, it was possible that participants altered their perspectives concerning staff development as the school year continued and they experienced more professional learning opportunities.

A final delimitation in this study pertained to the professional positions of the personnel interviewed. Multiple people with various professional titles worked within district administrative departments of the districts studied, such as staff development, so that components of the educational system functioned smoothly. Hence, the individual perspectives obtained about the purpose and effectiveness of district procedures or functions were subjective and specific to those interviewed. In an effort to maintain methodological consistency, only people with administrative titles concerning financing operations, learner and curricular services, and staff development participated in the interviews. I considered the perceptions of the administrators to represent the views of all personnel within the respective departments.

Limitations

The current study contained several limitations that inhibit other researchers from duplicating it exactly. One of the factors that restricted the methodology of the study was that processes districts went through when funding, implementing, and evaluating staff development programs were subject to the current knowledge base of the educational industry. Presumably, as researchers continually contribute to the field of school finance and professional development in the future, districts would adapt practices accordingly.

Additionally, researchers desiring to duplicate the present study should seek a broader range of districts to participate. In this way, the generalizability of the study could be strengthened because district samples would be more diverse. Thus, results would pertain to an increased number of local education agencies.

Significance of the Study

This study aimed to impact the educational community in multiple ways. As a direct result of examining the three school districts, a model suggesting district best uses of funding sources for staff development was produced. The model proposes effective ways for districts to implement funded, evidence-based staff development. Finally, within the model for funding professional learning, I propose ways that administrators can ensure that teachers implement learning obtained through staff development.

On a general level, providing administrators and practitioners with information related to funding, implementing, and evaluating staff development helped practitioners recognize characteristics of quality staff development. Similarly, participants with knowledge of the processes involved with funding and implementing quality professional learning could ensure that personal practices efficiently used expertise in which the district had invested. Furthermore, practitioners with enhanced knowledge regarding funding and implementing staff learning could improve student achievement by sharing their learning with peers and collaboratively planning as well as facilitating sessions with the district.

The present study recommends how administrators could monitor teachers implementing professional learning in classrooms, further enhancing the significance of the research. Another suggestion from the study is that administrators hold participants accountable for demonstrating learning. The current study increases administrator and practitioner awareness about funded staff development and iterates the importance of holding faculty accountable for incorporating learning into professional practices. Ultimately, the research will better equip teachers to improve student educational experiences.

This chapter laid the foundation for readers to understand the research. I addressed the context for which the study emerged and introduced the research questions. Additionally, methodology was described and terms pertaining to the study were defined. In conclusion, the chapter included research assumptions, delimitations, limitations, and the significance of the study. The review of literature follows this chapter and provides background research concerning school funding, as well as standards and perspectives regarding professional development. Furthermore, the literature review presents administrative responsibilities for ensuring that teachers implement and sustain professional learning to improve student success in attaining learning objectives.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Amidst shared constraints, public school districts serve a common purpose, which is using limited resources to develop learners academically. Educational resources constitute a variety of forms, including human capacity to perform professionally, textbooks, materials, and time that is necessary to train educators and allow for professional collaboration. It follows, then, that money is needed to sponsor improved student learning.

School districts positively impact student achievement by funding teacher professional development. For professional development to raise student achievement, teacher learning must focus on district educational goals and how well such goals are implemented (Hawley & Valli, 2007). Furthermore, district and school leaders should understand, organize, and sustain effective professional learning opportunities for staff (Sparks, 2009). This chapter argues that school administrators must hold faculty accountable for collaboratively learning to improve student achievement through quality professional development. Administrators ought to ensure that students benefit from teachers participating in staff development by monitoring student data and mandating that educators use skills learned through professional development.

When leaders empower teachers to work together, the goal is to share knowledge and expertise. In this way, administrators critically enhance professional learning among practitioners with the goal of improving student academic experiences. This chapter provides a framework of knowledge for increasing student learning with respect to school funding and professional development.

Financial Challenges Districts Face

Leaders in American public school districts make critical decisions regarding finances. Some decisions include what funds are needed to supply classrooms with necessary materials for learning and how to attract and retain highly qualified teachers with salaries. Surprisingly, Corcoran, Fuhrman, and Belcher (2001) noted that most investment decisions schools make are not research-based. School districts tend to consider evidence of success when deciding how to invest, but they are unable to show sustained results for an extended period of time. Even so, districts depending upon outside sources to fund instructional development tended to view professional learning as an extension to their systematic functioning rather than as a core component (National Staff Development Council (NSDC), 1999). NSDC purports that school districts should view professional development resources as critical factors in the school system budget. According to the NSDC, district officials must plan perpetually for resources pertaining to professional development because practitioners need to continually enhance expertise to serve students efficiently.

School districts must decide when to train teachers. Districts choosing to implement teacher training during the school day often opt to release students before the end of regular school hours. Allowing students to leave early gives teachers time without pupils to plan and to collaborate professionally. Such decisions tend to tax district resources in terms of time and expense involved with training and manipulating the school calendar (Crotty, 2009). Crotty warned that parental and community discord often ensues when instructional days are altered to allow time for teachers to develop professionally. When school districts choose to train teachers by releasing students early or canceling school, parents may suffer financially due to missed work to supervise their children, resulting in increased child care expenses. Crotty also explained that political pressures arise when teachers are allowed dates within the school calendar to collaborate and learn. This is because community businesses must adapt to less employee availability when parents stay home during the school year to watch school-aged children. Hence, Crotty argued that schools must work to increase student performance so that scheduling inconveniences for the community are justified when time is taken from the instructional calendar to develop staff.

Aside from professional development, multiple departments in education, such as transportation and student nutrition, often experience trickle-down effects from events such as the current national economic slump (Dillon, 2009). In response to economical constraints, school districts have had to review budgets to determine where spending can be aligned and tightened. Dillon cautioned districts not to make decisions about cutting costs in haste because many programs have long-term effects that sustain school districts. For instance, she insisted that districts continue to provide professional development opportunities requiring participants to travel long distances. This is because teachers benefit from crossing district boundaries and gaining perspectives from teachers in other regions.

Another financial challenge school districts face in supporting professional development for teachers is the fact that school funding is contingent on decisions made by separate government levels, committees, and licensing boards (Hill, 2008). Districts receive financial support from multiple sources. This means that district programs, such as staff development, may be funded from various entities that tie different stipulations to funding. The overall abilities of districts to regulate the flow of funds and supervise public investments weaken when efforts are not streamlined. It is hard for educators to link funds for particular initiatives with increased student performance. Federal and state funds for educational programs and interventions intertwine, making it difficult to isolate financial sources from discrete effects on learner outcomes (Manna, 2009). Furthermore, many personal and systemic factors, such as home environment and teacher expertise, potentially impact student learning. Thus, factors that influence learners outside of school functions make it difficult to obtain an accurate cost of educating students.

Since school districts receive funds to support instructional improvement initiatives like staff development, they are bound by tight spending regulations. Since requirements for federal and state funds are subjective, loose parameters complicate districts' determining how much spending is occurring for various school programs and which activities are cost effective (Hill, 2008). However, Hill outlined essential elements of educational systems that remain resolute in improving education, while receiving inconsistent funding. Hill stated that the school system must be transparent in terms of how money is exchanged. This includes how funds are spent, to whom money is transferred, costs of supplies, and salaries. He asserted that educators should continuously link data about student progress with special programs and teaching services that students receive. In addition, district and campus officials ought to analyze the effectiveness of programs and abandon or alter school spending and development practices accordingly. As Hill purported, administrators who attach measures of accountability to the school system and publicize information pertaining to district and campus spending, help practitioners increase knowledge of spending efficacy and, as a result, hold staff accountable.

Schmoker (2009) suggested that school districts educate practitioners practically as to how to take advantage of existing resources. He offered basic changes in educational practices that districts can make to influence student learning. Disallowing students to view movies for entertainment or to engage in activities that involve significant coloring, cutting, and pasting will inexpensively facilitate more productive use of classroom time. Campus administrators should accept responsibility for protecting learning time by holding educators accountable for efficiently using time, effectively delivering lessons, and implementing curriculum that is aligned with district and campus objectives. Still, another inexpensive way that districts can improve student achievement is expecting teachers to work collaboratively on a regular basis. Schmoker suggested that through collaborative efforts, educators can support one another in developing professional habits of mind and disseminating higher order thinking skills to students.

The financial state of individual school districts affects the local community and the national economy (Barber, 2009). According to Barber, the ability of the American economy to thrive in the future depends directly upon the nation improving the United States school system. Businesses often turn to other countries to hire employees who are more qualified to fulfill company needs. Since the professional capabilities of teachers immediately impact instruction for students, Barber purported that districts disseminate more funds to learning experiences. In turn, professional development will fortify educator capacity to reach learner needs and to extend student competence.

During tough economical times, districts are left to rely more on internal funding procedures and less on inadequate funding provided by federal and state governments.

School Funding

School finance facilitates public education practices such as teacher professional development, but many educators and the general public are ignorant as to how student achievement is funded (Reyes & Rodriguez, 2004). The trends of public school financing include local property taxes, relying on state constitutional provisions, and referencing state education clauses for broad educational concerns. It stands to reason that educators and community members who are knowledgeable about school financing are better equipped to lead reform efforts for educational programs than those who are not.

The first phase of the history of school finance occurred between the 1960s and early 1970s (Reyes & Rodriguez, 2004). Since properties throughout the nation vary widely in worth, local taxes on assets produced vast inequalities in available educational revenues and school expenditures. Districts that were property poor tended to tax themselves at high rates to better fund school programs. These attempts produced minimal revenues as compared to wealthy districts eliciting more returns with lower tax rates. In 1973, the Texas court case *San Antonio Independent School District v. Rodriguez* emphasized an extreme divergence among financial resources available to districts based upon property value. Despite property-poor districts contesting the constitutionality of funding school programs based on property wealth, the United States Supreme Court ruled that the right to education was not a fundamental privilege that the federal government protected (*San Antonio Independent School District v. Rodriguez*, 1973).

As a result of the ruling in the *San Antonio Independent School District v. Rodriguez* case (1973), educational reformers looked to provisions that state constitutions provided concerning equal protection and specific guarantees in public education (Reyes & Rodriguez, 2004). This second historical wave of school finance lasted from the early 1970s until the 1990s. During this phase, educators focused on fiscal neutrality (Coons, Clune, & Sugarman, 1970, p. 346), the notion that children must not depend on the property values within their community to obtain a worthy educational experience (Reyes & Rodriguez, 2004).

The third wave of school finance reform looked to state education clauses to set the standard concerning broad educational issues (Reyes & Rodriguez, 2004). The state of Kentucky set an example for the rest of the United States in 1989 when it associated the abstract concept of an adequate education with capacities students need to develop (*Rose v. Council for Better Education*, 1989). Accordingly, the abilities include oral and written communication skills; understanding of social, economic, and political systems; awareness of governmental processes; knowledge of mental and physical well-being; and an introduction to the arts. Kentucky mandated expectations for students to demonstrate satisfactory capabilities for life work and sufficient academic and vocational training, allowing learners to compete with pupils in other states (Verstegen, 1998). Thus, Kentucky provided a basis on which educators across the nation can enhance understanding of how adequately the school system serves students.

Currently, school finance and budgeting policies attempt to equalize how districts spend and distribute resources received. These policies aim to spend less money to fund instructional improvement and student achievement amidst tougher educational standards (Reyes & Rodriguez, 2004). Despite a lack of evidence linking decentralization models of campus-based budgeting to more efficient student performance, districts have recently allowed campuses to manage finances. Administrators within decentralized school districts make financial decisions based on policies that are designed to ensure that students experience an adequate education. Reyes and Rodriguez (2004) asserted that when districts experience financial constraints, money ought to be dedicated to cultivating practitioners professionally. This is because educators need to equip students with a quality education so that pupils become highly competent citizens. Though the concept of a sufficient program remains the standard to which current financial policies are upheld, educators reviewing academic programs should remain aware of not equating an adequate education with one that is highly competent.

School Finance Litigation

All 50 states in the nation operate under constitutions that assign financial responsibility for providing students with an adequate education. However, many states delegate much financial authority to local school districts (Dayton & Dupre, 2004). In turn, local districts frequently rely on property and sales taxes to reinforce money the state government provides. Educational activists contend this process for receiving funds for education is unfair. This is because the ability for districts to obtain income varies according to property prices and ultimately from the profits of property taxes within district boundaries. Dayton and Dupre noted that advocates for equal educational opportunities consider the varied ability of school districts to supplement state funds as denying students the opportunity for equal education.

Indeed, Underwood and Sparkman (1991) noted that the rationale for legislators and courts to determine equity in school funding has evolved from a district per pupil basis, into a framework considering costs for special services so that varying populations of students learn successfully. The authors categorized litigation for school funding into three discrete propositions. One appeal was that students receive an inequitable education when living in poorer areas as compared to pupils in more affluent districts, when funding for learning programs is based on property wealth.

State litigation about the fiscal equity of funding student educational programs revolves around the notion that every child has a right to public education. Furthermore, the funding plan for providing pupils with this automatic privilege needs to be reviewed rigorously (Underwood & Sparkman, 1991). Ultimately, the states are responsible for protecting individual rights to an education, but the Supreme Court has supported federal efforts to improve education under the proposal that everyone should practice academic skills that facilitate productively contributing to society and voting knowledgeably. Thus, states must demonstrate systems that fiscally support public education and provide school districts with available resources to reinforce the goals of developing functional societal members.

Underwood and Sparkman (1991) discussed a second perspective of educational equity complaints. The authors noted that states continue to treat students who come from poorer districts differently than peers from wealthier areas. This claim results from the system of educational finance perpetuating students in less wealthy areas receiving deficient financial support compared to more affluent counterparts by refusing to alter funding processes. The United States Supreme Court insisted that school finance programs assess the process for funding schools rationally (*San Antonio School District v. Rodriguez*, 1973). In fact, the Supreme Court determined that students who belong to poor school districts do not represent a class of discriminated people. This is because students receive educational services based upon the fiscal power of the school district, rather than the incomes of students' families.

The third category of controversy concerning educational equity that Underwood and Sparkman (1991) addressed involves courts referencing state constitutions for answers about how to fund educational processes as recorded within state articles. Since state constitutions use different words when discussing education as a fundamental right, state courts draw varying conclusions about how to serve individuals through public educational programs. According to Underwood and Sparkman, state supreme courts generally delegate the tasks of devising, operating, and implementing criteria and procedures related to financial considerations to the legislative branch of government.

Dayton and Dupre (2004) associated the modern era of court cases related to school funding with the Equal Protection Clause. This clause ensures every person the opportunity to an equal education regardless of race, color, or national origin (Alexander & Alexander, 2005). The *Serrano v. Priest* (1971) litigation resulted in courts focusing on three issues related to school funding: education as a fundamental right for all children, the intensity of scrutiny the court applies to school funding, and whether the state should supersede local control and become involved with reviewing individual district educational programs. Thus, the level of scrutiny that the Court applies to cases concerning school funding affected the ruling of *San Antonio Independent School District v. Rodriguez* (1973). Since almost the entire student population in the San Antonio school district lived in property poor homes, the Court did not find student poverty to constitute a deprived class of learners. Additionally, the Court chose not to rule that the amount of money available to school districts directly impacted student educational experiences. Summarily, the Court would not scrutinize the educational system in the San Antonio school district unless it had ruled that a sub population of students was denied the fundamental right to education.

However, in 1979, through *Pauley v. Kelly*, West Virginia began a trend for state supreme courts to be more active in determining academic qualities constituting education as a human fundamental right (Dayton & Dupre, 2004). Kentucky followed in *Rose v. Council for Better Education* (1989). The state specified that the characteristics of an ‘efficient’ school system include a free service that is available to every child, uniform throughout, and monitored for efficiency. Despite court efforts to establish criteria for sufficient public education programs, educators disputed the expertise of the court in terms of mandating public school reform.

States are repeatedly accused of depending too heavily on local school funds when supplementing student educational experiences (Dayton & Dupre, 2004). Even so, courts often fail to recognize that spending sizeable amounts of funds on education affects the quality of academic experiences students receive. Recently, the focus involving educational equity has centered around local districts proving that every child has access to the learning opportunities prescribed by the respective state constitution. According to Dayton and Dupre, courts typically take responsibility for litigation concerning school funding by reviewing educational programs students undergo. Examples of district academic programs that courts have reviewed include curriculum, staff, extracurricular opportunities, and the structural safety of facilities.

More specifically, Thro and Wood (2010) summarized recent school finance litigation from several state supreme courts to emphasize how the courts typically reference subjective text in constitutions. According to Thro and Underwood, courts first distinguish wording in state constitutions to determine if citizens are entitled to an established, equitable system of education, or a quality academic program. In terms of adequacy, a school district in the state of Florida was challenged in *Schroeder v. Palm Beach County* (2008) on the basis that students across various ethnic groups did not receive enough services to equalize chances of graduating. Students and parents of the Palm Beach County school district complained about low graduation rates and imbalances between minority students graduating compared to white pupils. The court ruled that individual school districts were protected from suits because it was up to the Legislature to specify characteristics comprising an ‘adequate education.’ Thus, individual school districts educate students based on the specifications that legislatures deliver.

When courts have concluded that state constitutional texts specify that citizens are entitled to a quality education program, legislatures must demonstrate committing sufficient funding for districts to address the expectations (Thro & Craig, 2010). For example, in *Campbell County v. Wyoming* (2008), the court ruled that the structure of the state finance system was strong enough to assist local districts in meeting the standard of quality that the Legislature set. Therefore, the Wyoming court stopped litigation challenging the funding efforts that the legislature had made in providing students with a quality education.

A ruling in Montana is another example of courts rejecting objections to state school systems (Thro & Craig, 2010). In April 2004, the court gave the legislature responsibility for creating an educational program that protected the cultural integrity of American Indians. Additionally, the court noted that the legislature must equitably fund the educational institutions or initiatives that it prescribed to local school districts. Four years later, in April 2008, the court found that Montana had not met the court demands concerning an equitable funding distribution formula for school districts. However, the court placed the burden on the plaintiffs of proving that the funding formula was unjust. The court listened to the results of a needs assessment study that estimated the costs of funding an adequate education and of closing the achievement gap for American Indian students. Additionally, the court reviewed school district expenses and disaggregated funds that were devoted to providing students with a quality education. It was ruled that the legislature needed to dedicate money to various purposes for improving the state educational system as deemed necessary by cost assessment reports. Recognizing that the populations of Montana school districts were extremely varied and sparse, the court anticipated future equitable funding disputes. Thus, the court stated that the legislature was obligated to equitably support local agencies in meeting state standards, but that individual school districts were responsible for funding initiatives adopted locally.

School finance litigation has occurred publically since the 1970s (Thro & Craig, 2010). The concept that providing students with an education is a fundamental right is one that students, staff, parents, legislators, lawyers, and judges have debated. Based on the recent trend of judicial decisions, constitutional texts will continue to form the basis of courts relinquishing authority when determining whether states provide acceptable funding for established, quality, public education programs.

Components of School Finance

Across the nation, revenues constitute a crucial component of the public education finance system by allowing districts to purchase resources that are needed to improve student achievement. States disseminate money from various taxes as well as fees for licensing and certificates to municipal governments and school districts (Reyes & Rodriguez, 2004). This is especially true in the state of Texas (2010), according to House Bill 1, Article II, Section 1, which lists licensing fees and lottery returns as part of the revenue that is distributed to the state for educational funding. Equalization policies ensure that school districts with lower property values have sufficient funds for supporting education processes. These policies lessen inequalities between property rich and poor districts by obligating the government to finance a minimal basic education for students. Districts that are property poor receive supplemental government funds based inversely on district ability to raise revenue.

In Texas, the state government bases the money available to districts on the minimum level of financing that schools require to provide students with an adequate education. Average daily attendance (ADA) is the typical foundation states use to disburse funds (Reyes & Rodriguez, 2004). Other educational costs the government may support include charges for transporting students and for special education services. The weighted pupils funding formula accounts for extra costs associated with giving students special services that are required to attain a basic education. Additionally, Reyes and Rodriguez discussed that state governments enact a full funding formula when local districts cannot proportionally contribute to the standard balance of local, state, and federal funds sustaining educational programs.

Federal Funding for Education

According to the TEA (2010), in the 2002-2003 school year, the federal government funded 9%, or $5.4 billion, of costs pertaining to educating students in grades kindergarten through 12. The Texas General Appropriations Act (2006) specified that federal monies are distributed to school districts based on specific needs of sub populations of students with special requirements. For instance, in 2009, $2,862,591,541 was allocated to Texas districts to improve education and welfare programs. Examples of such programs included Title 1, special education, and drug free programs. The federal government also contributed $1,411,976,708 to the state so that students who were eligible would receive free breakfasts and lunches. Still, the federal government gave $21,981,350 to the educational system in Texas to be used for programs that assist the needy, such as adult education and teen parenting classes.

As stated previously, Title 1 is a component of federal funds distributed to Texas to better the educational welfare of students. Title I is national legislation otherwise known as Improving the Academic Achievement of the Disadvantaged (United States Department of Education, 2009). It is an amendment to the 1965 Elementary and Secondary Education Act. The purpose of Title I is to ensure that all children have an equal, fair chance to receive a high quality education. According to Title I, resources are distributed to schools and local education agencies (LEAs) having the most need. Additionally, funds support staff development that is delivered to educators in an effort to increase instructional quality.

In 1984, the federal government established the Eisenhower program and reauthorized it through the Improving America's Schools Act of 1994 (United States Department of Education, 2009). This legislation sustains and promotes high-quality professional development activities. Specifically, the Eisenhower legislation focuses on preparing teachers to instruct students in underrepresented populations effectively. In order for districts and state agencies to receive funds from the Eisenhower program, the professional development activities that LEAs and state agencies for higher education (SAHEs) conduct must be aligned with state and local expectations for educational reform. Additionally, the Eisenhower legislation encourages school districts to enlist teachers in making decisions about how educational funds will be used.

As a result of this Eisenhower legislation, states receive funds for education based on a formula that accounts for the number of children in the state between the ages of 5 and 17 (United States Department of Education, 2009). According to the formula, 84 % of Title II Part B funds are distributed to state education agencies (SEAs).

LEAs are then allotted a minimum of 90 % of the funds that SEAs obtain. SAHEs collect the remaining 10 %. SAHEs distribute at least 95 % of the money received through the Eisenhower legislation to institutions of higher education (IHEs) or nonprofit organizations (NPOs) that provide professional development to current or future teachers. Money is primarily awarded to IHEs in the form of competitive grants. The Eisenhower legislation specified an “80/20” rule. This stipulation ensures that each local education agency receiving federal funds for educational purposes devotes at least 80 % of the funds to teacher and administrator professional development at the school level (US DOE, 2009, Section 2210 9). However, districts construe the 80/20 rule differently. For instance, some districts apply the 80/20 rule by supporting professional development opportunities that are planned and developed at the campus level. Still, other districts interpret the rule to support district staff development opportunities that are based on some degree of teacher input. Regardless of how school districts interpret the stipulation for receiving federal educational funds, teachers at the school level must help plan professional development to an extent (US DOE, 2009).

Cost functions assist educators in defining and quantifying various factors that influence the educational process (Imazeki & Reschovsky, 2005). In fact, these formulas provide researchers with the ability to determine how spending per pupil is impacted by student and district characteristics. Algebraically, a cost function formula for school districts represents purchased factors, such as teacher expertise and salaries, related to input factors that are not bought, like compounded student skill levels (Gronberg, Jansen, Taylor, & Booker, accessed April 4, 2010). Gronberg et al., highlighted other components of school district expenditures to include LEA size and characteristics of the student and parent body. When analyzing school expenditures, Imazeki and Reschovsky (2005) iterated that administrators ought to account for interactions between per-pupil spending and student achievement because school district spending decisions directly impact student performance levels.

Researchers evaluating the efficiency of a school district are faced with conceptual conflict (Imazeki & Reshovsky, 2005). Some people might consider a school district to be operating economically if it facilitates students reaching educational goals with limited spending. However, it is difficult to calculate the cost of supporting district educational goals accurately when considering spending that is incurred by factors affecting student achievement. Such factors can include funding academic or social support for students labeled at-risk, those pupils who need counseling, or those without physical or emotional needs met.

Weighted school funding (WSF) is currently used on a national level in an attempt to reform public school funding (Baker, 2009). This approach involves decentralizing school governance and awarding power over budgeting and management to the individual school. With WSF, school leaders and site-based planning teams have more say in how funds are spent. The underlying purpose of WSF is for a district to distribute funds based on school need. Ideally, decentralized government allows for more efficient school processes. Baker studied several school districts in Texas and Ohio and focused on elementary schools in Cincinnati, Cleveland, Columbus, Dallas, Houston, and San Antonio. He determined whether districts employing the WSF elicited better student achievement results as a consequence of varying district resources based on school need as compared to districts not implementing the WSF. He concluded that school districts not employing WSF fared similarly to districts using weighted funding in terms of providing resources to schools with volatile student needs. Thus, districts might focus their study toward determining which governing and budgeting style, centralized or decentralized, better allows for teacher professional learning opportunities that improve student learning efficiently.

