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SECONDARY TEACHERS AND ADMINISTRATORS PERCEPTIONS OF
TEACHER LEADERSHIP WITHIN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF PROFESSIONAL
LEARNING COMMUNITIES

by

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Dedication

I dedicate this dissertation to my loving grandparents, Richard George, Jr. and Bessie George for encouraging, supporting, and believing in me. I would also like to dedicate this work to Dr. Bettye Grigsby, who inspired me to complete my dissertation no matter how tough the process would be. Thank you for your guidance and support through this journey.

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ABSTRACT

SECONDARY TEACHERS AND ADMINISTRATORS PERCEPTIONS OF TEACHER LEADERSHIP WITHIN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF PROFESSIONAL LEARNING COMMUNITIES

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The purpose of this study was to examine secondary