Texas School Finance Issues

An exclusive feature of school districts in Texas, as compared to districts in other states, is the Permanent School Fund (PSF) (Imazeki & Reschovsky, 2005). This fund consists of cash and investments, such as stocks, bonds, and real estate. Per the Texas Constitution, the PSF assists public schools because it guarantees financing for public bonds issued through the Available School Fund (ASF). Public school districts must use money from the PSF to construct or repair school buildings or to purchase new equipment and land. If a school district is unable to make its debt payments, the PSF will cover the deficit. When this happens, the indebted school district must proffer state aid to the PSF until the debt is repaid.

This system of financing education is composed of complex formulas that are collectively known as the Foundation School Program (FSP) (Imazeki & Reschovsky, 2005). The FSP consists of three components. First, the foundation formula guarantees that all school districts will obtain a certain amount of financial assistance if they maintain a minimum tax rate. Second, the FSP ensures that districts will receive a fixed amount of money for each cent that property taxes are raised above a minimum and below a maximum rate. Finally, the FSP contains a recapture provision. This stops school districts from raising revenue by forcing them to return to the state all proceeds on property values that exceed the ceiling. The excess funds that are recaptured help finance the FSP and are distributed back to needy districts. The final component of the FSP is known as the Robin Hood system of financing education, because it takes money from wealthy school districts and distributes the funds to those that are more property poor.

In 1993, the Texas Supreme Court established the current system of educational funding (the Robin Hood system) and later upheld the system as constitutional, in 1995 (Imazeki & Reschovsky, 2005). In *Edgewood Independent School District v. Kirby,* over 300 Texas school districts challenged the constitutionality of the school finance system in 2004. The districts argued that many LEAs had inadequate funding due to tax rate ceilings derived from legislature-imposed restrictions on shared state funds. In 2004, Judge John Dietz declared the Robin Hood system unconstitutional.

Currently, property wealthy school districts have five options for equalizing financial constraints experienced due to Robin Hood (Imazeki & Reschovsky, 2005). These districts can consolidate with other districts, detach portions of their territory, purchase attendance credits from the state, contract for education of non-resident students, or merge tax bases with other districts. However, voters must approve the latter three preferences.

Financial Assistance through Grants

School districts sometimes depend on outside sources of funding for professional development. Miles, Odden, and Fermanich, et al. (2003) found that districts accept state and local resources for financial assistance fairly evenly. Approximately 46% of the revenues school districts receive come from the state, 48% is from local sources, and 6% of funds come from the federal government. These authors reviewed districts regionally across the nation and found that the Southwest region, to which Texas belongs, averaged spending 1.1% of its total operating budget on staff development. This amount breaks down further to be approximately $970 per teacher. The region of the United States that spent the most on professional learning was the Southeast. Of the total operating budget, this region spent 2.5%, or $4,090 per teacher, on expenses related to improving instruction.

School districts should vigilantly organize reform efforts and publicize professional development endeavors as essential components of district functioning (Miles, Odden, and Fermanich, et al., 2003). If instructional improvement efforts are not funded permanently and are financed only by awards and grants, districts risk employees perceiving the reforms as less significant than other educational plans.

When educators engage in stimulating staff development, administrators and practitioners need resources related to specific learned initiatives. Teachers might need supplies or resources to reflect practices obtained through professional development. In order to fund reform practices, staff members can seek aid from fiscal sources that lie outside the school district (Mizell, 2003). Identifying grant providers, researching funding requirements, and developing quality proposals is very time intensive. Consequently, Mizell suggested that teachers first turn to individual school budgets to look for assistance with creating educational reform.

In addition to the limited federal funds to which districts have access, individual school personnel can act to derive supplementary monetary assistance for educational needs. Case (2004) suggested that educators seek competitive grants to further educational resource capacity. In addition to federal and state funding grants, corporations, small businesses, and nonprofit organizations offer fiscal opportunities for specific educational endeavors. Administrators and educators should contact state legislators for aid in obtaining particular financial assistance. Such people are aware of existing grant opportunities and can serve as contact points between educators and grant providers. Case warned districts not to consider financial grants a reliable source of income.

Other factors of which educators who are seeking grants need to be aware include timelines associated with funds that districts receive (Case, 2004). This is because some educational grants have stipulations that are attached to money districts receive. Educators risk losing the funds if they work beyond the timeframes specified by the grant. Additionally, Case noted the importance of employees' waiting until the district deposits money that grant providers promise before spending financial resources on supplies and related needs. Consequently, awardees can better ensure that more fiscal strain is not created as the district financial assistance materializes.

Educators who are seeking financial support for academic reforms need to explicitly define the program feature requiring supplementing (Mizell, 2003). When requesting funding, educators need to prepare clear plans that explain why the educational reform is necessary and what results will occur. A request for a grant should articulate how the initiative will be assessed and how the outcome of the implementation will be shared. As Mizell suggested, educators seeking grant approval ought to thoroughly understand and adhere to the rules of the proposal and dedicate efforts to achieving program results.

National and state governments impose performance expectations on educators working to improve student achievement. In terms of raising student performance, state governments influence school districts more than federal governments because states provide LEAs with greater money than national government (Rhim, Hassel, & Redding, 2008). In fact, most states provide half of the functioning revenue that is available to LEAs. The state of Texas receives the funds that it distributes to the LEAS in the form of per pupil expenditure primarily from the General Revenue (GR) funds (TEA, 2010). Revenues from sales tax comprise most, 77%, of GR funds. However, corporate franchise taxes, fuel taxes, natural gas and oil taxes, as well as insurance, utility, and taxes on alcohol and tobacco contribute to the available GR funds.

State governments also motivate schools to increase student standardized test scores through contingent funding. Consequently, SEAs hold LEAs accountable for raising student achievement by publicly disclosing campus performance results. In respect to Rhim, et al., it stands to reason that administrators seeking to improve student achievement strive to find resources supporting professional development that elicits effective achievement scores.

States also give LEAs financial support by supplying fiscal resources for districts to attract and hire educators who are considered talented and qualified (Rhim et al., 2008). The underlying belief behind this practice is that schools considered difficult to staff will attain competent teachers, thus improving student abilities to achieve better test scores. Rhim et al. noted the interrelation among financial support, teacher effort, and continued professional learning for improving education.

> Incentives alone don't make for better gardens, or better schools. Neither do expanded opportunities alone. Nor do efforts to teach new skills in the absence of incentives and opportunities. Behaviors change, for the better, when people are provided incentives, opportunities, and capacity. All three. (p. 275)

In other words, for educators to improve student educational experiences, practitioners must receive the appropriate training, time, and necessary resources to implement professional expertise.

Professional Development

Administrators lead schools in three ways to elicit optimal staff and student learning. Leaders must supervise, evaluate, and professionally develop educators (McQuarrie & Wood, 1991). Often, opportunities for staff development are disjointed from student learning needs. Professional learning sessions are usually discrete workshops involving participants listening passively (McQuarrie & Wood, 1991; Duke, 2008). Generally, facilitators of professional development operate amidst limited fiscal resources. Many districts only plan for direct costs associated with training and disregard preparing for expenditures such as designing, administering, and supervising. This oversight makes it challenging for administrators to connect money spent on staff development with student success directly (Christie, 2009). To complicate the matter, legislators want evidence that the money schools receive is spent properly. The community also demands district reassurance that fiscal contributions are allocated efficiently. Amidst political and community pressures, instructional leaders must maintain a school community that works together and focuses on preparing teachers to meet student needs.

It is necessary to review current professional development practices in an attempt to understand how money spent on teacher training positively impacts student success. The fact that teachers attend training does not mean that instruction is getting better (Duke, 2008). Teachers can alter instructional habits based on training received, but convincing teachers to change classroom behaviors costs school districts significant amounts of money (Hill, 2007). In fact, districts spend approximately three percent of their budgeting expenditures on professional development. Similarly, corporations in America devote two to three percent of their budget to training staff to increase expertise and improve job readiness (Felix, 2006). The National Center for Statistics in Education (NCES) listed the median expense per pupil in average daily attendance during the 2006-2007 school year across the 1,031 public school districts in Texas as $8,398 (2009). For the 4,513,835 students in Texas during the fiscal year of 2007, pupil expenditures composed costs for instruction, instructionally-needed materials and support services. The participating districts in this study spent less than the average amount of expenditures of Texas school districts. In District A, the total operating expenditures per student were $6,652 in 2007-2008 (TEA, 2009). Instructional related services in this district totaled $212.00 per student for that academic year. The overall operating expenditures for District B were $7,463 per student, with $298.00 per student dedicated to services related to instruction. The operating expenses for District C totaled $6,680 per student, and costs for instruction totaled $261.00 per student.

From a national perspective, the National Center for Statistics in Education

(NCES) (2009) recorded that the approximate average total expenditures per state for educational related costs in the United States totaled $11,024,562,289 for the fiscal year of 2006-2007. This amount is well below the average expense related to education in Texas during the same fiscal year, $45,189,025,818. More specifically, the Texas Education Agency (TEA) (2009) documented approximate expenses related to staff development for the three districts included in the present study. District A spent a total $2,017,315 for the 17,000 students in the district, averaging $118.73 per pupil. District B exceeded this amount for staff development. This district channeled $6,354,502 to develop staff serving 26,240 students. In District B, the average cost per student to fund staff development was $241.25. District C devoted $2,470,490 to staff development. This district educated 27,256 students in 2008, and the average cost of staff development per pupil was $90.64. Though all three districts spent less than the $8,398 median amount that school districts in Texas spent per pupil, District B dedicated the most money for staff development (NCES, 2009).

Based on data available from the Academic Excellence Indicator System (AEIS) in 2010, each of the participating districts spent over one thousand dollars per teacher for expenses related to instructional support. In 2009, District A spent $1,432 dollars per teacher to aid instruction. District B spent more than Districts A and C, $3,490 per teacher for similar purposes. During 2009, District C spent $1,101 per teacher for expenses related to instructional support. All three districts spent more than the average cost of $970 per teacher that Miles, Odden, and Fermanich (2003) determined school districts in the Southwest region of the United States dedicated to improving instruction.

Furthermore, the AEIS (2010) provided information about the sources of funds for the districts that participated in this study. The total revenues for District A equaled $7,080 per student. Local taxes provided $3,994 per student. Other local sources constituted $195 per student in income. Business taxes constituted 23.9% of the income, residential tariffs supplied 72.8%, and land fees provided the district with 3.3% of funds. The state provided District A with $2,891 per pupil from the GR, while the federal government supplied the district with $1 for each enrolled learner.

According to the AEIS (2010), the total amount of money received for District B was $7,859 per student. Of this revenue, local taxes supplied the district with $5,181 per pupil, while other local sources provided $179 for each child attending school. Specifically, business taxes comprised 50.3% of the funds, residential taxes constituted 46.8% of the monies, land taxes totaled 2.8%, and other tariffs provided 0.1% of fiscal support for educational costs in the district. The state supplied District B with $2,491 for each learner, and the federal government supplemented costs of education for this district at a rate of $7 per student.

The total revenues for District C for each student were $7,568 per pupil. Local taxes constituted $4,795 per learner, and other local sources provided $574 for each student. For this district, businesses provided 21.8% of the funds, residential taxes supplied 73.0% of the fiscal support for education, land taxes totaled 5.0%, and other local taxes comprised 0.1% of the funds devoted to educational expenses. In District C, the state contributed $2,199 for each child attending school, and the federal government provided $0 for educational related costs per pupil.

Odden and Archibald (2009) provided a framework for recognizing the substantial costs associated with districts' launching a continual staff development program. The authors cautioned that districts typically respond to plans for professional development by appealing for more fiscal resources. This might occur because existing resources need to be alternatively channeled so that districts use them more efficiently.

Districts need to consider multiple resources when creating a professional development plan (Odden & Archibald, 2009). Time from the school calendar is needed to train teachers in full or half days. Educators also need opportunities throughout the regular school day to collaborate with one another. Districts must consider salaries and fees associated with trainers from within or outside the district when planning for resources. Other expenditures school districts need to figure into a cost framework for professional development include employee salaries and fees for instructional coaches. Instructional trainers support professional development effectiveness by assisting participants in incorporating learned practices into the classroom. Still, districts need to recognize expenses pertaining to administering professional development programs in terms of organizing and sustaining the initiative long term. Odden and Archibald maintained that miscellaneous costs also require estimating. Related fees might include refreshments, materials, and reimbursing participants for tuition and conference expenses.

Odden and Archibald (2009) studied the cost per pupil that several large urban districts nationwide spent on professional development. The authors determined that in 2005, 11 large urban districts in Washington and Wisconsin used approximately 450 dollars per learner for intensive staff development that extended throughout the school year. This financial commitment included money for staff to train 10 days throughout the school year, 1 instructional coach per 200 students, and paying the salaries of trainers, including central office staff and outside consultants.

Thus far, this chapter provided an overview of school finance litigation and school expenditures. The following section of the chapter discusses the importance of professional learning. It describes staff training as an investment that districts make towards improving instruction, rather than an unavoidable cost related to systematic functioning. Factors contributing to efficient staff development are identified and teacher roles in implementing learning from professional development are noted. Finally, the following section urges campus leaders to forge a change from static, traditional methods of professional development and guide staff in collaborative, evolving learning efforts to attain campus academic goals.

Educating Educators

Fullan (2007) proposed that educators replace the phrase professional development with professional learning when speaking about enhancing knowledge related to teaching. He contended that fortifying professional knowledge is more about habituating daily efforts to enhance performance and less about discrete workshops or courses to achieve certification. Like Fullan, Randi and Zeichner (2004) acknowledged that jargon such as staff development perpetuates a lack of respect for professional educators among school employees and members outside the educational community. The authors believed that using the term development implies to the community that educators have a perpetual deficit in expertise.

Hirsh and Killion (2009) concurred with this claim and offer multiple principles by which administrators should view and organize professional learning. Instead of considering staff development as in-service, Hirsh and Killion preferred the label professional learning. The authors recommended that school districts restructure school days so that educators engage in professional learning daily. Additionally, Hirsh and Killion stated that school districts need to consider professional learning an investment that capitalizes on collegial expertise. In respect to Hirsh and Killion, administrators need to hold teachers accountable for professional and student learning by promoting collective leadership opportunities.

According to Fullan (2007), professional learning must target enhancing educator performance and abilities to elicit student learning. In doing so, professional development opportunities for educators should be based on continual collaboration with colleagues. Schools sustaining an open, collaborative environment facilitate quality faculty development which leads to better student learning (Sparks, 2009). When developing professionally, teachers and school personnel need to cultivate students as life-long learners. The idea that educators need to collaborate on site when developing expertise contradicts the notion that professional learning in schools leads to academic decline. Schools that are declining academically tend to conduct sporadic, lone in-service programs targeting specific academic concerns. Sparks cautioned districts that when multiple facilitators lead professional learning opportunities, participants are guided inconsistently, ultimately confusing faculty.

Education agencies ought to focus less on incentive pay for motivating teachers to extend professional learning. Instead of tightening certification and qualification systems, SEAs and LEAs need to maximize working conditions that allow school personnel to work collectively (Stigler & Hiebert, 1999). Stigler and Hiebert summarized the importance of personal motivation for professional learning by stating,

> A profession is not created by certificates and censures but by an existence of a substantive body of professional knowledge, as well as a mechanism for improving it, and by a genuine desire of the profession's members to improve their practice. (1999, p. 146)

Summarily, educational agencies need to trust that educators strive to attain the ideal expertise necessary for impacting student achievement. As Stigler and Hiebert noted, the idea that practitioners are self-motivated to improve student and self performance contradicts a behaviorist mentality. National and state government agencies impose a behaviorist mentality upon educators when incentive structures and campus accreditation ratings are tied to practitioners' furthering career knowledge.

Since the 1990s, professional learning opportunities for educators have turned from fortifying teaching skills to higher cognitive processing, critically analyzing research, and actively studying schools as learning environments (Randi & Zeichner, 2004). Indeed, professional learning for teachers is an intangible concept. Teachers are continually internalizing learning through experience in the classroom and meetings with other colleagues. Interestingly, Randi and Zeichner noted that attending professional development might stunt participants from developing scholastically. The authors attributed this possibility to the idea that teachers typically passively receive information about pre-determined topics that do not necessarily relate to participant needs. Randi and Zeichner would consider it ideal for teachers to use professional learning time to enhance knowledge more actively by seeking insight on topics better suited to individual and collaborative circumstances.

Angelides (2002) studied teachers using a collaborative model for professional development. In this model, teachers worked with an expert to evaluate self teaching practices and to implement strategies based on research. This collaborative approach directly impacted student achievement in a positive manner. Through this model, teachers learned information directly relating to classroom situations. Angelides concluded that teachers working in the collaborative model increased individual morale and self efficacy.

In another study connecting teacher efficacy with professional learning, Geer and Morrison (2008) considered how the school culture impacted the effectiveness of professional development. When studying a cohort of middle school science teachers, the authors found that the collective efficacy of a school staff significantly enhanced teacher perspectives of effectiveness. The staff, as a whole, gained self-efficacy when participating in professional development with the purpose of increasing content knowledge. By extension, administrators should capitalize on the reciprocity between individual teachers and the self-efficacy of the school faculty by concentrating professional development efforts on content area knowledge.

The NSDC purported five models of staff development: training, observation, individually guided learning, involvement in a development or improvement program, and inquiry (1999). In terms of the opportunities for educators to collaborate and network with one another, the training model is an efficient form of professional learning. Training ought to entail opportunities for participants to practice skills in a low-risk learning environment. Still, the NSDC considered modeling, demonstrations, and coaching efficient and effective ways to enhance the likelihood that participants will learn from professional training.

Another mode of professional development that the NSDC recommended was observation (NSDC, 1999). Observations often involve participants viewing other teachers demonstrate lessons and coaching partners in refining teaching efforts. Individually-guided professional learning allows teachers to enhance professional duties by engaging in personal quests for improvement while cooperating with mentor coaches. The fourth and fifth models of effective professional development recommended by the NSDC, involvement in a development or improvement process, and inquiry, can be achieved collaboratively or individually. Examples of this professional development include local, regional, or national contexts as educators engage in action research, observations, and assessments. Ultimately, the NSDC reiterated that district and campus administrators should continually support and hold participants accountable for any type of professional development. Administrators can accomplish these tasks by paying instructional coaches to visit with participants and by including evidence of professional learning on educator appraisals.

Characteristics of Effective Professional Development

This section of the paper discusses characteristics of effective professional development and ideal traits of professional learning. Guskey (2002; 1985) defined professional development programs as efforts to change teacher practices within classrooms and to alter practitioner attitudes and beliefs about pupil learning outcomes. He noted that many professional learning opportunities do not actively engage participants in learning, nor do they prepare teachers for the change process. Guskey and Yoon (2009) claimed that professional development delivered in workshop format has an unjust, poor reputation. The authors stated that if workshop content is based on research and participants are actively involved, this learning mode can allow teachers to adapt their learning to the classroom environment.

In light of limited data determining the effectiveness of professional development in raising student achievement, educators should cautiously determine what attributes constitute quality professional development. To date, researchers have not produced substantial evidence positively linking professional development with increased student learning (Guskey & Yoon, 2009). Bellanca (2009) believed that some professional learning sessions operate on multiple misconceptions concerning staff development and teacher expertise. Some of these fallacies include educators as unmotivated to solve challenges. Additionally, education agencies incorrectly assume that teachers search for fast fixes to practical classroom problems, as opposed to striving to help students excel academically. To combat mistaken beliefs about professionally educating teachers, Bellanca suggested that administrators should promote effective professional development by highlighting teachers who apply learning in classrooms. Administrators can celebrate faculty learning by exhibiting photographs, artifacts, and data charts exemplifying student success that result from implemented instructional reform. Another way that Bellanca suggested instructional leaders can support teachers participating in effective professional development is to give educators credit for continued learning if practitioners perpetually apply newly learned skills.

Educational development opportunities should have specific attributes so that student achievement is successfully increased (Guskey, 2002). For instance, professional development should assist teachers in practically applying the information they learn to their work setting. Additionally, staff development facilitators should not try to change educator beliefs and attitudes about a particular concept. This is because professional development leaders tend to assume incorrectly that swaying educator beliefs about instruction will automatically result in practitioners teaching accordingly. Staff development facilitators should resist trying to get participants to accept information and rallying them to enact learning. Instead, learning leaders should present concrete evidence of how the professional development strategies positively impact students. Facilitators will be more likely to cultivate effective professional learning if the information delivered directly relates to challenges educators endure.

There are certain actions that facilitators can take to improve the impact that professional learning has on teacher practices, and ultimately on student learning. The model of teacher change (Guskey, 2002; 1986) is a blueprint that learning leaders can use to plan and deliver effective staff development. According to this model, professional learning situations should concentrate on impacting teacher classroom behaviors. Consequently, changed pedagogical practices will impact student learning outcomes. As student learning improves, teacher beliefs and attitudes adjust accordingly. In fact, practitioners will accept a reform as valid after witnessing positive results in the classroom (Bolster, 1983). Guskey (1985) iterated that higher student learning outcomes encompass multiple tangible and intangible aspects of academic performance. Examples of learning outcomes include increased class participation, improved attitude about school, higher self confidence, and gains on achievement scores.

The model of teacher change (Guskey, 2002; 1986) provides three guidelines for facilitating staff development that successfully impact classroom achievement. First, professional development leaders should recognize that teachers experience change gradually. Therefore, teachers need multiple opportunities to practice with new strategies before feeling that they are adequately complying with what is expected regarding reforms. Thus, administrators might allot time during the work week for teachers to collaborate professionally. However, Guskey mentioned that practitioner anxiety will likely increase as educators learn to comply with new expectations and incorporate different responsibilities into current practices. Still, teachers will vary when interpreting what is supposed to be implemented as a result of professional learning.

Another guideline for conducting effective professional development stemming from the model of teacher change (Guskey, 2002; 1986) is providing participants with regular feedback about progress based on student data. If administrators do not recognize educators for efforts, it is not likely that teachers will continue to work outside comfort zones and try new practices. Thus, it is important that administrators publicly acknowledge how student progress relates to employee acts.

Principals and learning leaders should use student assessments as critical tools for teacher feedback (Guskey, 2002; 1986). Assessment results provide the evidence that administrators need to recognize teachers for changing professional behaviors. Learning facilitators and district leaders can use test scores to defend the need for teachers to continually grow as educators and to justify the impact that professional learning has on learner achievement.

Guskey's (2002; 1986) model of teacher change provided facilitators with a third parameter for conducting effective staff development, one that perpetually assists participants with concepts learned. In order for educators to persist through trials associated with changing based on professional development, facilitators need to support and pressure participants. Pressure motivates teachers to forge ahead despite pains associated with changing, while support gives educators encouragement to succeed amidst anxiety experienced. Essentially, professional development aims to compel teachers to teach better habitually. However, sustaining teacher reform is the stage in changing teacher behavior that most administrators underestimate and undervalue (Loucks-Horsley, Hewson, Love, & Stiles, 1998). Without routinely supporting and pressuring participants to enact professional learning, the instructional improvement process will falter.

Administrators should remain aware of multiple modes for transferring learning that can successfully impact educators' classroom practices. Activities that facilitate teachers complying with professional learning include administrators assigning campus teachers as instructors, while campus administrators themselves guide veteran teachers (Bellanca, 2009). Administrators should protect and enforce regular grade-level planning time while holding teachers accountable for practices that reflect professional learning, by noting compliance in annual reviews. Additionally, Bellanca stated that principals can motivate teachers to internalize professional learning. Participants will take ownership for learning if allowed to present evidence of the impact on student performance to the school, community, or audiences at professional conferences. Bellanca suggested that another activity campus administrators can implement to promote effective professional development is encouraging teachers to research and publish results that the program initiative has on student success.

There are steps that professional development facilitators can take to help ensure that professional learning opportunities educators experience effectively elicit improved student achievement. All facilitators and participants should critically assess and evaluate professional development opportunities (Guskey & Yoon, 2009). Facilitators should plan for professional learning to follow a collaborative goal with measurable outcomes (Bellanca, 2009). The learning activities for teachers need to include assessment tools and a timeline for implementing the practices in the classroom. Professional development leaders should set up a library of professional materials that informs staff about concepts related to the reform. Additionally, Bellanca stated that facilitators ought to conduct continual sharing sessions allowing teachers to discuss new ideas and obtain solutions for challenges encountered. According to Bellanca, for staff development to be effective, leaders should always encourage participants to take responsibility for leading colleagues in reform efforts while voicing concerns, issues, and potential solutions.

Participants in staff development are responsible for furthering the effectiveness of professional development. Learning leaders should hold practitioners accountable for incorporating strategies in classrooms that come from professional learning and that elicit student success (Guskey & Yoon, 2009). According to the authors, facilitators and participants need to move away from relying on circumstantial, narrative claims describing success with instructional innovations and look to student data as evidence of successful instructional reform.

Furthermore, participants of professional development should engage in systematic and continual learning opportunities (Odden & Archibald, 2009). In order to obtain improved pupil achievement, educators should receive training to analyze and interpret student assessment data in order to adapt instructional practices accordingly. The authors discussed three resources that must accompany professional learning in order for educators to implement learning successfully. Such accommodations include setting aside days from the school calendar to train staff, funds for trainers to assist teachers with instruction on an on-going basis, and time for educators to collaborate.

Odden and Archibald (2009) specified features of professional development that successfully impact student progress. Accordingly, professional development should have a specific form, such as a study group, teacher network, or curriculum committee that is based on the campus. The time educators spend improving instruction should be continual and total between 100 and 200 hours a year. Professional learning activities should include instructional coaches who assist teachers in directly applying required techniques in the classroom. Odden and Archibald described a concluding characteristic of effective professional development as tightened alignment between what participants learn to incorporate into teaching, federal, state, and local goals, as well as content, evaluation, and performance standards.

Though Odden and Archibald (2009) included site-based team approaches as optimal forms of staff development, Guskey and Yoon (2009) might hesitate to concur. Guskey and Yoon reviewed over 1,300 staff development programs for effectiveness. The authors determined that no valid or scientifically-based conclusion links peer coaching, collaboration, or professional learning with increased student achievement. However, Yoon, Duncan, Lee, Scarloss, and Shapley (2007) cautioned that the credibility of the research design for many of the studies about professional development might influence the conclusions. The authors noted that professional learning programs that aim to change teacher behavior have less of an impact on student learning than staff learning situations that emphasize developing teacher knowledge and skills related to curricular demands. Yoon et al. iterated that for studies about the characteristics of staff development that impact student achievement to be valid, the research must connect professional learning with teacher growth and use of new skills to student knowledge. Secondly, the results of the research must authentically represent what the author claims to discover.

Principles of Quality Professional Development

Principles of effective staff development differ from characteristics of quality professional learning because principles offer moral guidelines for implementing staff development. The United States Department of Education (US DOE) specified principles of which professional development for educators should consist so that optimal student learning results (2009). Accordingly, professional development should facilitate educators adapting professional tasks to serve a population of students that constantly changes. Professional development should assist teachers with guiding students to achieve higher learning and development. Training for educators to grow professionally needs to address thorough content strategies and skills for organizing job-related responsibilities so that school employees competently perform duties.

Specifically, high quality professional development consists of multiple ideals. Per the US DOE (2009), professional development for educators recognizes teachers as crucial components in student learning experiences. Simultaneously, professional training should respect and guide other members of the school community who impact learner achievement. Professional development should aim to incorporate individual, collegial, and organizational improvement in the broad scope of improving student performance. The most current research and best known practices of teaching, learning, and leadership ought to be employed in professional development. While honing educator expertise, professional development should promote continuous organizational improvement by way of a flexible, extended plan. Finally, the US DOE stated that high quality professional development needs to synthesize participants and facilitators collaboratively planning and evaluating content, delivery, and the effectiveness of the training.

The NSDC classified standards for facilitators to follow when teaching educators, into three categories: context, process, and content (2009). All three components of professional standards for enhancing teacher knowledge aim to improve learning for all students. Context standards for developing staff include aligning intents of educating adults and students in the learning communities with district and state educational goals. By extension, facilitators of professional development should capitalize on the expertise of campus and district personnel by providing cooperative learning contexts for faculty to work together to advance instruction. To facilitate collaborative adult learning situations, educators need access to materials and resources related to staff training.

In terms of process standards, administrators and facilitators should use disaggregated student data to select the type of professional development that teachers experience (NSDC, 2009). District and campus leaders must guide educators in collaboratively using data to prioritize student needs, monitor student success, and set goals for continually improving curricular programs. The NSDC asserted that professional development should lead educators in employing research-based strategies for enhancing human learning. Overall, the process for educating school personnel should be collaborative, based on evidence, designed to stimulate human learning, and utilize data results to evaluate and make changes to curricular programs.

The third standard for professional development involves content (NSDC, 2009). The NSDC expects staff learning to consistently nurture all members of the learning community and to hold staff accountable for attaining high academic achievement. As a result of professional development, the NSDC purports that educators should meet student needs through expert teaching and assessment practices. The content of staff learning should develop participants as partners in the educational process with student families and community stakeholders.

The Effectiveness of Professional Development

For instructional change to result in improved student learning, teachers must take risks by trying out new strategies learned through professional development (Kent, 2004). The success of staff development initiatives eliciting higher student achievement relies on teachers' changing pedagogical beliefs (Hirsh & Killion, 2009). Typically, it is difficult for teachers to willingly try new practices because practitioners are generally not as enthusiastic about reforms as the learning facilitators. Thus, administrators should tie reform efforts to campus goals (Kent, 2004). It is more likely that the instructional reform efforts will be successful when the connections between the expected, new practices are apparently aligned with school goals, because all staff will identify with the purpose of the initiative. Since it is the classroom teacher who ultimately controls student learning experiences, educators are morally bound to incorporate new instructional strategies acquired through professional development within their teaching. Thus, Kent purported that instructional initiatives should involve entire faculties working collaboratively to support one another in solving challenges that individuals experience when implementing learning.

Additionally, the effectiveness of a professional reform effort stems from teacher commitment to change (Kent, 2004). Educators need to appreciate that learning is a continual process for all. Teachers must accept responsibility for changing and adapting classroom environments accordingly. It stands to reason that when instructional leaders learn more, students will achieve better. Thus, professional learning is a conduit for improving classroom instructional practices.

It is important for administrators and facilitators of professional development to recognize that teachers are adult learners who experience learning in a multi-faceted way. Learning leaders should ensure that the training teachers experience extends beyond behavioral skills (Theriot & Tice, 2009). Thus, professional learning leaders need to consider participants as complex thinkers who filter new learning based on prior conceptions.

Wedman and Robinson (1988) determined that educators who participate in professional learning that highlights practical instructional strategies for the classroom maintain positive opinions regarding the effectiveness of staff development. The research participants in the authors' study conferred with one another regularly and supported each other in implementing instructional reform. This fact supports the recurring idea that collaborative professional development is critical to practitioners' successfully implementing instructional reform.

The case study that Theriot and Tice (2009) performed elicited two findings regarding teacher beliefs based on professional learning and instruction. The authors found that teacher beliefs and practices about instructing students are often inconsistent. According to Theriot and Tice, teachers filter perceptions concerning teaching practices based on personal experiences and routines. To help participants understand how the instructional initiative applies to student learning, facilitators should disseminate the philosophical framework of the pedagogical reform to teachers. In this way, educators have a theoretical base to reference when implementing professional learning in the classroom.

The results of the study by Theriot and Tice (2009) directly apply to administrators' selecting, implementing, and evaluating staff development for teachers. This is because the findings demonstrate that teachers are susceptible to skewed interpretations of how authentically professional learning is transferred to the classroom. Learning leaders should remember that, according to Theriot and Tice, teachers do not necessarily teach skills competently upon completing professional learning.

Administrators should remain aware that participants might view how professional learning is incorporated into classrooms hypocritically. Corcoran, Felman, and Belcher (2001) found that participants superficially focused on research-based practices while prioritizing evidence that supported existing practices. Thus, practitioners might claim concern with research and evidence-based practices when actually seeking literature that proves personal practices are correct. The authors cautioned administrators about overly relying on school-based staff development in the interest of connecting learning to the campus context. Corcoran, Fuhrman, and Belcher found that simply relating staff learning to problems that schools experience does not make educators implement professional development more effectively.

Brown, Morehead, and Smith (2008) reinforced that educators struggle to comply with requirements imposed by external political forces amidst teacher desire to hone personal characteristics. Teachers continually try to excel despite societal and political perceptions about quality teaching that contradict one another. The authors noted that on one hand, practitioners conclude that people who are patient and nurturing towards children are effective teachers. In contrast, political leaders have taken steps to ensure that teachers are deemed highly qualified as determined by credits that education agencies distribute based on ongoing hours of professional learning.

The idea that personality affects teacher professional effectiveness and competency deserves further attention in regard to how professional development elicits a positive impact in the classroom. Professional learning aiming to change teacher behavior is subject to participant personality factors (Guskey, 1985). Guskey studied how teachers associated professional learning with the ability to impact learner success. He found that master teachers were more likely to associate teaching behaviors with classroom effectiveness, as opposed to less experienced instructors attributing ability to personality traits. He determined that master teachers valued learning effective teaching behaviors in professional development. This is because these practitioners had previously experienced a link between changed teaching practices and student success. By extension, administrators should realize that participants who associate personality with effective teaching might resist instructional change more than master teachers.

Engstrom and Danielson (2006) studied teachers participating in staff development that required participants to work collectively. The researchers reviewed lesson artifacts, interviews, and teacher writing samples. Engstrom and Danielson concluded that participants responded positively to professional learning when interacting with colleagues amidst a shared sense of community. Participants prioritized time to work with one another as a resource lacking in typical professional development experiences. Additionally, Engstrom and Danielson (2006) recommended that district officials design group professional development sessions in a systematic, continual manner. This finding transmits to professional development that is based in schools. Thus, for educators to implement learning effectively, administrators and facilitators need to give teachers time to collaborate perpetually about learning initiatives.

Instructional reform does not necessarily occur once district and campus administrators plan and enact quality professional learning opportunities. Instructional leaders must still hold teachers accountable for using evidence-based teaching techniques learned during staff development. Additionally, facilitators and administrators should determine what support participants need to incorporate professional learning into teaching routines. The following portion of this chapter discusses how leaders of instructional change sustain instructional improvement resulting from professional learning.

Eliciting Change from Professional Development

District leaders trying to elicit changed teaching practices as a result of professional development need to ensure that practitioners understand and align taught curriculum (Downey, Steffy, Poston, & English, 2009). District leaders should follow several parameters concerning curricular development and acknowledge that participants will likely experience three phases of change. According to Downey et al., first, leaders must hold teachers accountable for implementing research-based instructional practices. Administrators overseeing professional learning opportunities are responsible for keeping track of all employees who attend development and for monitoring that training faculty helps students. Second, it is important that administrators publicly acknowledge the curricular competencies for which participants will be accountable. Finally, participants should experience differentiated professional learning related to curriculum goals. The authors cautioned that for an accurate assessment of teachers incorporating professional learning into the classroom, administrators need to allow at least six months for faculty to adjust to and implement the expectations.

Downey et al. (2009) concurred with Hall and Hord (2006/2001; 1987) that administrators must recognize that educators will adjust to new professional responsibilities and knowledge learned from staff development to varying degrees. However, the researchers differed when interpreting how participants incorporate professional learning and instructional reform. Downey et al. (2009) determined that participants adapt to change in three stages: apprentice, professional, and expert. Administrators should assign mentors to teachers in the apprentice level who will collaborate with faculty to facilitate success. Teachers in the apprentice stage also need information that specifically relates to the context of the reform effort. Ideally, Downey et al. noted, principals reduce work constraints of apprentice teachers to allow time for internalizing learning. Learning leaders can help teachers in the professional phase successfully reform practices by giving teachers time to personally reflect on and interact with others resourcefully. Expert teachers also need administrators to provide time to work with colleagues. Administrators should profit from expert teachers' capabilities and have master teachers lead in-service and follow-up sessions that support collegial learning. Differently, Hall and Hord (2006/2001; 1987) categorized participants using a reform according to levels as opposed to three stages.

Administrators should recognize that campus faculty will internalize and react to professional development by incorporating learning from staff development into classrooms to varying degrees. Hall and Hord (2006/2001; 1987) described the behaviors that educators exhibit during a reform effort as levels of use (LoU). The authors stated that administrators must rely on interviews with faculty to categorize staff as users or nonusers of the implementation. As interviewers, administrators receive training that prepares them to ask staff guiding questions concerning how teachers use the innovation. During the interview, Hall and Hord stated that administrators first determine whether the staff member is incorporating the implementation in the classroom. Based on the concerns the interviewee expresses, the administrator classifies the individual into one of eight LoU categories.

The levels that describe how participants implement a reform include nonuse, orientation, preparation, mechanical use, routine, refinement, integration, and renewal

(Hall & Hord, 2006/2001; 1987). A faculty member who does not have knowledge of or involvement in the innovation and does not try to implement the instructional reform is a level zero nonuser. Levels one and two are the orientation and preparation stages. These phases also describe nonusers; however, orientation and preparation stages indicate that faculty are advancing to the user phase. Administrators need to determine which educators constitute nonusers. In this way, instructional leaders can provide such people with the resources needed to help them use the innovation, such as mentor coaches, instructional supplies, or time to observe others who are implementing the reform effectively. Thus, administrators with an active knowledge of the LoU (Hall & Hord, 2006/2001; 1987) can support staff in effectively incorporating instructional innovations into teaching routines.

The user category consists of stages called mechanical, routine, refinement, integration, and renewal (Hall & Hord, 2006/2001; 1987). Levels three and four are collectively labeled mechanical, routine, and refinement. These levels represent individuals who habitually incorporate learned strategies. People within these stages include instructional innovations daily, without extensive planning or reflecting. Individuals in the routine use category are not working to improve or refine the impact that students experience as a result of staff development. Hall and Hord noted that once teachers integrate the innovation into teaching, they seek other colleagues with whom they can collaborate and extend the effects of the innovation. Individuals in the renewal stage continually critique the reform and look for ways to enhance the effect it has on student learning.

So that principals do not prematurely abandon professional learning for reform efforts, administrators need realistic expectations regarding what changes in classroom instruction to expect from participants. District and campus administrators should plan to witness recurring actions as practitioners undergo professional development concerning a reform (Elmore & City, 2007). Initially, principals will witness noticeable improvements in classroom practices based upon teacher learning. Following preliminary advancement, instructional improvement will stabilize or regress. However, Elmore and City reiterated that administrators need to persist through declines in progress because enhancements will follow again. Throughout this process, administrators should offer practitioners continual support and opportunities to collaborate with colleagues concerning professional learning.

Educators will require time to adapt, adjust, and incorporate practices from professional learning in classrooms. When progress from professional learning wanes, administrators should guide staff in making collaborative adjustments based on assessments and observational forms of evidence (Elmore & City, 2007). Accordingly, Elmore and City (2007, p. 28) wrote “Improvement, after all, is learning.” Thus, with a supportive work environment and leaders vigilantly enforcing school-based, collegial learning, student achievement should improve.

In addition to recognizing and respecting various degrees to which practitioners implement professional learning, administrators should evaluate professional development opportunities aiming to increase student achievement. Learning leaders have a critical responsibility in sustaining effective professional development (Zepeda, 1999). District and campus administrators can evaluate many aspects of a professional development program. For instance, learning leaders can judge professional development according to how efficiently and effectively participants learn the content that is taught and how teaching practices improve consequently. Additionally, Zepeda recommended that principals review how professional learning opportunities meet the needs of the school, individual educators, and campus- or district-based goals. Administrators need to agree with participants as to how professional learning will be evaluated. Ultimately, professional learning situations should specifically focus on impacting student learning experiences positively.

Principals also need to collect data related to the professional learning opportunities and ensuing student scores (Zepeda, 1999). Upon organizing, collecting, and analyzing student progress that connects to professional development practitioners undertake, principals need to publicize outcomes of student learning. According to Zepeda, district officials who are directly linked to professional learning should review student assessment results related to the initiative. In this way, the people who develop and implement professional learning opportunities can adjust and plan programs as needed.

As leaders of the district and school, administrators guide teachers towards continual professional learning that ultimately enhances classroom instruction that students receive (Zepeda, 1999). District and campus leaders must understand what attributes constitute quality professional development to ensure that staff experience appropriate learning. It is also important for leaders to guide teachers in resolving challenges regarding implementing professional learning in classrooms. Thus, students are more likely to experience improved instruction because teachers can persevere through struggles associated with trying new instructional techniques. Administrators should review teacher progress in implementing professional learning realistically. Zepeda noted that when leaders expect teachers to develop cyclically, administrators will be less likely to prematurely abandon instructional improvement efforts. Finally, Zepeda asserted that administrators should use student achievement results to evaluate professional learning and to provide teachers with feedback concerning how practitioner efforts and pupil outcomes coincide with district and campus educational goals.

Conclusion

Administrators indirectly influence student learning in classrooms. The knowledge and authority that district and campus leaders hold over professional learning potentially impact the school community in a substantial way. District and campus learning leaders need to align educational resources with educational goals. Additionally, learning leaders must re-align district funds so that participants trade traditional, discrete staff development sessions for more site-based, continual, and collaborative learning sessions.

As organizational leaders, principals and campus officials are forced to make budgetary decisions for professional development that fall within government and district parameters. This chapter discussed three means by which national and state governments disperse funds to school districts, including ADA, Title 1, and the Eisenhower Program. The author recommended that school districts direct more money to teaching teachers classroom instructional strategies in the core content areas, as opposed to training educators in elective content.

Over the last two decades, the educational community has shifted the purpose of professional development. Formerly, teachers were trained with teaching skills for classrooms. Currently, staff development facilitators provide teachers with research about higher cognitive processing and lead educators in critically analyzing research.

Presently, administrators should use The model of teacher change (Guskey, 2002; 1986) as a basis for viewing professional development trends. This model allows teachers to better interpret progress made towards demonstrating learning from professional development sessions since change is viewed as gradual and requiring continuous feedback. Additionally, this model suggests that district leaders repeatedly support staff in professional learning endeavors with fiscal, tangible, and non-tangible resources. Finally, to successfully elicit improved student achievement, administrators should base professional learning opportunities on student data in terms of context, process, and curricular content areas that need developing.

Since educators incorporate professional learning into classrooms to varying degrees, administrators must vigilantly determine individual concerns staff have that inhibit teachers from fully implementing learned knowledge. In this way, principals can assess what resources will help teachers successfully use professional learning to increase student success. Learning leaders need to capitalize on the collective insight that is available within school communities to enhance instruction for staff and students. After all, educators do not efficaciously operate and learn in a vacuum, and public schools are not isolated entities. Thus, administrators should facilitate routine opportunities for colleagues to share expertise, while organizing school environments that cultivate perpetual growth for all learners.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

This dissertation study used a mixed methods research design. Accordingly, data were collected and reviewed both qualitatively and quantitatively, constituting a triangulation of data. By combining instruments and analyses, multiple sources about district procedures and perspectives provided insight regarding the funding and effectiveness of staff development programs in three school districts (Gall, Gall, & Borg, 2007). District officials from three local education agencies, the chief financial officers, the assistant superintendents of curriculum and instruction/learner services, and the directors of professional development, participated in the study. All teachers in the three school districts completed a teacher questionnaire.

The study described the processes for funding, implementing, and evaluating professional development through process diagrams (Corbin & Strauss, 1990). Although teacher participants qualitatively ranked their perspectives concerning the effectiveness of the district-funded professional development, collected data were quantified with nonparametric tests. The mode of teacher responses was determined, and such results were compared across the three participating school districts. Thus, I interviewed administrative personnel who were responsible for funding and implementing district professional learning programs. Additionally, district teachers were surveyed about their knowledge of funding for staff development and viewpoints of effective practices.

The present study answered the following research questions:

1. In what ways do three Texas school districts fund professional development for instructional improvement?

2. How do three Texas school districts use funds to develop staff professionally?
3. What are teachers' views on the effectiveness of staff development in three Texas school districts?

I pursued the answers to the questions descriptively. Thus, district processes for funding professional development were delineated and interpreted (Gall, Gall, & Borg, 2007). Questions 1 and 2 were examined qualitatively through interviews. This process allowed participants to respond openly about district practices and procedures associated with funding and implementing professional development programs. An electronic questionnaire was used to answer Question 3. Quantitative measures were used to describe how participants in the three school districts compared in terms of knowledge about resources needed for staff development and demonstrating professional learning. Comparisons across districts were based on three characteristics of teacher participants: years of teaching experience, degree attained, and grade level taught.

Research Participants

This study was descriptive; therefore, no experimental group was involved. The districts involved with this study constituted a convenient sample (Gall, Gall, & Borg, 2007). Each participating school district was located in north Texas. All three school districts were publicly funded and served students of both genders and various ethnicities, such as Caucasian, Hispanic, African American, and Asian/Pacific Islander. In these districts, students attended school in grades Pre-kindergarten through 12. Each of the participating districts educated students in regular and special education classrooms, gifted and talented programs, and Bilingual or English as a Second-Language (ESL) settings. All three districts served some students who received free or reduced lunches. The school districts all publicly acknowledged the importance of adults and students engaging in life-long learning.

Administrators

For the purposes of answering the research questions, three school districts in north Texas gave permission to solicit information from selected administrators and teachers. Individual interviews were conducted with personnel who worked directly with district funding and staff development processes. These individuals were solicited for individual interviews because professional responsibilities directly aligned with the purpose of the current study. Therefore, the district chief financial officer, the assistant superintendent of learner services/ curriculum and instruction, as well as the district directors for professional development, were asked to participate in the interviews.

District administrators who served as interviewees were of both genders. The administrative participants from District A included one male and two females. Administrators interviewed from District B also included one male and two females. As with the previous districts, one interviewee from District C was male and two were females.

Teacher Participants

Teachers of all grades and subject areas were asked to respond to the electronic questionnaire concerning perspectives about the impact that resources had on implementing professional learning and the effectiveness of staff development. Instructors in the three school districts varied in average years of teaching experience.

Since the number of years instructors have taught positively impacts pedagogical practices (Cheung, 2006; VanTassel-Baska, Feng, MacFarlane, et al., 2008), teaching experience was expected to impact how practitioners implemented professional learning in teaching practices. Therefore, Table 3.1 highlights the average years of teaching experience for districts participating in the present study. This table reflects available information from the Academic Excellence Indicator System (AEIS) (TEA, 2010). An overview of district teacher characteristics for the school year prior to the study was included so that hypotheses could be drawn regarding the potential pool of participants and their perceptions about the effectiveness of staff development in 2009-2010.

Table 3.1

2008-2009 District Teachers and Average Years of Experience

District	Total Teachers	Average Years of Experience
A	1, 167	10.3
B	1, 821	9.0
C	2,243	7.9

Another characteristic that varied per district was the degree of education that teachers had attained. When teachers furthered their education by achieving additional college degrees, they engaged in professional development. I believed that teachers with advanced college degrees had a positive teacher attitude toward professional development and a predisposition to seeking and applying new professional learning. For this reason, the number of teachers holding specific degrees per district for the 2008 – 2009 school year was summarized. However, Cheung (2006) and Mitchell and Hegde (2007) did not associate teacher levels of education with a statistically significant influence on student learning. The information for teacher level of education by district was compiled in Table 3.2 (TEA, 2010).

Table 3.2

The Degree of Education Held by Teachers per District in 2008-2009

District	Total Teachers	No Degree	Bachelors	Masters	Doctorate
A	1, 167	0	882	274	10
B	1, 821	7	1, 373	433	9
C	2,243	1	1, 757	478	8

A broad range of participants provided insight on funding, implementing, and monitoring the effectiveness of the educational phenomena known as teacher development programs. Three methodological instruments, two structured interview scripts and a teacher questionnaire, were the tools for answering the questions in the current study. The instruments used in this study are described in the following section.

Instruments

Interview Scripts

Interviews with the district chief financial officers were based on a script consisting of five questions (Appendix A). The questions were developed with the help of the doctoral committee chair. In addition, an administrator from District B, who did not participate in the research, was asked to offer suggestions for clarifying information included in the administrative interview scripts. The purpose of the interviews was to understand the sources of funding for district staff development programs and the procedures districts followed when fiscally supporting teacher learning. Standardized, semi-structured interview questions regulated the inquiries with which each respondent was prompted (Gall, Gall, & Borg, 2007).

Separate interview scripts (Appendices B and C) that varied slightly from the former, guided questions for the assistant superintendents for learner services/curriculum and instruction and the directors of professional development. The scripts for interviewing these administrators were identical and were composed of six questions. As with the first interview script, a structured interview format guided dialogue with the administrators. The questions for the interviews were developed with the assistance of the doctoral committee chair and were created to elicit information directly related to the purpose of this study. Again, the central administrator from District B was solicited for insight concerning the interview script, further validating the questions before the interviews. Through the interviews with the assistant superintendents and directors of professional development, district processes for implementing staff development and for holding teachers accountable for using new professional knowledge to impact student learning were described.

Teacher Questionnaire

I developed a survey instrument called District Opportunities for Staff Development (DOSD; Appendix D), to elicit practitioner perspectives about knowledge concerning district funding constraints for staff development and the effectiveness of professional learning experienced. The questionnaire consisted of three demographic inquiries and 12 questions. The queries regarded teacher perspectives about the impact that the availability of resources had on teachers implementing pedagogical strategies learned in staff development and the degree to which professional learning impacted student achievement. Questions on the DOSD were also designed to ascertain educator opinions of professional learning that assists with improving student outcomes. Context and process standards from the National Staff Development Council (NSDC) provided the foundation from which the questions were developed. Specifically, survey questions pertaining to resources recognized the NSDC (2009) position that districts must provide educators with adequate resources for both supporting and sustaining adult learning. The inquiries regarding participants' professional learning experiences adhered to NSDC claims that staff development should employ research-based learning strategies, reference data to guide program goals, and incorporate procedures to evaluate adult and student progress.

To maximize efficiency and clarity, the 15 questions were revised based on the suggestions of the doctoral committee chair, a group of teacher experts, and the insight from a district administrator participating in the present study. The teacher questionnaire was field tested before electronically distributing it to participants to enhance its reliability and validity (Gall, Gall, & Borg, 2007). During the field test, a cohort of teachers from various grade levels voluntarily answered the survey and recommended changes for enhancing the clarity of questions. The field test participants were employees of school districts other than those participating in the current study. The suggestions of the pilot study participants, teacher experts, district administrator, and doctoral committee chair contributed to the finalized survey instrument.

Procedure

The process of gathering data for this dissertation study took two months and occurred during the middle of the 2009 – 2010 school year. The procedure for the study consisted of seven separate and one combined interview with people in three district administrative roles within the participating school districts. Axial codes (Strauss & Corbin, 1990) were determined to focus the interviewer mentally as the dialogue occurred. For the interviews with the district chief financial officers, several axial codes were anticipated to arise. These codes included funding processes; sources of funding; financial constraints involved with planning, implementing, and evaluating staff development; dividing resources for professional learning among the district; and measures the district took to evaluate the effectiveness of staff development.

Axial codes that developed through interviews with the assistant superintendent of learner services and the director of professional development differed from those with the district chief financial officers. The axial codes for the interviews with the former included types of professional development the districts offered, district goals for staff development, challenges associated with planning and implementing staff development for teachers, and evidence proving teachers learned from staff development. Other codes that emerged from dialogues included teacher accountability for professional learning in classrooms and how central office evaluated the impact of professional development.

Since two interviewees requested access to interview questions prior to meeting, all administrative participants received interview transcripts two weeks before scheduled interviews. Interviews occurred in participants' offices. Some interviews lasted approximately 20 minutes, while other interviews continued for an hour and a half. The interviews were recorded with participant permission, and the script guided the interviewer. Within 72 hours of conducting the interview, participants received transcribed proceedings of the dialogue. Thus, participants had an electronic opportunity to review, contest, or supplement, any of the responses provided. Providing interviewees with a copy of their remarks validated the interview process by confirming the validity and accuracy of recorded replies (Gall, Gall, & Borg, 2007).

The procedure for gathering data to determine teacher perspectives about resources for staff development and how effectively the funded staff development programs helped teachers impact student learning differed by district. For District A, I e-mailed all teachers on each campus to explain the purpose of the study and inform potential respondents of assurances, while soliciting participation. The e-mail contained a hyperlink that directly connected teachers to the DOSD.

District B required individual campus principals to approve the research before teachers were contacted to participate. This district stipulated that approval forms signed by building administrators were necessary. Hence, once principals provided consent for staff to participate in the questionnaire, campus principals in District B signed a form approving the research. I contacted all teachers in the eight campuses with an e-mail that contained the same components teachers in District A received.

Participants in District C were contacted differently from those in the other districts. For District C, the assistant superintendent of learner services forwarded an electronic message to all teachers that she created to solicit staff participation based on information I provided. Again, the message contained a description and purpose of the study, an electronic letter of research consent, and a hyperlink connecting teachers to the Web-based questionnaire. Teachers in all three districts received an electronic reminder directly from me three days before the survey window closed.

Data Collection

Data were collected through key informant interviews, or meetings with people who possessed particular knowledge of district processes (Gall, Gall, & Borg, 2007). The interviews occurred during December 2009 and January 2010. Interviewees included the district chief financial officers, the assistant superintendent for learner services/curriculum and instruction, and the directors of professional development. Participants answered questions pertaining to district processes and practices involved with funding and implementing staff development, as well as holding teachers accountable for demonstrating learning from professional education. By interviewing the administrative personnel through open response questions, employees could respond more freely than with pre-contrived answer options. Thus, it was more likely answers had richer data than if responses were elicited through guided parameters (Fowler, 1993).

Teacher participants received a hyperlink that corresponded to the DOSD questionnaire associated with respective school districts. The link directed participants to an electronic survey (Appendix D) created through a Web-based survey provider to collect teacher perspectives regarding district staff development programs. Survey instruments were identical for the three districts, with the exception of a separate numerical code. This code allowed for categorizing participant responses by school district. Teachers in all three districts received the hyperlink in late January 2010. Participants were given two weeks to respond to the questionnaire. The survey was expected to require teachers approximately ten minutes to complete, according to the field testers.

In the survey, teachers were asked to rate perspectives concerning resources for staff development and opinions regarding the effectiveness of professional learning in eliciting improved student progress. Gall, Gall, and Borg (2007) suggested that researchers use Likert scales to capture participant ranks of agreement concerning numbered queries. Thus, participants in this study answered five questions using a Likert scale consisting of four options, including *high, satisfactory, limited, and none*. The DOSD exercised four ranking options so that participants positively or negatively identified with questions. In this way, respondents did not have the opportunity to remain neutral as in surveys consisting of three or five provided options (Fowler, 1993). Participants answered the remaining questions on the DOSD by selecting multiple choices. In several instances, teachers chose the *other* answer option and offered information that did not conform to responses provided on the questionnaire.

Data Analysis

I qualitatively reviewed the data derived from the nine individual interviews to answer Questions 1 and 2.

Research Question 1: In what ways do three Texas school districts fund professional development for instructional improvement?

Research Question 2: How do three Texas school districts use funds to develop staff professionally?

Transcripts from the interviews were coded by hand and patterns within administrator responses were determined. Additionally, repeated concepts in participant responses signified links in district processes for funding, implementing, and monitoring the effect of professional learning on student outcomes. Axial phrases, or verbal patterns alluding to affinities regarding how districts funded staff development practices, were grouped into two main categories: budgeting and allocating resources (Strauss & Corbin, 1990; Grbich, 2007). All recurring ideas were identified according to an organizational paradigm concerning how participating districts funded staff developing professionally. Thus, codes were categorized according to the features of the paradigm including conditions, phenomenon, context, actions, and consequences. Finally, the phrases were incorporated into process diagrams.

Links were found among the processes districts had for funding, implementing, and monitoring the effect that professional learning had on student outcomes based on teachers implementing new learning. Three overarching concepts evolved from the transcriptions concerning staff development. Therefore, planning, implementing, and evaluating staff development constituted the phenomena for which the organizational paradigms were based (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). The components of the paradigm were then used to create process diagrams for individual phenomena. Such diagrams are discussed in more detail in the following chapter.

More specifically, the interviews with administrators allowed for topological review of the district systems for funding and developing staff professionally. In this way, patterns were linked among administrator insight concerning the processes for each district function in an abstract manner (Strauss & Corbin, 1990; Glaser & Strauss, 1967). Data analysis of interviews followed Glaser and Strauss' (1967) grounded theory. Hence, theories about the processes districts used to fund, plan, implement, and evaluate staff development programs were developed inductively. Initially, similarities were found within participant responses on a general level. Once ideas that were non-relevant were removed from consideration, concepts were filtered into a list that was more exclusive to the research questions.

Data collected to answer Question 3 underwent qualitative and quantitative review.

Research Question 3: What are teachers' views on the effectiveness of staff development in three Texas school districts?

Data were reviewed from a macro to a micro perspective. Initially, the data were cross tabulated (Faherty, 2008) for descriptive frequencies of responses among the teacher population as a whole. Then, participant answers were analyzed by demographic variables, including educational degree attained, grade range taught, and years of teaching experience. The tendencies of respondents to answer questions in a particular manner were reviewed by district through chi-square tests (Faherty, 2008). In this way, it became apparent if teachers in a particular district were significantly more likely to respond to survey questions in a certain manner as opposed to teachers in the other districts.

Parametric tests determined the mode among the teacher responses from the participating districts, when answering each question. Gall, Gall, and Borg (2007) suggested using parametric tests to examine data that are not homogeneous. This is because data that veer slightly from the mean do not significantly affect parametric values. The variance in teacher populations from the three districts was distributed normally in terms of degrees held, grade ranges taught, and teacher years of experience.

However, Gall, Gall, and Borg (2007) suggested strengthening analytic conclusions by using a nonparametric statistical test in addition to parametric analyses. Since the questionnaire employed categorical or rank scores to gauge teacher viewpoints, the mode of discrete answer options was calculated. The discontinuous participant responses showed teacher perspectives about staff development in three districts, while considering years of teaching experience, degree of education attained, and grade levels taught. Additionally, the chi-square analyses run on the questionnaire determined if teacher perspectives varied among the three school districts based on demographic variables.

Methodological Challenges

According to Bryant (2004), three methodological challenges result from descriptive studies chronicling educational processes within a set geographical location. These trials include gathering enough data to answer the questions, organizing the quantity of data resulting from a thorough investigation, and interpreting the information collected. The following paragraphs briefly describe the organization of the present study amidst the stated challenges.

Sources of Data

The methodological plan for this research ensured that an appropriate amount of data was collected in several ways. First, participating administrators from each district were asked five or six questions that focused on the research queries. In this way, excessive information that was not related to the study purpose did not risk the efficiency and authenticity of the interview analysis (Miles & Huberman, 1994). Also, a large population of potential participants, approximately 5,000, received the survey. Thus, it was likely that a credible amount of respondents, as characterized by Fowler (1993), participated, further solidifying survey reliability.

Organizing Data

In order to organize the data collected, participating districts received a letter and numerical code for the purposes of accurately and anonymously filing transcriptions of the interview responses. The codes represented each interview taping within districts. Letters represented the specific job title for each interviewee and numbers corresponded to districts. Copies of the transcription were stored electronically on a hard drive and memory stick.

The data collected through the teacher questionnaire were contained and protected electronically by pass code via an account with the Web-based survey provider. Response information was formatted in Excel spreadsheets. At the conclusion of the study, all data related to taped interviews will remain locked in a safe for three years. The electronic information and analyses pertaining to interviews and questionnaires will be stored electronically and will stay protected by pass code for three years. After three years, all paper data and electronic documents pertaining to this study will be destroyed or erased.

Interpreting Data

When qualitatively interpreting the interview transcripts, I remained aware of recurring codes that arose within responses. Authors Strauss and Corbin (1990) provided a framework for identifying themes or patterns that emerge when coding. In the initial review of data, patterns directly relating to the research questions materialized. Then, continued analysis of participant responses facilitated sub-codes emerging. Finally, connections between administrator responses and research questions were made.

This process repeated for the DOSD when interpreting open responses from teachers among the participating districts. Quantitatively, the mode of participant responses within the cooperating districts based on teaching experience and grade level assignment, were determined. Numerical values represented rating choices for the purpose of the nonparametric statistical analyses. Accordingly, responses marked as *high* denoted a value of 4, *satisfactory* translated to 3, *limited* represented 2, and *none* equated to 1.

Summary

The present study employed a mixed methods approach to substantiate conclusions gleaned from descriptive processes (Gall, Gall, & Borg, 2007). Data obtained were gathered from three school districts in north Texas. Within the participating districts, information came from several sources, including various administrators and general practitioners. In addition to collecting data from multiple origins, reviews of participant responses occurred qualitatively. Parametric and nonparametric tests reinforced qualitative measures for analyzing information that was collected. Accordingly, the modes of participant responses to the questionnaire were determined. A chi-square test determined if respondents from specific school districts varied significantly from other districts in terms of demographic variables. When alpha levels indicated a number less than .05, the Cramer's V value was reviewed to determine the significance of a relationship between variables and responses.

In the current chapter, it became apparent that outcome models were constructed based on collected information. Additionally, plans for excelling with descriptive research despite common methodological challenges noted by Bryant (2004) are included. Details concerning obtaining enough data, organizing information that was collected, and interpreting data that were acquired qualitatively, are provided. In Chapter 4, data are analyzed and results are reported.

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS

This dissertation study examined sources of funding that three school districts in north Texas used when developing staff professionally. The ways that the participating districts planned to develop staff, as well as how professional learning was implemented and evaluated based on the fiscal resources available, were described. Finally, teacher views of the effectiveness of staff development experienced within districts were elicited and analyzed. The research aimed to improve student learning by examining how districts bettered teacher practices, and how administrators held teachers accountable for professional growth that the school districts funded.

The following questions framed the research:

1. In what ways do three Texas school districts fund professional development for instructional improvement?
2. How do three Texas school districts use funds to develop staff professionally?
3. What are teachers' views on the effectiveness of staff development in three Texas school districts?

Findings from Participants

Administrators

Since the present study was descriptive, no experimental group was involved. The participants were solicited to participate based on professional duties. Nine central office administrators participated in the study. To answer Question one, the chief financial officer from each district responded to prompts during a semi-structured interview. The questions used in the interviews are included in Appendix A. The chief financial officers represented public school districts in north Texas serving between

18,000 and 36,000 students. Each interviewee was responsible for budgeting and allocating funds that supported school district programs, such as staff development. The chief financial officers were asked five identical questions so that I could understand the sources of funding and the procedures that the participating districts followed when funding staff development.

Like Question 1, Question 2 was answered through semi-structured interviews (Appendices B and C). The purpose of the interviews was to determine processes that three districts followed when developing staff professionally and holding teachers accountable for related growth. Interviewees were solicited based on their positional title in each district. The participants included the assistant superintendents of learner services and the directors of professional development in the three, participating school districts. The interviews occurred between the six administrators from district offices and me. Each interviewee answered six, open-ended questions pertaining to the types of professional development teachers in their respective district experienced. Commonalities in the interviewee responses are discussed at length in the data analysis portion of this chapter.

Teachers

Teachers of all grade levels and content areas from the school districts involved in the current study were asked to answer a District Opportunities for Staff Development (DOSD) questionnaire, eliciting practitioner perspectives about the effectiveness of staff development experienced. Across the three districts, a total of 29% (*n* = 1,162) of 3,940 teachers who were solicited chose to respond. According to Fowler (1993), this response rate represents a strong rate of return. Thus, the conclusions drawn when analyzing the data that were collected were strengthened.

Considering the response rate more specifically, 39% (*n* = 467) of teachers in District A participated in the study. Teachers from all campuses in District A were asked to participate in the questionnaire. The participants potentially included teachers from 15 elementary schools (Grades PreK-6), 3 middle schools (Grades 7-8), 1 freshman center (Grade 9), 1 high school (Grades 10-12), and 1 special achievement center (K-12). Originally, 9% (*n* = 43) of the individuals who began the survey did not complete it.

District B comprised the smallest number of teacher participants (*n* = 340). This is because permission to survey teachers was obtained on an individual campus basis. Of the 36 schools requested to participate, I received permission to contact faculty from eight campus principals. So, one primary school (Grades K-2), two elementary schools (Grades K-5), one intermediate school (Grades 3-5), one middle school (Grades 6-8), two high schools (Grades 9-12), and one college preparatory school (Grades 9-12), comprised the potential teacher participants from District B. Of the 340 teachers who were solicited to answer the survey, 51% (*n* = 172) answered it entirely. A small percentage, 5.5% (*n* = 10), opened the survey hyperlink, but chose not to complete the questionnaire.

District C contained the largest potential pool of teacher participants. In this district, 2,400 instructors from all campuses were asked to complete the teacher questionnaire. Therefore, the teachers who participated were from 28 elementary schools (Grades K-5), 9 middle schools (Grades 6-8), 6 high schools, (Grades 9-12), and 4 special program centers (Grades 9-12). A total of 22% (*n* = 526) of teachers answered the entire survey. Originally, 10.1% (n = 59) teachers began the questionnaire, but did not complete it.

Table 4.1 describes the demographics of the participants by district in terms of grade levels taught, degree of education attained, and years of teaching experience.

Table 4.1

Ranges of Grades Taught by Participating Teachers by District

Demographic Variable	A *n*	% of District	B *n*	% of District	C *n*	% of District
Grade range						
Pre-K – 4	249	49.3	57	31.5	222	28.7
5 – 8	149	29.5	36	19.9	154	26.9
9 – 12	107	21.2	88	48.6	197	34.4
Degree held						
Bachelor's	321	63.9	115	63.5	329	57.6
Master's	173	34.5	64	35.4	234	41.0
Doctorate	8	1.6	2	1.1	8	1.4
Years of experience						
1 -5	118	23.2	52	28.6	160	28.0
6 10	123	24.2	40	22.0	188	32.9
11 - 15	104	20.5	34	18.7	102	17.8
16 - 20	57	11.2	17	9.3	54	9.4
21 -25	40	7.9	20	11.0	36	6.3
26 - 30	37	7.3	10	5.5	20	3.5
31 -45	29	5.7	9	4.9	12	2.1

In District A, 49.3% of teacher respondents (*n* = 249) taught Grades Pre-kindergarten through 4, 29.5% (*n* = 149) taught Grades 5 through 8, and 21.2% (*n* = 107) taught Grades 9-12. The table shows that 31.3% (*n* = 53) of teacher participants in District B taught pre-kindergarten through grade 4, 20.3% (*n* = 37) taught Grades 5 through 8, and 48.4% (*n* = 88) taught Grades 9 through 12. Of the teachers who responded in District C, 38.7% (*n* = 222) taught Grades Pre-kindergarten through 4, 27.0% (*n* = 155) taught Grades 5 through 8, and 34.3% (*n* = 197) taught Grades 9 through 12.

The degree of education participating teachers attained by school district is also listed in Table 4.1. In District A, 1.6% (*n* = 8) of the teacher responders had earned a doctorate, 34.5% (*n* = 173) had a master's degree, and more than half, 63.9% (*n* = 321), had a bachelor's degree. The levels of educational achievement for participants in District B were similar to those in District A. Of the 172 teachers who answered the survey in District B, 1.1% (*n* = 2) held a doctoral degree, 34.5% (*n* = 64) earned a master's degree, and 63.5% (*n* = 115) had a bachelor's degree. Like District A, District C demonstrated 8 participants (1.4%) having attained a doctorate. A slightly higher amount, 41.0% (*n* = 234), had earned a master's degree in District C, as compared to Districts A and B. In District C, 57.6% (*n* = 329) had a bachelor's degree.

Table 4.1 also illustrates the differences in years of teaching experience for respondents in terms of district. Teacher experience by district is depicted as a range of years. In all three districts, fewer than five participants answered as having taught less than one year, or more than 30. Hence, these categories did not meet the criteria for performing a chi-square test since at least one district contained less than five responses (Faherty, 2008). Therefore, participant outputs for years of experience were grouped by ranges consisting of five years, with the exception of years exceeding 31. District A had the fewest participants, 23.2% (*n* = 118), with five years or less of teaching experience and the most respondents with greater than 31 years, 5.7% (*n* = 29). Participants in District B with five years or less of teaching background totaled 28.6% (*n* = 52). Of the respondents, 4.9% (*n* = 9) had taught at least 31 years. In District C, 28.0% (*n* = 160) of teachers who responded had taught five years or less, and 2.1% (*n* = 12), had 31 years of experience or more. Summarily, respondents from Districts A and B tended to answer questions based on slightly more years of teaching experience as compared to teachers from District C.

The demographics of teacher participants were potentially altered by a technological glitch with the questionnaire. Approximately one week after the response window opened, a participant informed me that he or she was unable to progress past the first page of the DOSD that prompted responses to demographic information. Therefore, I contacted technology support for the electronic survey employed in the present study. It was determined that teachers had to round their years of experience to the nearest whole number for the survey to accept the input. Upon learning this, I edited the survey format to include such specifications in the directions. In District A, .09% (*n* = 46) of the people who began the survey did not answer all inquiries. Of the respondents who began the survey in District B, .06% (*n* = 10) did not complete it entirely. In District C, 10% (*n* = 59) people began answering the demographic inquiries but did not complete the rest of the survey. It was possible that the technological glitch deterred individuals who began the questionnaire but did not complete the questions following the background queries.

Data Collection and Analysis

Interviews

Funding Professional Development Programs

Information that was collected to answer Question 1, *In what ways do three Texas school districts fund staff development*, was comparatively analyzed (Strauss & Corbin, 1990; Anselm & Strauss, 1967). Therefore, interviews with the chief financial officers from the school districts participating in this study were reviewed for conceptual categories that evolved. I coded interview material by hand using Glaser and Strauss' (1967, p. 114) grounded theory. According to Glaser and Strauss, grounded theory involves working inductively with abstract information in a planned way so that underlying uniformities are used to create theories about data.

Following the grounded theory process (Strauss & Corbin, 1990, Glaser & Strauss, 1967), each transcript was read in its entirety, line by line, three times. During this series of actions, notes were made comparing and questioning responses that arose when reading the transcripts. Next, the data were reviewed to determine general ideas that emerged. Strauss and Corbin (1990) labeled overarching thoughts that evolve from reviewing data as concepts or basic units of analysis. The concepts elicited from analyzing data were clustered more discriminately based on the phenomenon to which they pertained. Categories were named according to the aspect they represented. The following table (Table 4.2) demonstrates the phenomenological concepts that emerged when coding.

Table 4.2

Concepts Related to Funding Staff Development

Concept	Meaning
Access	The opportunity districts provide departments and campuses to have professional learning goals funded.
Allocation	How the district distributes financial support for educational programs
Constraints	Bureaucratic as well as financial barriers that constrict district ability to fund staff development
Data	Information about student enrollment and student achievement
Discretion	District coordinator and campus principal freedom to spend resources when developing staff professionally
District Goals	Basis of all funded staff development
Expenditures	Costs school districts encounter to operate and function
Identified needs	Critical to financially supporting staff development efforts
Investment	District perception of funding professional development
Reasonableness	Checking district expenditures on staff development with those of neighboring districts
Requests	Programs and resources related to staff development that district departments and campuses wish to have funded
Resources	Tangible and intangible needs related to training staff, such as time to plan, materials, and money to pay for substitutes who replace teachers attending staff development
Sacrifice	Some departments in the district relinquishing resources so that other departments have what is needed
Sources	From where districts receive money

Strauss and Corbin (1990) define change in grounded theory as altered conditions eliciting specific actions and interactions executed to obtain intended results in terms of the phenomenon studied. Similarly, the process of funding staff development for school districts results in programs that are supported by fiscal resources and in a larger sense, professionally competent staff. According to Strauss and Corbin (1990), change has properties that constitute its shape, form, and character. Thus, the range of impact characteristics of changing conditions have on the outcome of the process for funding staff development is measureable in an abstract sense. The following change property diagram (Strauss & Corbin, 1990, p. 150) shows conditions that affected how districts funded staff development in the three north Texas school districts participating in the present study (Figure 4.1).

Funding Sources →	*Change Property* →	*Dimensional Range*
Federal and state grants	Occurrence	Planned
Local property tax	Ability to control	High
Student attendance/enrollment	Degree of impact	Great

Figure 4.1. A diagram depicting sources of funding for school districts when developing staff professionally. Based on change property diagrams (Corbin & Strauss,1990, p. 150).

The process districts used to fund staff development was dependent on conditions that affected fiscal resources. Therefore, a change property diagram (Strauss & Corbin, 1990, p. 150) was created to reflect how varying factors affected how staff development was supported financially (Figure 4.2). Strauss and Corbin acknowledged the need to recognize subcategories within conditions that alter processes. When analyzing the interview transcripts to determine the actions that funded staff development, three conditions emerged. The subcategories illustrated the breadth and range to which the process of funding staff development was affected by external and internal factors. The components included funding sources, fiscal constraints, and accountability for money spent.

All three of the districts that participated in this study relied on federal and state grants to supplement money used for support programs such as staff development. This was planned income that each district depended on to support functioning costs. It was a set amount of money determined by the state formula. The property tax rate also allowed school districts some ability to financially supplement staff development programs. However, according to state mandate, tax fees were capped to limit citizens in voting to raise rates too high. Extremely high tax rates would have allowed some school districts to derive more money than districts with lower property taxes, potentially creating inequities among the educational experiences provided among neighboring districts.

Student enrollment was another factor that greatly impacted the amount of money districts received from the state to support educational program needs. Districts could not control enrollment numbers, but school attendance rates greatly impacted how local education agencies functioned since districts received state fiscal supplements on a per pupil basis.

The state limited the three participating school districts in the ability to raise money to support needs within educational programs, such as professionally developing staff. This legislative restriction hindered districts supplementing a pool of financial resources. All three districts acknowledged that funding staff development typically required spending money to hire substitutes for teachers who were developing expertise during school hours. Since each district was limited in raising funds to support educational programs, the amount of money district departments received to develop staff was also impacted.

Funding Constraints →	*Change Property* →	*Dimensional Range*
Legislature forces districts to lower taxes	Building funds	High
Paying for substitutes	Ability to control	Medium
Restricted amount departments receive for staff development	Degree of impact	Great
Difficult to identify elements of quality staff development	Direction	Downward
Wants exceed resources	Scope	Wide

Figure 4.2. A diagram that depicts funding constraints school districts encounter when developing staff professionally based on change property diagrams (Strauss & Corbin, 1990, p. 150).

Districts had to identify elements of quality staff development programs when financing professional growth. Maintaining a current knowledge base of research-based practices for staff development equipped districts to lead employees in delivering the type of educational experiences students were expected to receive. However, the ability of districts to determine the effectiveness of the funded professional development imposed a barrier on the practice of fiscally supporting staff learning because additional money was needed to carry out the task. Another financial constraint when funding staff development in school districts was that administrators' desires to develop staff continuously and in creative, innovative ways were expensive and exceeded resources available.

Figure 4.3 addresses factors affecting the degree of accountability district finance departments can associate with funds spent on developing staff expertise. The direction and degree of control pertaining to aspects that influence district liability for fiscal resources for staff development are noted. The factors described constitute direct and indirect measures of accountability for funds spent.

Accountability for Money Spent on Staff Development →	*Change Property* →	*Dimensional Range*
Campuses have equal access to funds needed	Ability to control	Medium
Money spent tied to district goals	Occurrence	Planned
Student performance correlates with expenditures	Degree of impact	Great
Reasonableness of expenditures compared to other similar districts	Direction	Forward

Figure 4.3. A diagram showing school district considerations when developing staff professionally. Based on Strauss and Corbin (1990, p. 150).

For Question 1, professional development was viewed in terms of the district and campus levels in the three districts studied. Each district ensured that campuses had equal access to funds that were needed to develop staff. Campuses had a moderate ability to control the way faculty developed based on the allotted money the district provided. All three districts routinely checked to determine that every professional learning program planned for the district related to pre-determined district educational goals. Benchmark and standardized tests were analyzed yearly to show that student academic progress directly related to the money spent on teacher development for planned initiatives. The degree of student performance greatly impacted district decisions to continue or stop professional development foci.

Though all chief financial officers discussed checking the reasonableness of district spending on professional development compared to other local agencies, District B particularly emphasized this practice. The participant in District B iterated the importance of spending money to support district goals. Specifically, the interviewee stated,

> Unfortunately, the world is out-running us. We may be twice as good as we were five years ago. Unfortunately, the world is five times more complex. So, just getting twice as good every five years isn't good enough. So, that's probably one of the biggest challenges of staff development in general. And because the need for more rapid, more developed, more intense staff development is so clear, the ability to increase the resources for it are just as important. (M.H, personal communication, December 14, 2009)

Since developing staff professionally was a recognized, valued mission that the district believed would assist in progressing schools forward, efforts to develop staff received more financial resources as compared to other functions and departments in the district. Student achievement data, as well as expenses of districts in the state that were comparable in size, justified the reasonableness of resources that District B spent on staff development.

After categorizing concepts that emerged from the transcripts of interviews with the chief financial officers, two overarching questions pertained to the grouped ideas. One question that developed as a result of the repeated, line-by-line analysis (Strauss & Corbin, 1990) of the interview transcripts included wondering how money was distributed to campuses for staff development purposes. Another query arose, concerning how districts budgeted the money available for developing staff professionally.

The next step in the process of analyzing the data taken from the interviews was categorizing the concepts based on the paradigm for conceptualizing stages or phases offered by Strauss and Corbin (1990). These phases included the conditions of the phenomenon, the phenomenon, the context of the actions, specific actions within the phenomenon, and related consequences. From this paradigm of concepts, two underlying components became apparent in driving the funding of district staff development programs: budgeting and allocating resources. Thus, changing conditions within the phenomenon of funding the development of district staff professionally were budgeting for related needs and allocating fiscal resources equitably throughout the district.

According to Strauss and Corbin (1990), analyzing a course of actions, such as funding staff development efforts within a school district, entails events and the ensuing consequences evolving amidst changing conditions. The process diagram was created using grounded theory (Strauss & Corbin, 1990) and was the basis of district actions related to funding staff development programs. This diagram was chosen to depict the process of funding staff development because it shows that, over time, conditions and consequential actions for circumstances impacted the phenomenon studied. The phenomenon was affected because as time progressed, people adapted purposeful actions in order to meet the desired goal. Figure 4.4 illustrates the process diagram (Strauss & Corbin, 1990) as it related to funding staff development in school districts.

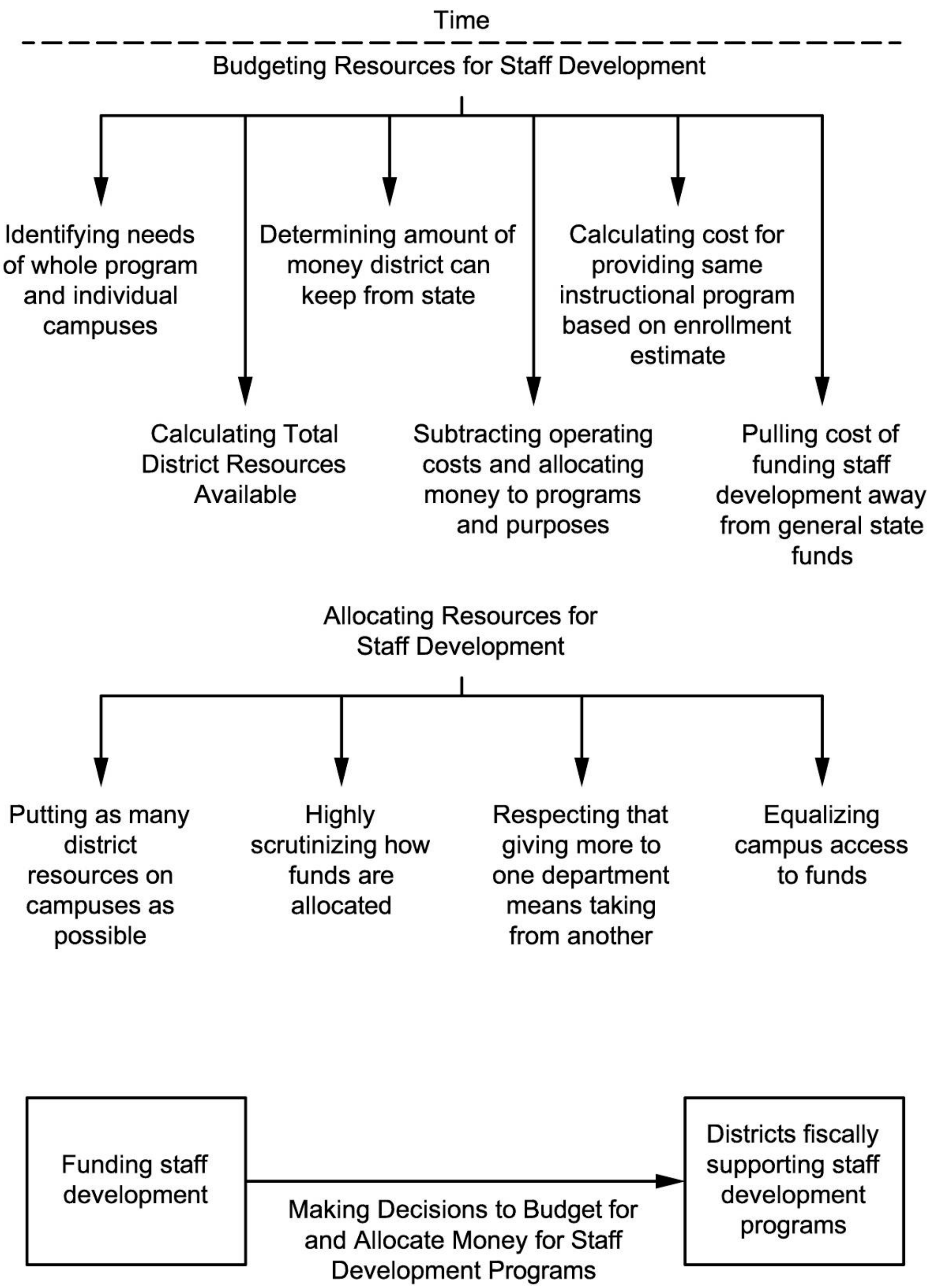

Figure 4.4. A diagram illustrating how school districts fund staff development (Strauss & Corbin, 1990, p. 145).

Figure 4.4 shows the process districts used when funding staff development.

Over the course of a school year, the process involved budgeting for staff development.

By extension, those in charge of financing staff development, such as chief financial officers, directors of staff development on a district level, and campus principals from the campus level, first determined the professional needs of the staff. After staff needs were identified, the total district resources available were calculated. Thus, the amount of money that the district was able to retain from the state was known. Administrators determined the amount of money left after district operating costs were considered and other programs received financial allocation. Then, the cost of providing the same instructional program to students based on enrollment numbers was figured. Finally, the expense of supporting district staff development programs was pulled away from the general educational funds that the state provided.

The second changing condition in the process of funding staff development was allocating money for district staff development programs. This condition impacted the degree to which districts fiscally supported staff development because administrators maximized how efficiently staff received support for developing professionally. When allocating money for staff development, the districts put as many resources at campuses as possible, as opposed to housing personnel like instructional coaches in central office. Thus, travel time for instructional coaches was reduced as proximity to teachers who needed help implementing the funded staff development initiatives increased. District personnel, including the superintendent, chief financial officers, assistant superintendents, and directors of departments scrutinized spending. In this way, district officials ensured that staff development expenses aligned with district goals and purposes.

When allocating fiscal support for staff development, districts continually respected that a fixed amount of resources was available. So, district personnel repeatedly considered that providing the staff development department with more resources meant that another department in the district received less financial support. Throughout the process of funding staff development, all school districts tracked spending to ensure that campuses had access to funded resources. While the changing conditions of budgeting and allocating resources were occurring throughout the school year, personnel perpetually decided how to plan for and reinforce staff development programs. Consequently, the district reached its desired goal, providing fiscal support necessary to develop staff professionally.

Question 2. *How do three Texas school districts use funds to develop staff professionally?*

The process that was used in collecting and analyzing data for Question 2 was similar to the actions used in Question 1. Again, I transcribed the interviews with the assistant superintendents for curriculum and instruction and the directors of staff development in the school districts participating in the study. Interviewees received transcriptions from the interview within three days of collecting data. Since interviewees reviewed and approved the transcripts, it was determined that the manuscripts accurately contained what participants had intended to convey. Once the recorded dialogues were approved, the transcriptions were coded by hand using Anselm and Strauss' grounded theory (1967).

True to grounded theory (Anselm & Strauss, 1967; Strauss & Corbin, 1990), each transcript was read in its entirety, line by line, several times while considering the second research question. During this process, notes were made regarding repetitious thoughts or linked phrases that arose amidst interview dialogues. When data were compared and analyzed, several questions developed. These questions included which staff experienced professional development, how the districts created goals for staff development, how staff development experiences were planned, and what challenges were associated with developing staff professionally. Questions also formed that pertained to district expectations for participants implementing learning from staff development experienced into teaching practices. Related questions included how staff development opportunities were evaluated, what follow-up to staff development occurred, what constituted evidence of staff developing professionally, and how staff were held accountable for learning. From there, general ideas emerged from the data. Strauss and Corbin (1990) labeled these overarching thoughts as concepts or basic units of analyses.

Planning Professional Development Programs

The concepts that materialized from coding interview transcripts with respect to Question 2 were grouped based on the phenomenon to which they pertained (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). Then, the categories were named in a manner that represented the phenomenon. Table 4.3 shows the concepts related to planning staff development that emerged when coding the interview transcripts.

Table 4.3

Concepts Related to Planning Staff Development

Concept	Meaning
Characteristics of high quality staff development	Employing researched-based strategies and attending to the needs of adult learners
Data-driven decisions	Using student assessment data and teacher feedback to choose types and determine the impact professional learning has on student achievement
Origin	Created for district or campus
Persons responsible	Those whose ensured that professional learning was implemented and occurred: district leaders; campus leaders; practitioners
Purposes	Aligning learning initiatives with district strategic plans
Time	Maximizing efficiency of trainings; giving scheduling priority to student academic needs
Types of staff development	Government- vs. District-Mandated; Formats

Table 4.3 shows seven main factors that districts considered when planning development experiences for staff. State and local mandates regarding the instructional foci teachers should address when teaching were acknowledged in addition to the format for staff learning that would be employed. Examples of some of the formats the districts utilized included collaborative studies, individual action research, presentation style trainings, mentor and mentees working together, and on-line courses. District coordinators and campus administrators also considered where trainings would occur. Factors that influenced these decisions included logistical arrangements when trying to accommodate as many staff as possible, and how to get the most value for money spent. Administrators from the districts also emphasized that planning to develop staff

involved directly linking professional learning experiences with district goals for improvement.

Other concepts that emerged through coding and that related to plans for developing staff were noting characteristics of quality staff development experiences and by extension, meeting the needs of adult learners. Districts accommodated adult learners by ensuring teachers experienced collaborative, engaging learning that allowed some personal choice in what and how content was learned. Additionally, the planning stage of staff development involved deciding who was responsible for facilitating staff learning experiences. An underlying category of thought that emerged when coding information that pertained to planning staff development experiences was using data to drive decisions. The participating districts routinely analyzed district benchmark and standardized assessment data to decide what type of learning staff should experience.

Since developing staff professionally was a planned process that school districts purposefully encountered in order to elicit a desired result, improved teacher expertise, grounded theory (Strauss & Corbin, 1990; Anselm & Strauss, 1967) was referenced. Like the method for funding staff development, the way staff were developed professionally was subject to changing conditions that affected how districts achieved the goal. As in Question 1, the dynamic characteristics of change in developing staff involved properties such as shape, form, and character. Thus, the change property diagram (Figure 4.5) shows challenging conditions that affected the process that districts participating in this research used when planning to develop staff professionally.

Challenges Associated With Planning Staff Development	*Change Property*	*Dimensional Range*
Communicating purpose across departments	Scope	Wide
District emphasizing the value of staff development	Direction	Forward
Invisible barrier on district expense	Scope	Wide
Limited time to train teachers	Occurrence	Planned
Balancing managerial tasks and visioning component	Degree of impact	Small

Figure 4.5. A diagram depicting challenges associated with district plans to develop staff professionally. Based on Strauss & Corbin (1990, p. 150).

As indicated in Figure 4.5, the interviewees reported that it was difficult to consistently communicate the purpose of staff development to multiple departments in the district. It was important that all teacher participants knew that central office personnel expected on-going professional learning to occur. Interviewees from each district emphasized that the success of professional learning initiatives was greatly affected by the respect that personnel publically maintained for teachers to continually develop.

During one interview, a participant from District B focused on the invisible barrier that districts encountered when planning expenses for staff development programs. This participant noted that the societal and bureaucratic perceptions of what constituted an acceptable amount of money to spend on staff development restricted district planning efforts. For instance, the participant stated,

> I came from corporate America and most of the businesses that I had relationships with, especially in developing businesses, the idea of spending one percent of your total gross revenue on research and development would be laughed at. For the type of institution we are, a fluid, changing, academic environment, the amount of money we spend on staff development relative to our total costs is infinitely small. (M.H., personal communications, December 14, 2009)

By extension, more staff development would have been planned in the district if increased spending on staff development was more accepted.

Still another challenge that affected district plans for staff development was time involved with training. Due to participant time constraints involving personal and family obligations, teachers were better able to attend professional learning during school hours. Furthermore, teachers were less receptive mentally to learning after working all day and then attending professional development. So, in making decisions about when to develop staff professionally, districts planned learning during regular school hours. One director of staff development offered insight about time as a challenge associated with the position that restricted plans to develop staff. This was because a lack of time forced directors to balance managerial tasks involved with planning staff development. The interviewee discussed personally balancing managerial versus visionary tasks related to serving as director of staff development.

> This is the challenge of a director of staff development. Having done the job now for about ten years, the director of staff development job could easily be about management. It could easily be about scheduling rooms, and people completing surveys, and about food, because you've got to feed people, you know, and water bottles. It could easily be about all of the management kinds of things and the calendar of staff development, but you really have to learn in this job how to delegate that if you can, or to find a way to compact that. Because, the director of staff development job is really about leading the learning. It's really about trying to stay a step ahead of people. Thinking about how adults learn and how do I design learning for adults, just like I designed learning for kids in my classroom so that they'll take it back and implement it. (L.C., personal communication, January 5, 2010)

Thus, examples of duties that directors balanced included scheduling learning sessions, accommodating adult learners, and balancing visionary plans for ideal programs while operating under restricted conditions, like limited resources.

Data from the interviews were analyzed by categorizing the concepts based on the paradigm for conceptualizing stages or phases offered by Strauss and Corbin (1990). Strauss and Corbin's process diagram (p.145) was chosen as a basis for illustrating how events that resulted in a consequence unfolded over time.

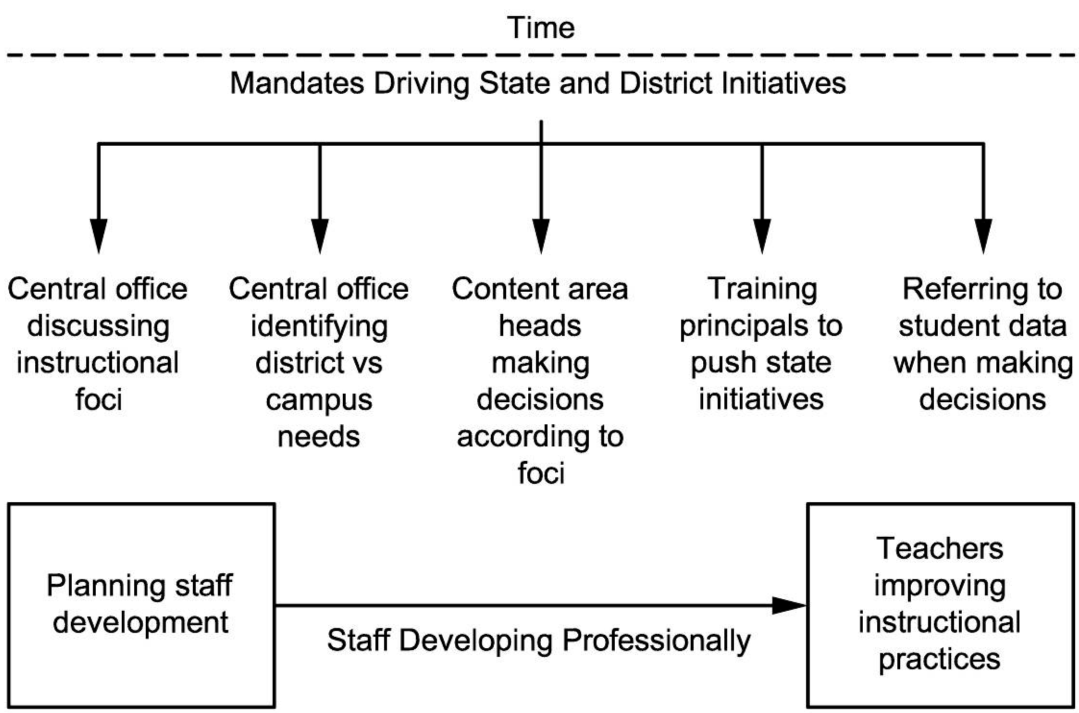

Figure 4.6. Process diagram for planning staff development (Strauss & Corbin, 1990, p. 145).

Three overarching components became apparent in the process of developing staff professionally: planning, implementing, and evaluating staff development. The changing condition within the phenomenon of planning district staff development was mandates for district and state initiatives. The action steps related to this changing condition and the phenomenon of planning staff development to improve teacher instructional practices are shown in Figure 4.6.

As evident in Figure 4.6, mandates delivered by the state and local school districts influenced the decisions made by central office staff and campus administrators when planning to develop staff professionally. Administrators from central office discussed the instructional foci that teacher participants were to experience in order to meet the needs of the state and district purposes. Subject area coordinators decided what sessions of professional development teachers would receive based on the instructional foci to which the district had chosen to adhere. The decisions that central office administrators made about staff development programs that teachers would experience were then broken down further and tailored to campus needs, based on student achievement. Campus principals were trained to function as instructional leaders and to push state academic initiatives. Still, another action pertaining to the changing mandates condition was central office administrators and campus instructional leaders continually referring to student data when making decisions regarding professional development initiatives. This action was taken to ensure that teachers received training according to the academic deficits that the student data showed.

Implementing Professional Development Programs

A group of concepts that emerged when coding interview transcripts with respect to Question 2 pertained to implementing professional learning experiences for staff. Table 4.4 shows the concepts regarding developing staff professionally.

Table 4.4

Concepts Related to Implementing Staff Development

Concept	Meaning
Collaboration	Participants of staff development working together to share expertise and assist one another in overcoming challenges related to implementing professional learning
Communication	Relaying the purpose of staff development throughout staff hierarchy
District expectations	Emphasizing directly and publically that teachers use learning in classroom practices
Evaluation	Determining the impact of staff development on teacher practices and student learning
Follow-up/on-going support	Continually giving participants the resources needed to sustain efforts to implement learning into classroom practices (i.e. instructional coaches, mentors, materials)
Goals	Adhering to district purposes in learning initiatives
Motivation	Participants willingly implementing professional learning into their practices
Ownership	Participants identifying with the purpose and importance of professional learning
Principals	Responsible for holding staff accountable for using professional learning

The concepts related to implementing staff development that arose from coding the interview transcripts are outlined in Table 4.4. Communication was a concept that interviewees considered important because staff development participants of all hierarchical levels needed to understand how learning sessions related to district goals for improvement. A similar idea that repeatedly surfaced in the interviews was that processes and content associated with district staff development needed to honor district purposes for learning initiatives. Still, district expectations for staff to implement the practices learned through professional development was another concept that emerged when coding.

The role of principals was also a concept that arose when considering how districts implemented staff development. Principals were repeatedly noted as responsible for holding staff accountable for learning professionally. This concept directly linked principals to providing staff with the necessary follow-up and support that was needed to sustain participant efforts to implement learning from professional development into classroom practices. Additionally, district and campus administrators, as well as instructional coaches, evaluated teacher attempts to incorporate learning in pedagogical practices.

By working collaboratively to share professional expertise, participants in staff development assisted one another in overcoming challenges associated with implementing professional learning into pedagogy. The sense of ownership that participants experienced was another concept that arose when coding interview transcripts in light of implementing professional development. For example, participants, who related to the purpose and the importance of the professional learning experienced, grew in expertise. Attendees, who personally identified with the professional learning, were motivated to implement new teaching strategies and techniques into instructional practices.

Figure 4.7 utilizes a change property diagram (Strauss & Corbin, 1990, p. 150) to acknowledge challenges that affected the process of developing teachers professionally through implemented district staff development programs.

Challenges Associated With Implementing Staff Development →	*Change Property* →	*Dimensional Range*
Communicating purpose across participant hierarchy	Scope	Wide
Logistical constraints amidst community growth	Direction	Downward
Different levels of teacher preparedness and experience	Shape	Random
Sustaining initiatives over a long period of time	Occurrence	Planned
Teacher resistance to ‘swinging pendulum’	Direction	Downward

Figure 4.7. Change property diagram illustrating challenges school districts face when implementing plans to develop staff professionally (Strauss & Corbin, 1990, p. 150).

Figure 4.7 shows that interviewees found it challenging to adhere to the communicated purpose of professional development programs when implementing staff learning sessions. The larger districts considered it difficult to communicate the purpose of staff development to all audiences. Thus, district administrators conveyed that it was important to widely disseminate the reasons for conducting staff development so that participants would successfully implement programs. Still, a factor related to this challenge was hiring many new personnel to meet the needs of district growth, and ensuring that all staff understood the purposes of staff development programs.

Another infringement on successfully implementing staff development stemmed from the varying ability levels, prior training, and types of teaching certifications associated with practitioners. Such differences shaped the professional learning experiences teachers engaged in because staff development facilitators were unable to control for the random distribution of participant aptitude. Districts also found it challenging to sustain staff development programs implemented when the initiatives were intended to last extensively. Teacher turnover affected this difficulty. This is because it was necessary to continually provide instructors who were hired by the district after staff development had been implemented with the same professional development as veteran counterparts. Consequently, districts had to plan to repeatedly provide professional learning initiatives and follow-up support for participants over an extended amount of time.

Another challenge that affected how districts implemented staff development programs was teacher resistance to professional learning initiatives appearing as "swinging pendulums" (D.N., personal communication, December 9, 2009). When implementing staff development, districts had a limited ability to control negative participant perceptions associated with learning old concepts that were camouflaged by new names. Districts exercised little control in combating this resistance. To improve teacher opinions of the learning initiatives, districts publically acknowledged teacher expertise related to staff development topics and celebrated participants' implementing expectations concerning initiatives.

Figure 4.8 is a change property diagram (Strauss & Corbin, 1990, p. 150), that identifies changing district resources that affected the degree to which staff implemented practices learned during professional development.

Resources Needed to Implement Staff Development	*Change Property*	*Dimensional Range*
Time for teachers to plan	Scope	Some
Time for teachers to collaborate	Degree of impact	Great
	Occurrence	Planned
Shared teacher expertise	Scope	Wide
Supplies/materials	Impact	High
School board buy-in	Shape	Progressive

Figure 4.8. A diagram showing resources that school districts needed to implement staff development programs (Strauss & Corbin, 1990, p. 150).

Figure 4.8 reflects fluctuating resources that were necessary to support staff development programs that districts implemented. Time was considered an intangible resource that impacted teachers across the district who implemented professional learning into instructional practices. Districts gave teachers opportunities to plan how to implement professional learning into pedagogical practices. Additionally, district and campus leaders arranged to give staff time to collaborate with peers regarding successfully incorporating strategies from on-going development. Teacher expertise was an existing resource that assisted participants across district campuses, as well as within buildings, to develop professionally. Professional learning that required incorporating purchased materials into classroom practices constituted another changing dimension. This dimension varied among initiatives and greatly impacted how practitioners implemented new knowledge into teaching practices. Finally, districts considered securing buy-in from school boards a powerful source for shaping the outcomes of professional learning initiatives. When school boards supported the purpose of professional learning, districts could look to board members to approve spending requests relating to professional development.

Districts implemented plans for developing staff professionally over a period of time by recognizing and adapting to challenges and needed resources specific to each initiative. Therefore, a process diagram (Strauss & Corbin, 1990, p. 145) was used to explain how the participating school districts implemented professional learning. The actions described in the diagram occurred over time and in response to changing conditions, as noted in Figure 4.9.

Figure 4.9 outlines the series of actions districts engaged in when implementing staff development. Three changing conditions continuously affected how districts adapted their approaches to improve teacher capacity to meet student needs. Such considerations were needs of adult learners, teacher motivation, and community and industry growth. All three conditions occurred repeatedly over time while districts provided on-going support for teacher development. The needs of adult learners were met when participants experienced interactive, engaging professional development sessions and varied instructional formats. Additionally, administrators and instructional coaches provided participants with the on-going support that adult learners needed to continually implement practices obtained from staff development.

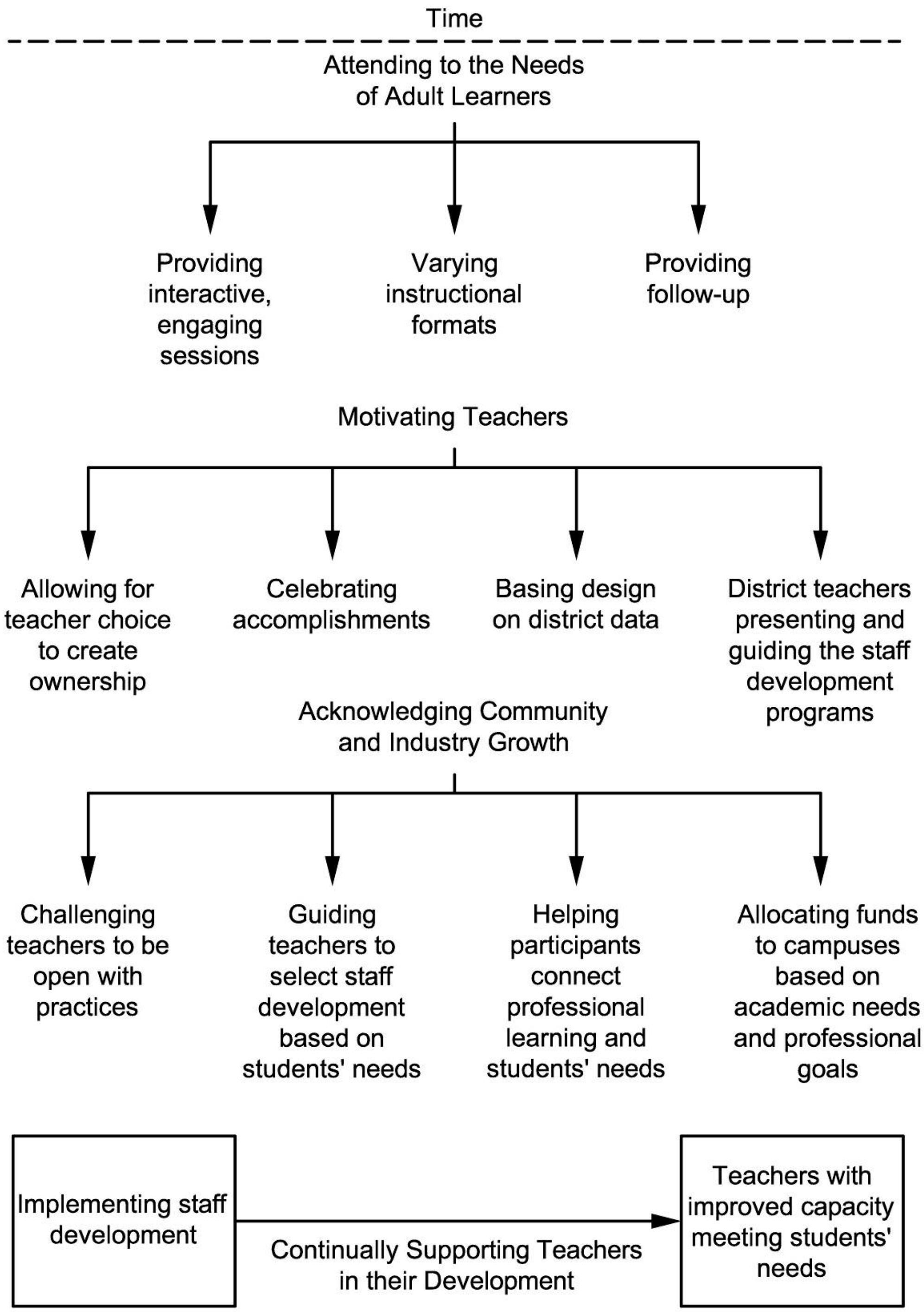

Figure 4.9. Process diagram for implementing staff development (Strauss & Corbin, 1990, p. 145).

Teacher motivation was a second condition that constantly changed as teachers were developing professionally. The participating districts created ownership for participants regarding professional learning by connecting learning to district and campus needs and goals. Furthermore, staff development participants were motivated to implement practices from professional learning because teacher accomplishments were publically celebrated. Still, the districts promoted teacher buy-in by designing professional development experiences based on academic needs that were evident in student data. Participants were also motivated to implement initiatives from professional learning because district teachers collaborated to create and present the staff development programs to peers.

The growth rate of the surrounding community and educational industry was a third changing condition that affected staff implementing professional learning as well. The participating districts took several actions related to this circumstance. First, the districts challenged teachers to mentor one another and learn from collegial expertise. Also, teachers were guided to choose professional learning sessions that were based on specific student needs as opposed to selecting topics appealing to personal interests. As the community populations grew and more teachers were hired to accommodate expanded enrollments, participants were led to continually connect professional learning experiences to student achievement results. Finally, districts allocated the necessary funds to new schools so that campus staffs could expand and develop.

Evaluating Professional Development Programs

A line-by-line analysis was used on each interview transcript to consider the third overarching component, evaluating staff learning. From this analysis, multiple ideas that related to evaluating staff development emerged repeatedly. Table 4.5 identifies relevant concepts.

Table 4.5

Concepts Related to Evaluating Staff Development

Concept	Meaning
Accountability	Ensuring that participants demonstrate knowledge of professional learning at the district, campus, and teacher level (i.e. through surveys, walk-throughs, PDAS, student performance results)
Evidence	Providing tangible and intangible forms of proof that participants employed strategies learned during professional development (i.e. documentation, demonstrations)
Feedback	District and campus administrators as well as teacher participants formally and informally discussing pedagogical improvements related to staff development
Foci of study team	Questioning what happened in the learning programs, how the district and campuses progressed with professional initiatives, and how feedback was provided to staff, administrators, and the district
Perspective	Evaluating professional development in terms of a learning program or discrete learning experience
Purpose	Designing the learning initiative to empower staff versus providing participants with a pleasant experience

As district and campus administrators evaluated how well staff development programs helped teachers become better practitioners, multiple factors influenced how evaluators perceived the effectiveness of professional learning initiatives. A change property diagram (Strauss & Corbin, 1990, p. 150) was employed to identify the properties and dimensional ranges regarding components of the process of evaluating staff development in terms of the impact of professional learning (Figure 4.10).

Factors Impacting the Effectiveness of Professional Learning →	*Change Property* →	*Dimensional Range*
Teacher willingness to be transparent in practices	Ability to control	High
Teacher selection based on student needs versus self-interest	Degree of impact	Great
Teachers connecting learning from staff development to students' needs	Direction	Forward
Relevance of recent staff development	Shape	Narrow
Needs of adult learners	Occurrence	Planned

Figure 4.10. A diagram showing factors that impact the effectiveness of district staff development programs. Based on Strauss & Corbin (1990, p. 150).

Figure 4.10 acknowledges facets of the evaluation process that influenced the degree to which professional learning elicited its intended purpose and improved teacher practices and better student achievement. One component that affected the impact that professional learning had was teacher willingness to realistically reveal pedagogical practices to others for critique. For instance, teachers who routinely incorporated strategies from professional development into instructional practices authentically represented the impact staff learning had on instruction. In contrast, instructors who only enhanced teaching practices when formally observed did not genuinely demonstrate how professional learning impacted pedagogical techniques.

Another facet that potentially changed how staff development was evaluated for effectiveness was the basis on which participants selected professional learning opportunities. This reason greatly impacted the outcome of staff development practices because practitioners did not learn to assist students with instructional needs if sessions were chosen that did not pertain to academic challenges that pupils experienced. Similarly, staff development participants who selected learning sessions according to student needs aligned pedagogical practices towards the district goals for professional learning.

The relevance of staff development opportunities that districts offered and participants experienced in the past also affected how staff perceived training experiences. Past professional learning sessions narrowly affected the outcome of current staff development experiences. For example, participants perceived the importance of current learning opportunities based on the degree to which previous learning experiences assisted in meeting student needs. Finally, staff development sessions that were planned in accordance with the needs of adult learners potentially impacted the overall effectiveness of staff development. By extension, learning experiences that purposefully stimulated and engaged adult participants, in turn, encouraged practitioners to use similar learning techniques to impact students.

As noted previously, the third overarching component in the process of developing staff professionally was evaluating staff learning. This was a series of interrelated acts that occurred on an on-going basis. A process diagram (Strauss & Corbin, 1990, p. 145) was used to explain how the participating school districts evaluated professional learning. Figure 4.11 notes the set of purposeful actions related to the phenomenon of evaluating staff development so that research-based instruction was tailored to student needs.

Figure 4.11 illustrates the process to which participating districts adhered when evaluating the effectiveness of staff development. The changing conditions included actions taken to evaluate staff learning, evidence derived to assess professional development, and how participants were held accountable for evaluating staff. One action that pertained to evaluating participant professional learning was assembling a district study team. This committee was composed of the assistant superintendent for learner services, the director of staff development, content coordinators, and master instructors or teacher liaisons. The district study team considered the staff development experiences that teachers attended in terms of how well the programs empowered teachers to improve learning. This perspective contradicted considering professional learning sessions from an aesthetic, experiential perspective. Additionally, the study committee reflected on the program and made recommendations for altering future professional learning actions. Finally, when evaluating the district staff development program, the study team referred to the levels of evaluation for staff development (Guskey, 1998). The levels of evaluating staff development include assessing participant reactions, learning, and use of new skills, as well as considering student learning outcomes, and the degree of support the district provides practitioners.

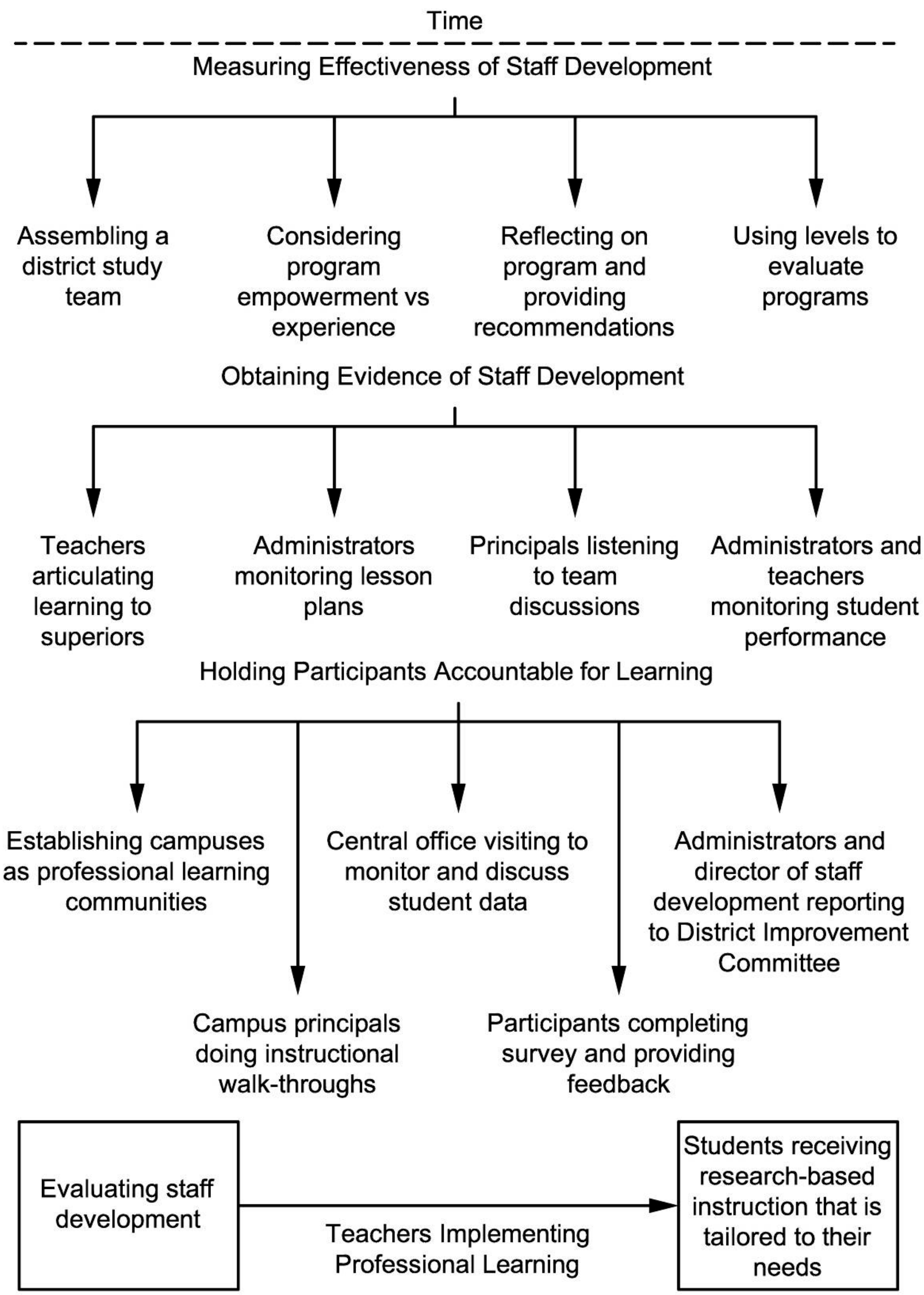

Figure 4.11. Process diagram for evaluating staff development (Strauss & Corbin, 1990, p. 145).

Obtaining evidence about participants implementing professional learning into pedagogical practices was the second changing condition in the process of evaluating staff development. In this process, teachers articulated their learning to direct superiors, such as campus principals. The administrators monitored lesson plans to ensure that teachers were including strategies and concepts learned from professional development into classroom practices. Campus principals also indirectly obtained evidence of participants incorporating professional learning into teaching practices by attending, listening to, and offering feedback during team planning meetings. Finally, another way proof was obtained about the effectiveness of staff learning experiences bettering student achievement was by district and campus leaders guiding school staff in monitoring student performance data.

The districts that participated in the study engaged in several actions in response to the changing condition of holding participants accountable for professional learning. One action to ensure that participants attended staff development was requiring teachers to complete surveys concerning learning experiences. The surveys asked participants to respond to the usefulness and appropriateness of the learning based on personal need. Furthermore, district and campus leaders established schools as professional learning communities (DuFour, 2004). Thus, district and campus employees collectively and purposefully used student achievement results to guide academic efforts so that all students successfully learned.

Administrators from central office, such as the assistant superintendent for learner services, the director of staff development, and content coordinators, visited campuses to monitor teacher instructional practices and to discuss data related to campus needs. Similarly, campus principals held teachers accountable for implementing professional learning by conducting regular walk-throughs to monitor instructional happenings in classrooms. Finally, administrators from central office and campuses reported to a District Improvement Committee about progress schools made in implementing professional learning practices and how student scores were affected.

Figure 4.11 shows the process of evaluating the effectiveness of staff development on a continuum. The school districts experienced changing conditions when reviewing how teachers implemented professional learning into classroom practices. The varying conditions were evaluating the professional learning program, obtaining evidence of teachers learning professionally, and holding teachers accountable for learning professionally. The process resulted in students receiving research-based instruction that was tailored to individual needs.

In summary, semi-structured interviews with nine administrators were coded using grounded theory (Anselm & Strauss, 1967; Strauss & Corbin, 1990) to answer the first two research questions in the present study. Process diagrams were created to outline district practices in terms of phenomena related to funding staff development and developing teacher expertise in order to enhance student achievement. Change property diagrams (Corbin & Strauss, 1990) were created to address factors that influenced the extent to which staff development was funded, how it was planned, how professional development programs were implemented, and how they were evaluated.

Teacher Questionnaire

Chi-square Analysis

The survey response rate, 29% (n = 1,277), in this dissertation study, constituted a strong community sample as noted by Fowler (1993). Furthermore, the 1,277 survey responses reduced the sampling errors and strengthened the reliability of the analytic tests performed on teacher answers by school district (Isaac & Michael, 1997). The teacher questionnaire was reviewed quantitatively by assigning numerical values to the categorical options from which respondents chose: none, limited, satisfactory, or high. Six questions asked participants to select one or more prescribed choices that best described perspectives.

Since the survey utilized all nominal data to label participant perspectives, the chi-square test (x^2) demonstrated relationships between teacher responses to questions by district (Faherty, 2008). After reviewing the output from the chi-square tests done through SPSS, survey questions were analyzed to determine if a significant relationship existed between the teachers from participating school districts and responses provided. To put it differently, outputs were read to see if teachers from one district were more likely to answer specific queries in a particular manner versus participants from the other districts. The values of *p*, or the probability that the statistical values denoted relationships between variables happened by chance, were determined next (Gall, Gall, & Borg, 2007). As Gall, Gall, and Borg explained, determining the *p* value was necessary because it enables researchers to predict how teachers from each district would answer the survey should more participate in the future. When *p* values were less than 0.05, the likelihood that any relationship between the dependent variable and responses happened ironically was slim. The *p* values that were less than .05 indicated that the statistical relationship between respondent answers deserved further attention to discover if a predictive pattern was present. The x^2 analysis was performed for Survey Questions 4 through 9, because participants were permitted one response per question. Because teachers were allowed to select all the answers that applied for Questions 13-15, a relationship between participants and identified specific perspectives would be skewed. So, teacher answers were described in terms of frequency of response for these questions.

Once the responses for survey questions were analyzed for a statistically significant correlation among district answers, the effect size was reviewed to understand the magnitude of the relationship (Faherty, 2008). In other words, the Cramer's V value was used to determine how closely the relationship equaled 1.00. Cramer's V outputs that neared 1.00 indicated a strong relationship between districts and teacher answers. Numbers less than 0.19 meant that essentially no association existed that predicted how respondents would complete survey questions.

The *p* values for the chi-square tests run on responses to Questions 1 through 12, by district, indicated no relationship between teachers of specific grade ranges or those who held post graduate versus bachelor's degrees. Thus, my hypotheses about respondents who had attained a higher level of education were incorrect. The assumptions included the idea that participants who completed post-graduate work likely used knowledge of district funding to impact student learning more efficiently. Additionally, I believed that teachers with higher degrees would consider staff development to more effectively assist students in improving achievement, as compared to those who had not attained master's or doctoral degrees. Table 4.6 depicts the results of the chi-square analysis run on teacher answers to questions that involved participants rating perspectives about district funding for and the effectiveness of staff development practices.

Table 4.6

Participant Responses to DOSD and Chi-square Analysis Comparing Teacher Responses by District

Question	None %	*n*	Limited %	*n*	Satisfactory %	*n*	High %	*n*	x^2	*p*	Cramer's V
District A											
Knowledge of financial constraints	16.2	76	52.2	245	26.7	125	4.9	23	42.58	0.00*	0.14
Teaching improves with more financial knowledge	2.4	11	11.6	54	42.2	196	43.9	204	8.06	0.23	
Practices change with more financial knowledge	31.3	147	38.8	182	25.8	121	4.1	19	10.21	0.12	
Resources motivate implementation	0.4	2	5.2	24	21.5	100	72.9	339	9.88	0.13	
Professional learning improves teaching	0.6	3	14.3	67	37.2	174	47.9	224	17.40	0.01*	0.09
Impact on student learning	0.9	4	12.7	59	38.8	181	47.6	222	23.34	0.00*	0.10
District B											
Knowledge of financial constraints	8.2	14	52.0	89	32.2	55	7.6	13	42.58	.00*	0.14
Teaching improves with more financial knowledge	1.7	3	18.6	32	43.6	75	36.0	62	8.06	0.23	

(*table continues*)

Table 4.6 (*continued*).

Question	None %	*n*	Limited %	*n*	Satisfactory %	*n*	High %	*n*	x²	*p*	Cramer's V
District B											
Practices change with more financial knowledge	39.0	67	35.5	61	23.8	41	1.7	3	10.21	0.12	
Resources motivate implementation	2.3	4	7.6	13	24.0	41	66.1	113	9.88	0.13	
Professional learning improves teaching	0.0	0	16.3	28	44.8	77	39.0	67	17.4	0.0*	0.08
Impact on student learning	0.0	0	16.9	29	45.3	78	37.8	65	23.3	0.0*	0.10
District C											
Knowledge of financial constraints	26.8	141	50.0	263	19.4	102	3.8	20	42.5	0.0*	0.14
Teaching improves with more financial knowledge	1.7	9	12.7	67	45.4	239	40.1	211	10.2	0.1	
Practices change with more financial knowledge	38.1	200	38.9	204	20.4	107	2.7	14	8.06	0.2	
Resources motivate implementation	0.6	3	7.2	38	20.8	109	71.4	375	9.88	0.1	
Professional learning improves teaching	1.5	8	20.3	106	40.3	211	37.9	198	17.40	0.0*	0.09
Impact on student learning	1.3	7	18.1	95	46.9	246	33.7	177	23.34	0.0*	0.10

*Note.*p < .05.*

As Table 4.6 indicates, several survey questions elicited responses with *p* values that were less than .05. Low *p* values denoted a possible relationship between teachers answering questions in a predicted manner based on district belongingness. It was necessary to look at the value for Cramer's V when $p < .05$, so that the magnitude of the relationship between teacher responses could be ascertained more specifically (Faherty, 2008). According to Faherty (p. 154), the extent of the correlation among variables is categorized as follows: a Cramer's V value of .01 to .19 means that a relationship essentially does not exist, and a Cramer's V value of .20 to .39 indicates a weak relationship among variables. Cramer's V values between .40 to .59 constitute a moderate association, while Cramer's V values that range from .60 to 1.00 equate to a strong relationship between the variables studied. Faherty (p. 300) emphasized the importance of acknowledging the degrees of freedom (*df*) when reporting results, because this amount indicates the number of ways that data in a chi-square test can be separate from each other. For the survey, the results of the chi-square test for grade ranges taught were $x^2 = 52.98$, $df = 4$, $p = .00$, Cramer's V = .15. Thus, there was no relationship between the way participants responded and the grade levels teachers taught.

When reviewing teacher years of experience, $p = .00$, indicating that a relationship potentially existed between participant background and responses. However, the results of the chi-square test were $x^2 = 35.35$, $df = 12$, $p = .00$, Cramer's V = .12, meaning there was no real association among participant answers based on the amount of years taught. The value of Cramer's V determined if a correlation existed among district participants concerning the degree of teacher knowledge about financial constraints involved with funding professional development. The results of the test were x^2 = 42.58, *df* = 6, *p* = .00, Cramer's V = .14. Again, the Cramer's V value was below .20, so no real relationship could attribute teacher knowledge of district financial struggles to professional development views (Faherty, 2008).

Teacher responses to three other questions signaled possible dependence between teacher answers and school districts. The results for the participants rating the extent of beliefs that professional learning improved teaching were x^2 = 17.40, *df* = 6, *p* = .01, Cramer's V = .09. Thus, no real relationship existed among teacher responses to this question (Faherty, 2008). When participants rated the impact that professional learning had on student accomplishment, the chi-square returns were x^2 = 23.34, *df* = 6, *p* = .00, Cramer's V = .10. Therefore, teachers from District A, B, and C, were not more inclined to view the impact of professional learning on student achievement based on where they taught. Still, the results of a chi-square test concerning the resources participants found most helpful when implementing staff development did not elicit a direct connection among teachers from specific districts and corresponding answers (Faherty, 2008). The results of the chi-square tests were x^2 = 12.48, *df* = 4, *p* = .01, Cramer's V = .07.

Table 4.7 shows the frequency of teacher responses regarding how the impact of professional learning was judged and demonstrated, and how evidence was provided to the district that professional growth occurred. A chi-square analysis was not performed for these inquiries because participants were invited to choose all responses that applied. Since it was illogical to associate respondents with a particular answer regarding these questions, the number of teachers who selected each choice is listed by district in Table 4.7.

Table 4.7

Frequency of Teacher Responses with Multiple Options about Staff Development

Query	Response	District A	District B	District C
Methods for judging impact on students	Informal observations	124	49	164
	Documentation/ note Keeping	14	8	21
	Assessment data	33	17	38
	Student/teacher conferences	11	0	7
	All of the above	283	96	292
Ways teachers demonstrated learning to colleagues	Informal discussions	380	136	445
	Student work samples	180	81	162
	Formally present information	160	55	161
	Other	9	4	16
Ways teachers demonstrated learning to students	Discussion	166	80	206
	Simulation	162	83	244
	Direct instruction	386	129	387
	Other	13	7	18

(*table continues*)

Table 4.7 (*continued*).

Query	Response	District A	District B	District C
How districts held teachers accountable	Earning certificate/credit	348	124	411
	Administrators examining teaching	118	67	196
	Sharing student performance data	76	36	66
	Documenting in lesson plans	64	41	125
	Other	7	3	10
	All of the above	102	50	109
	No accountability	6	7	16

Table 4.7 illustrates on what teachers based their opinions of the effectiveness of staff development on student achievement, how professional learning was demonstrated, and how districts held participants accountable for growing expertise. Teachers were able to select all of the choices that applied. Thus, a chi-square test was not an appropriate method to analyze responses. The frequency of answers selected by teachers in each district is included in the table. Regarding the ways teachers judged the impact of their professional development learning on students, participants preferred to informally observe pupil performance. However, a combination of observation, documentation, assessment data, and student teacher conferences was the most frequently cited method for evaluating the impact teacher professional learning had on students. It is noteworthy that teachers most frequently chose informal observation as

an individual method for determining whether or not their staff development experiences impacted student achievement. This might speak to the fact that teachers generally view staff development as an obligation that is not connected to students. In other words, teachers tend to view professional learning as personally beneficial, as evidenced by participant responses (n = 489) that professional learning impacts teaching to a high degree. However, teachers appear to have developed their expertise more to comply with district expectations rather than for the purpose of enhancing their professional capabilities to better serve students.

Teacher responses about how learning was demonstrated to colleagues showed informal discussions as the most commonly cited method, followed by showcasing student work samples and formally presenting information. In contrast to collaboratively sharing learning with colleagues, Table 4.7 shows that the most popular method of showing learning to students was direct instruction. In terms of how districts held teachers accountable for developing professionally, earning credit hours for staff development experience was most commonly cited, followed by administrators examining teaching practices. Surprisingly, several people in each district believed there was no accountability for teachers' strengthening of expertise.

In conclusion, the statistical analyses run on the survey responses showed no relationship between teacher knowledge and perceptions related to funding staff development or participant views of the effectiveness of developing staff professionally, based on location of teaching. This fact might be attributed to the similarity in staff characteristics across districts. The data concerning three large school districts in north Texas were reported in terms of teacher views of funding practices for and developing staff professionally. The chi-square and frequency analyses of the questionnaire fulfilled a purpose of survey studies as noted by Isaac and Michael (1997). Hence, information was provided about fiscal support for developing teacher expertise and evaluating staff development experiences.

Open Survey Responses

Participants were given the opportunity to respond openly in the present study to supplement the analyses of the teacher questionnaire with chi-square tests. Each answer was considered individually in terms of the question to which it pertained. Then, responses were read again so that major ideas were noted. Afterwards, specific answers were combined to form overarching ideas that further represented major concepts related to the questions. The socio-cultural concepts that emerged provided a foundation for associating participant ideas with the fluid conditions involved with implementing and evaluating staff development experiences (Blumer, 1956). Blumer noted the importance of establishing generic knowledge to represent fluid, complex social conditions, while remaining cognizant that individual experiences affect interpretation of phenomena.

For the survey question asking how teachers demonstrated professional learning to students, several categories of participant responses emerged. The answers included modeling strategies for students, implementing strategies into classroom practices, and enhancing the rigor and product when questioning students and assigning work. The ideas of using hands-on, engaging learning strategies; cooperative learning groups; and technological enhancements such as blogs, tweets, videos, and e-mails, also developed. Additionally, the concept of demonstrating professional development to students through an improved teacher attitude and higher expectations when working with students also evolved.

Multiple sensitizing concepts (Blumer, 1954) materialized when asking teachers from what format of professional development was learned the most. Respondents answered that the most knowledge was gained when formats of professional development promoted collaborating with teachers from similar genres, interacting with content learned, and participants simulating learning strategies. Teachers also stated that learning was best accomplished when sessions employed multiple formats. Respondents favorably cited professional development programs that allowed for making and then taking relevant materials because this approach facilitated using products related to staff learning in classrooms immediately. Another type of professional development that teachers preferred was observing others implementing teaching strategies. Still, respondents noted that hearing presentations by professionals from outside of the district was the desired method of staff learning, particularly when the facilitators appeared competent and enthusiastic.

When participants were asked on what opinions about the professional learning from which they gained the most were based, several ideas arose. Some teachers were dissatisfied with the types of sessions offered, writing that the trainings were repetitive and unbeneficial, and that time for developing professionally was lacking. However, more participants stated that conclusions regarding the effectiveness of professional learning were based on the depth and complexity of student responses to objectives, as well as feedback from students, families, and other teachers. Few respondents based opinions on research and the level of personal satisfaction with teaching.

Another survey question that elicited free responses involved participants demonstrating learning from professional development to colleagues. Answers included team or collaborative meetings, implementing strategies learned in pedagogical practices, and making digital video discs of teaching practices so that peers could watch and constructively critique efforts. Several teachers admitted to not demonstrating what was learned to colleagues, and offered the lack of time available to collaborate with others as the reason.

In response to the ways school districts held teachers responsible for providing evidence of professional learning, a few participants noted test scores. Some teachers answered that the Professional Development and Appraisal System (PDAS) review process provided accountability for practitioners developing professionally. By extension, a respondent noted that administrators walking through classrooms to observe student learning experiences provided a measure of answerability for professional growth. Several practitioners stated that liability for professional learning occurred when participants presented to staff and observed, as well as when they critiqued colleague teaching practices. A respondent from District C stated that pay was deducted from salaries if teachers did not complete a targeted amount of professional credit hours for staff learning by the end of April.

So, participants who chose to supplement answer choices with text enhanced information gleaned from prescribed survey responses (Bowen, 2006). It was apparent that several concepts arose when coding information that teachers volunteered.

Specifically, respondents provided insight as to how opinions regarding the effectiveness of staff development were created, and ways that professional learning was modeled to students and colleagues. Also, teachers wrote about preferred methods of experiencing staff development. Some participants offered concerns about the lack of time teachers had to effectively develop expertise and that professional learning sessions tended to be repetitive and unbeneficial.

Conclusion

Data analysis for this study was triangulated because information pertaining to the research questions was collected in more than one way (Gall, Gall, & Borg, 2007). Interviews were conducted to answer the research questions about how three school districts in north Texas funded staff developing professionally, and how the districts used funds to enhance teacher expertise. In addition to collecting data through interviews, a questionnaire was distributed to teachers who worked for the districts participating in the present study. The survey was developed to answer the third research query about teacher perspectives concerning the effectiveness of staff development.

Both qualitative and quantitative measures were employed in the analysis of the study. Administrator interview responses were analyzed through comparative analysis so that a general theory pertaining to social research could be derived systematically (Strauss & Corbin, 1990; Anselm & Strauss, 1967). The qualitative analysis explained district behavior regarding the processes of funding, planning, implementing, and evaluating staff development. Additionally, the process diagrams (Strauss & Corbin,

1990) that were created as a result of the current study allowed practitioners to understand, and ultimately, to control behavior regarding the series of actions described.

The teacher questionnaire was analyzed quantitatively through chi-square statistical tests run on SPSS. Initially, the demographic variables of teachers who participated were summarized. Then, teacher responses were reviewed by district to determine if teachers were more likely to respond to survey questions in a particular manner as compared to colleagues from other districts. Though the value of *p* was less than .05 when responses were cross tabulated by district for some survey questions, the Cramer's V value showed no real relationship between districts and teacher answers. Since the participant samples from each district had similar demographic characteristics, it was determined that teacher responses were independent of the district where respondents worked. My hypotheses were proven incorrect because the years of experience respondents had and their degree of knowledge pertaining to district funding constraints did not impact teacher views regarding the efficiency of staff development in improving student learning. Additionally, participants' post graduate education did not affect teacher beliefs concerning how effectively staff development programs improved student achievement.

In summary, all three intents of the present study were fulfilled by analyzing the data collected. The first purpose of the study, determining sources of funding for staff development, was coded, answered, and diagrammed using grounded theory (Strauss & Corbin, 1990; Anselm & Strauss, 1967) and process diagrams (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). Second, this study described how districts used funded professional development practices to enhance teacher expertise. Information about the formats of professional development that districts employed, as well as facts concerning processes for planning, implementing, and evaluating professional learning programs, was derived as a result of interviews with district officials. Insights related to such series of actions were coded and diagrammed using grounded theory (Strauss & Corbin, 1990; Anselm & Strauss, 1967) and process diagrams (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). The final aim of the study, examining teacher views about the effectiveness of staff development programs supported by district funds, was accomplished. This goal was fulfilled by analyzing chi-square tests and frequency results for each survey question. Recommendations related to the purpose of the study and related discoveries are provided in the following chapter.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

The present study had several purposes. First, it determined how three school districts in north Texas funded efforts to develop staff professionally. Additionally, a description of how the participating districts used funds to develop staff expertise was provided. Finally, it ascertained participant viewpoints regarding the effectiveness of district staff development sessions that teachers attended. This study directly pertained to all hierarchies of educators because every faculty member must continually work to better student educational experiences. Thus, the concept of staff development, efforts to enhance teacher expertise, is a professional and ethical duty. Accordingly, Fullan (2007) stated:

> There are deep theoretical and evolutionary reasons to believe that society will be stronger if education serves to enable people to work together to achieve higher purposes that serve both the individual and the collective good. When you boil it all down, there are two social forces that cause continuous improvement. One pertains to ongoing knowledge creation and use; the other, to ever-deepening and –widening moral purpose and commitment. (p. 302)

Therefore, developing teacher expertise is a moral and practiced commitment that requires district personnel to expend resources and efforts. The research addressed this quest by examining fiscal resources and reviewing how staff learning was enhanced for the purpose of improving student achievement. All levels of educators are professionally responsible for continually improving their ability to serve student needs. The districts in this study coordinated efforts to develop staff from two angles: central office and individual campuses. Both central office and school administrators were responsible for using resources to facilitate, guide, and maintain the school mentality of continually improving academically. Campus administrators assumed more direct roles in overseeing staff learning than central office administrators because principals knew staff personally and were directly connected to school achievement goals. Thus, campus leaders identified with DuFour & Marzano (2009), and shifted professional foci from managing facilities to coordinating learning. As learning leaders, principals cultivated student growth by reviewing evidence of achievement and enhancing teacher expertise accordingly. The research questions were formed based on this responsibility for which school administrators are perpetually obligated. This chapter concludes with recommendations as to how districts can use allocated resources for providing staff with learning opportunities that meet teacher needs.

Discussion of Research Questions

Three research questions guided this study. The questions are listed below

1) In what ways do three Texas school districts fund professional development for instructional improvement?
2) How do three Texas school districts use funds to develop staff professionally?
3) What are teachers' views of the effectiveness of staff development in three Texas school districts?

The research questions were reviewed qualitatively and quantitatively. The results of data collected for each question are discussed in the following sections.

Discussion of Question 1

As discussed in the previous chapter, Question 1 was answered by coding interviews with district financial officers. The codes were categorized and analyzed as to processes districts underwent when funding efforts to develop staff professionally. Afterwards, information was arranged in a process diagram (Strauss & Corbin, 1990).

The diagram showed how changing conditions associated with funding staff development over time, led to specific actions that district personnel took to obtain the end result, initiatives that were fiscally supported.

Funding for district staff development programs was critical to sustaining the success of learning initiatives and was considered an investment that fortified student achievement through job-embedded training for teachers (Killion, 2008). The participating districts were methodical in dispersing fiscal resources to fund staff development. Two components arose when analyzing district actions taken to fund staff development: budgeting money for staff development and allocating funds to departments and campuses for professional learning. It was determined that multiple individuals worked with chief financial officers during these processes, including district-level administrators, content area leaders, and campus administrators. Individuals worked collaboratively to identify needs on a broad and specific level. Money was budgeted so that central office expectations for growth could be met while supporting campus actions to attain goals. The funds available to develop staff were figured by determining the amount of money the school district was given from the state, subtracting operating costs and money that needed to be allocated to other programs, and pulling the cost of developing staff professionally away from state funds.

Administrators who were interviewed and teachers who responded to the questionnaire, repeatedly noted time as a lacking resource when developing staff professionally. The fact that time was considered by staff as more valuable than purchased supplies or materials correlated with Grubb (2010). Grubb stated that school districts need more than money to develop staff professionally, and emphasized the importance of using resources efficiently to improve education, “Dollar bills do not educate children” (2010, p. 52). Thus, simply providing administrators and teachers with more money does not achieve better student achievement. Rather, it is planning, implementing, and evaluating how resources are spent on learner gains.

When district administrators decided how to allocate funds for staff development to content area departments and campuses, the priority was to dedicate as many resources to campuses as possible. Administrators analyzed district and school achievement data in order to scrutinize the appropriateness and equality of fund distribution. Still another priority that district officials maintained when allocating funds for staff development was equalizing campus access to the funds that were needed to enhance faculty expertise. The process for allocating funds was perpetual because district and campus administrators adjusted achievement goals continually as student achievement outcomes changed.

The fluidity of the process of funding staff development was repeatedly subjected to environmental considerations that affected the amount of fiscal resources districts had available. Factors that impacted the supply of funds from which the districts worked included federal and state grants that were received, local property tax and student enrollment, and legislative restrictions on district abilities to raise money. Grubb (2010) reminded districts that efforts should be made to effectively use fiscal assets as well as those that differ from financial resources. The participating school districts recognized such intangible resources as positive school climates, time managed effectively, engaging pedagogy, cooperative spirits, unified visions, staff persistence, and collegial trust.

Additionally, districts were financially constrained when funding staff development because plans for initiatives were audited for quality learning opportunities. Blueprints for sessions that included ineffective designs were discarded. Since the volume of learning opportunities that district officials wanted to provide staff outweighed available resources, administrators considered poor -quality training to be an inefficient use of funds. These actions coincided with Grubb's (2010) assertion that schools should conduct waste assessments involving thoroughly reviewing if expenditures aligned with district and campus goals. Grubb also suggested decentralizing decision making processes for the school and allowing teacher input regarding campus budgets. Another recommendation he provided was giving staff a checklist or data bank of information about how to use resources efficiently. This advice directly pertained to the purpose of the present study. By extension, faculty who understood financial constraints associated with developing expertise could tailor their actions to efficiently capitalize on the investments that districts made.

District officials held one another accountable for the money spent on staff development by controlling resource distribution. Campuses were ensured equal access to fiscal resources if money that was spent on professional development connected with district goals for student achievement. Data were reviewed by district and campus administrators to see if student progress correlated with professional learning initiatives. Thus, the districts analyzed the efficiency of funds spent to improve teacher practices with student achievement (Bolster, 1983; Guskey, 2002; 1986). Finally, central office administrators cross checked spending patterns for staff development against those of districts with similar enrollment.

Discussion of Question 2

When drawing conclusions from data collected to answer Question 2, three phenomena arose pertaining to districts developing staff expertise. The major ideas from interviews with district directors of staff development and assistant superintendents for learner services included planning, implementing, and evaluating staff development. Accordingly, administrators in the participating districts adhered to several factors that Bubb and Earley (2009) noted as successfully contributing to positive outcomes associated with creating staff development that improves student success. Such factors included explicitly defining the purpose of staff development, linking goals to a needs analysis, and monitoring and evaluating the impact of learning initiatives. The processes involved with each phenomenon were charted as process diagrams (Strauss & Corbin, 1990, p. 145).

The planning phase of developing staff professionally involved central office administrators understanding state mandates regarding student instruction as well as district academic goals. Central office administrators referenced data to determine what the content area needs were across the district as well as by campus. Individuals in charge of content areas made decisions according to these foci and principals were trained to push the instructional initiatives on campuses (DuFour & Marzano, 2009). Again, data obtained from state assessments and district benchmark tests were referenced regularly so that plans for developing staff professionally were modified to match mandates. The desired outcome related to developing staff expertise that is aligned with state and district initiatives was having teachers who improved the instructional practices that students experienced.

Three changing conditions affected how districts implemented staff development experiences for faculty. District officials recognized that opportunities for staff development must meet teacher learning needs. Staff needed to be motivated to implement learning from professional development as well. Finally, when implementing staff development opportunities for teachers, districts had to adapt to growth in their surrounding community and in the educational industry.

When meeting teacher academic needs, district officials ensured that professional sessions accommodated adult learning preferences and were interactive, engaging, and offered to participants in a variety of formats. These considerations coincided with Worth (1985). Worth asserted that in order for staff development to meet teachers' needs as adult learners, training should occur during school hours, capitalize on adults socially interacting in a professional setting, and empower teacher participants to train peers.

It was also necessary for instructional coaches, as well as district and campus administrators, to balance the amount of support and pressure participants experienced so that learning was implemented. District administrators motivated teachers to implement strategies learned through professional development by allowing participants to choose the sessions attended. Another way that district and campus leaders heightened teacher interest in incorporating learning into pedagogical practices was celebrating participant accomplishments pertaining to professional development. District and campus administrators also cultivated teacher motivation for implementing learning by designing professional development that was based on achievement data. Still, participants were empowered to implement professional learning because teachers helped develop and present learning opportunities to colleagues.

In response to the fluctuating growth that the participating districts experienced, teachers were challenged to openly discuss and exhibit instructional practices. Again, district and campus administrators referenced student achievement data to guide participants in selecting professional development based on pupil needs. This action aligned with Bartlett's (2004) finding that the purpose of most staff development experiences should respond to administrators' and teachers' areas of needed growth. As the districts expanded and more teachers were hired, administrators continually reiterated the purpose of attending staff development as connecting professional expertise with student needs. Finally, districts secured for new campuses the funds necessary for aligning staff expertise with district expectations. As a result, the participating districts continually supported staff in developing professionally and improved teacher capacity to meet student needs.

The third phenomenon relating to developing staff professionally was evaluating the effectiveness of the staff development programs that teachers experienced. Three changing conditions were associated with this major idea: measuring the worth of the program, obtaining evidence of teachers implementing learning, and holding participants accountable for using strategies learned. The conditions occurred perpetually throughout a school year and occurred with the intended result of students receiving research-based instruction that met individual needs.

When measuring the effectiveness of the staff development programs that participants experienced, officials in the district assembled a study team. The team consisted of assistant superintendents, the director of staff development, and content coordinators. Thus, the district study teams correlated with Barnett's (2004) finding that 39.2% of staff evaluation committees are comprised of administrators such as the building principals and superintendent. Individuals on the team considered program attributes in terms of the empowerment participants obtained rather than the pleasantries of the physical experiences. Five levels of evaluation for staff development (Guskey, 1998) were referenced when reflecting on the programs and devising recommendations to improve future efforts. Thus, the programs specifically designed to meet district learning goals were reviewed in terms of participant reactions and learning, the organizational support and change, participant implementation, and student learning outcomes.

In gathering evidence of participants incorporating learning from professional development into pedagogical practices, district administrators expected teachers to articulate how learning would enhance instruction. Hirsh and Killion (2008) expected administrators to adopt and maintain standards for professional development and recommended using educator performance and student learning as indicators of standards being met. Similarly, principals in the participating districts monitored lesson plans to review how faculty incorporated strategies obtained through professional development into classroom practices. Additionally, campus administrators met with grade level teams and listened to collaborative sessions to determine how teachers intended to incorporate professional learning into instruction. District administrators reviewed student data to determine improvements related to increased teacher expertise across the district and conferred with campus principals. In turn, principals led campuses in discussions aimed at evaluating the impact professional learning had on student achievement.

District officials indirectly held teachers accountable for implementing professional learning into classroom practices. Every campus was considered a Professional Learning Community (PLC), involving each staff member continuously and actively pursuing a better student education experience. Campus administrators conducted routine instructional walk-throughs to document instructional happenings in classrooms as they related to district and school initiatives. Short observations focused on instructional happenings allowed principals to gather authentic perceptions about the type of learning situations students were experiencing (Protheroe, 2009). Later, the anonymous results of the walk-throughs were shared with faculty and disaggregated. Administrators from central office visited campuses to see pedagogical practices and to discuss observations with campus leaders.

Staff were held accountable for implementing professional learning in other ways as well. Faculty who attended development experiences completed questionnaires pertaining to the learning in order to obtain credit for attending. Participants rated the program based on its instructional relevance to student needs and offered personal reflections and suggestions for improving future sessions. Finally, district administrators and the director of staff development synthesized the results of teacher questionnaires with observations and evidence related to faculty implementing professional learning in the classroom. The study teams reported the progress that the districts made to district improvement committees, including the local superintendent. Such teams involved district administrators understanding that facts and insights from multiple sources and collaborative discussions diffused disagreements about program initiatives (Martin, 1954). When evaluating staff development programs that the districts implemented for faculty, the previously described actions contributed to teachers incorporating developed expertise into classroom practices. Ultimately, students received research-based instruction that was appropriate for academic needs.

The actions that administrators took to plan, implement, and evaluate staff development programs supported the assertions of several researchers in education. Similar to Hawley and Valli's (2007) recommendation, central office and campus leaders focused on the educational goals of the district and how teacher professional growth impacted students achieving those targets. Furthermore, district administrators who planned, implemented, and evaluated staff learning experiences recognized Guskey's (2002) assertion that altered teacher pedagogical beliefs render changed instructional habits. The district leaders who participated in this study viewed teacher motivation as an important changing condition that must be addressed when implementing staff development. Therefore, teachers were empowered to help create staff learning programs that aligned with district needs, and served as instructors who facilitated many professional learning sessions for colleagues. Also, campus leaders publically celebrated teachers implementing professional learning into classrooms as a routine effort to motivate instructors to incorporate learning into pedagogical practices.

Discussion of Question 3

Question 3 was answered quantitatively through an electronic survey distributed to teachers in the participating school districts. A chi-square test was run on teacher responses to determine if teachers from one school district might be more likely to respond to a question in a manner that differed from the others. According to the results of the chi-square test, the demographic variables of participants, such as school district, grade range taught, degree of education held, and years of experience, did not impact teacher responses. Furthermore, the frequency of participant answers was noted for each item on the questionnaire. Since respondents were allowed to select multiple options for the last several survey questions, a chi-square analysis would not have been logical.

The present study was conducted with the belief that participant knowledge about district financial constraints surrounding professional development would affect teaching practices. By extension, teachers who knew more about the funding constraints districts experienced when planning, implementing, and evaluating staff development would respect sacrifices made to enhance expertise. In theory, the participants who appreciated district efforts to support professional development would ensure that learned skills were efficiently incorporated into pedagogy.

To determine teacher perspectives concerning this matter, the degree of knowledge teachers had about financial constraints involved with professional development was assessed. Approximately half of all teachers across the three school districts considered themselves to have limited awareness of fiscal burdens. Most teachers, 38.3% (n = 447), believed that understanding financial matters related to professional development would impact teaching practices to a limited extent. Only 3.1% (n = 36) responded that having fiscal knowledge about budget constraints when funding staff development would change teaching practices to a high degree. Therefore, teachers generally did not know a lot about financially supporting staff development, yet there was a common belief that such information would not greatly enhance pedagogical abilities.

Professional learning was a concept that was generally appreciated by all teacher participants. Almost half, 42% (*n* = 489), of the respondents indicated that developed expertise impacted teaching performance to a high degree. A slightly smaller amount, 39.9% (*n* = 464), thought that professional learning affected students to a large extent. Only 1.0% (*n* = 11) of teachers believed that developed expertise had no impact on student achievement. Generally, teachers across the participating districts valued professional learning as a tool to improve instructional performance, but fewer (*n* = 25) participants connected personally improved pedagogical abilities with better student outcomes.

Teachers responding to the survey stated that conclusions about the degree to which professional learning impacted pupil achievement were based primarily on a combination of methods. Most respondents, 58.0% (*n* = 671), relied on documentation, assessment data, and conferences with learners to determine if professional development affected student outcomes. The fewest number of participants, 1.6% (*n* = 18), cited documentation or note keeping as the means for determining related conclusions. So, teachers used a variety of evaluation measures for deciding that professional learning for staff enhanced student achievement to a high degree.

Since teachers needed resources associated with professional learning to enable implementation to occur, participants were asked what means was most critical for incorporating new learning into classroom practices. The majority of teachers, 52.8% (*n*

= 612), cited that having time to plan how to use strategies learned from professional development into lessons was the most important. Giving teachers time to observe other colleagues and collaborate regarding new strategies was the most important resource pertaining to staff development for 36.4% (n = 421) of the participants. Only 10.8% (n = 125) stated that materials were the most important resource when implementing learning from staff development. Time was an intangible and elusive need listed on the District Opportunities for Staff Development (DOSD), as pertaining to staff development. Yet, according to teachers, the need for time far outweighed tangible supplies such as workbooks, texts, and manipulatives from workshops or learning sessions attended. Thus, recommendations stated later in the chapter are made to suggest how administrators can cultivate educational environments that foster efficient collaboration with colleagues regarding instruction.

Finally, teacher opinions about the professional development format that facilitated the most personal learning were queried in the survey. The majority of participants, 54.1% (n = 630), selected group or collaborative study from other options, including presentation style, independent study, mentor and mentee relationships, and online learning. In contrast, 1.8% (n = 21) of the respondents reported that online learning situations, involving limited contact with colleagues, was the format facilitating the most professional gain. The findings related to participants' preferred format of professional learning, further solidify the need to establish campuses as professional learning communities (PLCs). Such environments facilitate all staff actively and collaboratively improving student outcomes (DuFour, 2004).

Comparison to Other Studies

District personnel who worked with planning, implementing, and evaluating district staff development experiences adhered to Bellanca's (2009) assertion that professional learning should follow a collaborative goal with measurable outcomes. By extension, administrators relied on Guskey's (1998) levels of evaluation to consider the effectiveness of staff development sessions. The districts reviewed the programs implemented in terms of the quality of learning adults experienced rather than participant narratives describing personal claims. Furthermore, as Guskey and Yoon (2009) recommended, district and campus administrators led staff in discussing student assessment results and based conclusions regarding practitioners expanding expertise on achievement scores.

The administrators who planned, implemented, and evaluated staff development experiences for the districts participating in this study aligned their actions with Killion (2009). Thus, the district leaders communicated the purpose of staff development sessions to all hierarchical levels so that participants identified with the intent of the initiative. More specifically, campus principals correlated student academic needs with necessary professional growth.

Another way that the central office administrators participating in the present study mirrored research when planning and implementing professional development was by recognizing needs of teacher participants as adult learners. Theriot and Tice (2009) asserted that practitioners should be treated as complex thinkers with learning needs that go beyond behavioral skills. Administrators who recognized adult social needs planned staff development experiences that dedicated time for social collaboration and varied instructional formats so that participant interest was maintained.

The findings of the DOSD in the current study support Quick, Holtzman, and Chaney's (2009) conclusion that accumulated experience does not determine how teachers implement professional learning. However, the authors noted characteristics of professional development that staff believed would enhance teaching practices. Two attributes of effective staff development that the authors noted coincide with the findings of this study. Such traits included teachers having ample time to collaborate with peers, and instructors modeling pedagogical strategies and providing feedback when peers implement learning. The findings of Lujan and Day (2010) relate to Quick, Holtzman, and Chaney (2009), as well as this study. This is because the authors determined that a limited time for teachers to work together and school conditions that seclude staff, constrain teachers collaborating. Therefore, school leaders should prioritize providing staff with ample opportunities to work together. Also, as Lujan and Day (2010) suggested, administrators need to plan environmental arrangements that are conducive to adults working together, such as sufficient and comfortable working space.

Still another conclusion that Quick, Holtzman, and Chaney (2009) made aligned with the present study. The authors determined that presentation style workshops positively correlated with instruction that stimulated higher student comprehension. The assertion is similar to the finding from the DOSD in this study because 25.3% (n = 295) of teachers learned the most from presentation style workshops. This percentage is second only to group or collaborative formats of professional development. Thus, teachers in the current study concurred with participants in the research that Quick, Holtzman, and Chaney (2009) conducted.

Two of the most common constraints that Chval, Abell, Pareja, Musikul, and Ritzka (2008) determined to hinder teachers implementing professional development coincided with findings in the present study. According to Chval, et al., teachers in sub-urban areas associated a lack of time and disinteresting topics for professional learning with lessening the effectiveness of staff development experienced. In this study, teachers volunteered dissatisfaction with the amount of time provided for collaborating and the repetition of subject matter offered.

Implications

The findings of this study directly relate to the recommendations of Lujan and Day (2010). These authors stated that campuses should create school cultures that are PLCs (DuFour, 2004). Lujan and Day (2010) found that PLCs provided teachers with enough time to collaborate and plan lessons, while simultaneously cultivating relational bonds among staff. For PLCs to function successfully, Lujan and Day suggested that campuses establish operational norms and maintain the sacredness of collaborative time. Therefore, when working together, teachers need not experience interruptions nor engage in conversations other than those pertaining to the instructional foci.

Li and Chan (2007) suggested that campus leaders account for several factors when establishing a collaborative culture geared towards professional development for faculty. The authors considered a cooperative school in terms of instructional coaches who worked regularly with teachers to discuss instructional needs and progress when implementing reform. Li and Chan stated that leaders need to communicate to teachers that instructional coaches are systems of support rather than individuals who have more of a hierarchical status than standard faculty. Otherwise, the authors found that teachers were reluctant to discuss concerns and needs regarding an implementation for fear that instructional coaches were evaluators. Li and Chan also asserted that principals should provide instructors with enough time to collaborate and observe colleagues teaching, and that staff must work together in small groups. Summarily, Li and Chan learned that professional development that occurred in a cooperative, interactive manner improved teacher ability to plan and implement learned instructional strategies. These findings support participating teacher perspectives that working and studying collaboratively elicited the most professional growth.

The participating districts should consider Guskey’s (1998) program evaluation for learning initiatives. He defined program evaluation as purposeful, routine actions to determine merit or worth. Therefore, program leaders, administrators, and staff development facilitators need to use multiple sources to conclude if professional learning experiences elicited intended outcomes. Guskey (1998) listed the three types of staff development evaluation as planning, formative, and summative.

Guskey’s (1998) recommendation directly aligned with the research in this study because personnel in charge of staff development thoroughly considered blueprints for professional learning experiences. Guskey stated that plans for staff development should determine learning goals, resources available, and the context of faculty learning. When implementing district staff development opportunities, administrators and facilitators in the participating districts identified characteristics that attested to the successful implementation of learning initiatives. In this way, learning leaders conducted routine, formative evaluations to detect potential problems with the effectiveness of staff development and made needed corrections. Thus, as Guskey stated, administrators and facilitators used data obtained from formative evaluations of professional development sessions to positively influence the success of staff learning initiatives summarily.

In the future, administrators from the participating districts must continually strive to evaluate staff development programs on five levels. Guskey (1998) offered five categories for administrators and facilitators to reference when determining the success of district learning programs. The first level concerns participant reactions to the learning experience. By extension, this involves surveys that query practitioners about the perceived worth of the learning and the usefulness of the information gained. Despite the simplistic nature of these evaluations, Guskey iterated the importance of gleaning such information so that learning designs match participant needs.

To address Level 2 of a program evaluation, administrators need to ascertain participant knowledge gains (Guskey, 1998). Personal reflections, simulations, or post-tests should ascertain the expertise and skills that participants obtained from the learning program. The third level of evaluation, organizational support and change, concentrates on the conditions that facilitate participants successfully implementing new learning gained from professional development. The purpose of participating administrators eliciting information at this stage is to better reinforce participants in their attempts to improve expertise and to positively affect plans for initiatives to come. Evaluators reflecting on the third level need to ponder conditions and procedures that affected learning programs and how the knowledge and skills disseminated to participants aligned with district goals. Administrators should adhere to Guskey's suggestions and review the degree of support practitioners received in terms of learning initiatives.

In considering if staff implemented knowledge and skills learned in professional development, participating instructional leaders would engage in Level Four of the program evaluation (Guskey, 1998). Evaluators must determine the measures that exemplify the way and worth of participant implementation. Furthermore, Guskey suggested that leaders review portfolios or reflective logs that participants maintain to document pedagogical practices that changed as a result of staff development.

To fulfill the fifth level of evaluation, Student Learning Outcomes, central office and campus administrators need to determine the underlying reason for engaging in professional learning (Guskey, 1998). Although determining student gains according to district professional growth initiatives is important, Guskey warned school leaders to consider different content areas where pupil performance might have been negatively affected. In other words, administrators and teachers need to remember to give needed efforts to aspects of the educational program that are not highlighted in professional development sessions. When learning initiatives are evaluated on all five levels, important information for improving student achievement is obtained. Guskey challenged districts to move beyond the typical first level and occasional second level of evaluation and focus efforts more holistically when reviewing the impact professional development has on student learning. Thus, participating school districts are justified when considering the degree of organizational support for practitioners who are implementing new learning, determining how participants change practices as a result of professional growth, and reviewing campus achievement outcomes that ensue across content areas.

To make further recommendations regarding districts evaluating staff development programs, Killion (2003) suggested eight steps for evaluators to take when determining the degree of participant learning taking place over an extended period of time. The initial step involves considering if the plans for the learning initiatives are clearly defined, reasonable, and valuable. The next action for evaluating staff learning experiences is formulating questions to assess and shape the learning program to take place. Then, personnel who plan the learning programs should decide what evidence will reflect success of the initiative. The necessary data analyses to determine participant and student growth must be decided as well as when proof of the learning initiative success will be obtained. Steps four and five involve collecting and analyzing the data gathered. Afterwards, according to Killion, district and campus leaders should interpret data and publicize results and conclusions.

Limitations and Suggestions for Future Research

The generalizability of the present study is restricted in several ways. One reason for the limited ability to apply the findings to other school districts is the fact that only school districts located in the north Texas suburban area were reviewed. The populations of the school districts ranged from 18,000 to 34,000. Therefore, the results did not reflect suburban school districts with smaller student enrollment outside this range. To combat this limitation, future researchers need to seek a larger sample of districts to study. In this way, groups of teachers with varying years of experience and degrees held could be studied. Future researchers might also review rural and urban school districts to determine if funding and staff development practices in such areas align with this study.

Another feature of the current study that limited generalizability was that the findings derived from coding interviews with chief financial officers, assistant superintendents, and directors of professional development were reflective of central office viewpoints. Thus, administrators who spoke about teacher involvement in the processes of planning, implementing, and evaluating staff development were answering second-handedly from the perspective of district officials. The applicability of this research would have been stronger if teachers were interviewed about personal involvement with planning, implementing, and evaluating district staff development experiences.

Additionally, a more holistic representation of District B would have enhanced the generalizability of this study. For this district, permission to distribute the survey to district teachers was obtained on a per campus basis. Only nine of the 36 campuses in District B agreed to allow me to solicit teachers for participation. Despite the 42% (n = 186) return rate, the results might have represented the district more authentically if a greater variety of schools had the opportunity to respond to the survey as well.

A final limitation of the present research involved collecting data at a single point, in the middle of the school year. Since all administrators and teachers were questioned during one instance, participants might have changed their perspectives concerning the questions asked of them as the school year continued and more staff development was experienced. A future study would glean more accurate perceptions of administrator and teacher perspectives if insight were solicited at regular intervals throughout the school year.

The results of the present study warrant future research. The outcome of the study provided models for school district processes concerning funding, planning, implementing, and evaluating staff development. Teacher views about the staff development programs that practitioners experienced were described. A future study should entail reviewing documents and artifacts that teachers complete regarding efforts to implement professional learning. Thus, the degree to which participant efforts change as a result of growing professional expertise could be tracked and quantified by associating measurable behavioral goals with a timeline for participants to meet expectations (Bellanca, 2009). Rubrics that outline teacher abilities to articulate growth and exhibit behaviors related to staff learning could guide district and campus administrators in creating the artifacts.

A future study might include a longitudinal case study involving a teacher in each participating district who resists collaborating with peers regarding professional learning to increase student achievement. Similarly, a teacher from each district who actively engages in collaborative efforts regarding professional expertise to improve pupil learning could be reviewed over an identical number of years. This research would allow for an in-depth review of personality traits and professional characteristics of teachers who actively develop expertise so that students benefit. A study like this would benefit school districts that are similar to the ones in the present research. This is because administrators could make informed decisions when selecting staff who exemplify the desired characteristics of campus staff development facilitators. With competent colleagues leading learning initiatives, staff would be more likely to respond positively to the professional development they experience and take ownership of the district investment in developing self expertise (Bellanca, 2009; Sparks, 2009).

Still, future studies should involve teachers specifically understanding accountability measures and the expectations for implementing the staff development programs experienced. Campus leaders and staff development facilitators can reference Richardson‘s (2007) recommendations for creating innovation configuration maps regarding professional learning initiatives. In this way, campus and learning leaders could outline the actions that teachers need to take to meet campus and district expectations for the professional learning. Hall and Hord’s (2007) Levels of Use could form the basis for administrators ascertaining the degree to which participants use knowledge gained from professional learning to change pedagogy. Thus, a recommendation for a future study about the effectiveness of professional development and the impact that it has on student achievement would involve administrators reviewing specific and measurable teacher behaviors towards the targeted goal.

Furthermore, the findings of this dissertation would be enhanced by the results of research targeting campus principals as study participants. Campus administrators could be interviewed individually or in group settings to ascertain their direct insight on how faculty implement learning from professional development. Therefore, a future study should question principals about purposeful efforts to support teachers incorporating learning in which the district has invested and determine the effect that campus administrators publically celebrating staff efforts has on the likelihood that teachers implement changed pedagogy (Guskey, 2002; 1986, Loucks-Horsley et al., 1998; 1987).

Summary

Much literature exists regarding appropriate practices for developing teacher expertise. After all, professional learning is a concept that applies to all Texas teachers appraised under the Professional Development and Appraisal System (TEA, 2010). Ideally, practitioners are intrinsically motivated to continually develop as educators who influence pupils' minds. One function of the educational system is to perpetually enhance staff abilities to service student academic needs. This study reviewed processes that three school districts in north Texas had in place so that all faculty continually learned and increased professional knowledge.

There were three goals of the present study. First, sources of funds that school districts used when developing staff were determined. Also, the ways that school districts developed practitioners were described. Additionally, teacher opinions concerning the effectiveness of staff development programs that district funds supported were reviewed. The goals were accomplished by qualitative and quantitative means. Interviews with district administrators were coded and process diagrams were created that delineated the conditions that the school districts faced when funding, implementing, and evaluating staff development.

This research was different from other studies about professional development because it reviewed related school district processes through administrative perspectives, while respecting teacher input on the outcome of such actions. Teacher responses to the questionnaire were reviewed in terms of mode. chi-square tests were run to determine if one school district was more likely to respond to a prompt in a particular manner over another. No real relationships evolved for any survey questions by district, as determined by the Cramer's V of statistically significant *p* values. Additionally, teacher variables were not found to influence teacher responses. Still, the present study was valuable because it provided insight on current professional development practices. It recommended future actions that administrators and staff development facilitators need to take to increase the likelihood that professional learning positively impacts student achievement. Furthermore, this study highlighted the necessity for administrators to ensure that practitioner learning needs are met so that student academic deficiencies are transformed.

This study is important to the educational community because it outlined recommended practices that school districts can follow to systematically plan, implement, and evaluate faculty professional growth. The results of the study described actions district and campus administrators can take to enhance pedagogical expertise in ways that teachers will perceive as effective. It also appealed to administrators to lead student learning by ensuring that staff continually develop and exercise new knowledge. In conclusion, district and campus leaders should implement measures of accountability for participant behavior as one way to facilitate continued growth for all members of the educational community.

APPENDIX A

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICERS

Purpose of the Study:

The purpose of the study is to understand how the district finances staff development for teachers and how the effectiveness of the funded staff development is evaluated.

Research Questions:
1. In what ways do districts fund professional development for instructional improvement?
2. How do districts use funds to develop staff professionally?
3. What are teachers' views on the effectiveness of staff development?

Interview Questions for Chief Financial Officers:

1. What is your district's process for identifying funding sources for teacher professional development and what are those sources?

2. What budgeting constraints does your district consider when planning, implementing, and evaluating staff development?

3. What other challenges are associated with providing funded staff development for teachers in your district?

4. How are resources for staff development divided among your district campuses?

5. How does your office evaluate the effectiveness of funded staff development?

If you would like information about the findings from this study, please contact Shannon Ivey at Shannon_ivey@sbcglobal.net or XXX-XXX-XXXX.

APPENDIX B

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR ASSISTANT SUPERINTENDENTS OF LEARNER SERVICES AND CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

Purpose of the Study:

The purpose of the study is to understand how the district develops staff professionally and how the district evaluates the effectiveness of staff development for teachers.

Research Questions:
1. In what ways do districts fund professional development for instructional improvement?
2. How do districts use funds to develop staff professionally?
3. What are teachers' views on the effectiveness of staff development?

Interview Questions for Assistant Superintendents of Learner Services and Curriculum and Instruction:

1. What do you believe is the purpose of staff development?

2. What types of professional development does your district provide?

3. What are the challenges associated with providing staff development for teachers in your district that you face as Assistant Superintendent of Learner Services and Curriculum and Instruction?

4. What evidence of professional learning do you expect your teachers to provide as a result of district staff development? To whom do they provide this evidence?

5. How are teachers held accountable for implementing professional learning in their classrooms?

6. How does your office evaluate the impact of professional development?

If you would like information regarding this study, please contact Shannon Ivey at Shannon_ivey@sbcglobal.net or XXX-XXX-XXXX.

APPENDIX C

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR DIRECTORS OF STAFF DEVELOPMENT

Purpose of the Study:
The purpose of the study is to understand how districts develop staff professionally and how the district evaluates the effectiveness of staff development for teachers.

Research Questions:
1. In what ways do districts fund professional development for instructional improvement?
2. How do districts use funds to develop staff professionally?
3. What are teachers' views on the effectiveness of staff development?

Interview Questions for Directors of Professional Development

1. What types of professional development does your district provide?

2. What is your district's goal for staff development?

3. What are the challenges associated with providing staff development for teachers in your district that you face as Director of Staff Development?

4. What evidence of professional learning do you expect your teachers to provide as a result of district staff development? To whom do they provide this evidence?

5. How are teachers held accountable for implementing professional learning in their classrooms?

6. How does your office evaluate the impact of professional development?

If you would like information from the findings of this study, please contact Shannon Ivey at Shannon_Ivey@sbcglobal.net or XXX-XXX-XXXX.

APPENDIX D

DISTRICT OPPORTUNITIES FOR STAFF DEVELOPMENT TEACHER QUESTIONNAIRE

District Opportunities for Staff Development

Teacher Questionnaire

District Opportunities for Staff Development 0001

1. Background and Purpose

Background: The topic for this dissertation study is the funding and effectiveness of staff development programs in three North Texas school districts. You are being asked to participate in this study so that the researcher can obtain information about teacher views and experiences related to professional development. Your participation in the study is fully voluntary. Your completion of this survey indicates your willingness to serve as a participant. Thank you!

Purpose: The purpose of this questionnaire is to elicit teacher perspectives regarding opportunities for staff development that school districts provide.

2. Directions and Assurance

Directions: Please read the following questions and choose the answer(s) that best describe(s) your perspectives.

Your identity will not and can not be connected to your responses. As an extra measure of security, this survey is protected by a Secure Sockets Layer (SSL).

If you desire information from this study, please contact Shannon Ivey at 469-223-4004.

This questionnaire should take no more than 10 minutes to complete.

Thank you for participating.

What range of grades do you currently teach?

	PK-4	5-8	9-12
Current Grade Range Assignment	○	○	○

What is the highest degree of education you have obtained?

	Bachelor's	Master's	Doctorate
Degree Held	○	○	○

Total Years Teaching Experience (Round to the Nearest Whole Number)

Years Including 2009-2010 School Year ____________

3. Questions About Staff Development

Please rate the degree of your knowledge about financial constraints your district faces when funding professional development.

	None	Limited	Satisfactory	High
Rating	○	○	○	○

District Opportunities for Staff Development 0001

Please rate the degree to which your teaching practices would change if you had more knowledge about financial constraints your district faces regarding professional development.

	None	Limited	Satisfactory	High
Rating	○	○	○	○

Please rate the degree to which your teaching would improve if you received more resources to implement what you learn during professional development.

	None	Limited	Satisfactory	High
Rating	○	○	○	○

To what extent does having the appropriate resources (i.e. time to plan and/or collaborate, materials, etc.) available motivate you to implement teaching practices that you learn during professional development?

	None	Limited	Satisfactory	High
Rating	○	○	○	○

To what extent do you believe that professional learning (staff development) makes you a better teacher?

	None	Limited	Satisfactory	High
Rating	○	○	○	○

How would you rate the impact that your professional learning has on your students?

	None	Limited	Satisfactory	High
Rating	○	○	○	○

On what do you base your opinion? (Please choose only one.)

○ Informal observation

○ Documentation/Note keeping of student performance

○ Assessment data

○ Student/Teacher conferencing

○ All of the above

Other (please specify)

District Opportunities for Staff Development 0001

What resource is the most important in helping you implement new practices that you learn during professional development? (Please choose only one.)

- ◯ Time to plan
- ◯ Materials
- ◯ Time to observe or collaborate with others who successfully use the practices

From what format of professional development do you learn the most? (Please choose only one.)

- ◯ Presentation style (lecture, demonstration, or PowerPoint)
- ◯ Group/Collaborative study
- ◯ Independent study
- ◯ Mentor/Mentee relationships
- ◯ On-line learning
- ◯ Other (please specify)

How do you demonstrate what you learn from professional development to your colleagues? (Please choose all that apply.)

- ☐ Informal discussion (in person or on-line)
- ☐ Show student work samples
- ☐ Formally present information (i.e. staff meetings, conferences, or workshops)
- ☐ Other

Other (please specify)

How do you demonstrate what you learn from professional development to your students? (Please choose all that apply.)

- ☐ Discussion
- ☐ Simulation
- ☐ Direct Instruction
- ☐ Other

Other (please specify)

District Opportunities for Staff Development 0001

In what ways does your school district hold you accountable for providing evidence of learning? (Please choose all that apply.)

- [ ] Certificate/Credit when you complete a learning session
- [ ] Campus or district administrators examining your teaching practices for specific evidence of your training
- [ ] Sharing data with you about your students' achievement before and after professional learning to determine if your training impacted student assessment results
- [ ] Documentation of how you incorporate your professional learning into your lesson plans
- [ ] All of the above
- [ ] No teacher accountability by the district
- [ ] Other

Other (please specify)

4. Thank You!

Your time and insight are appreciated and will contribute to the purpose of this study.

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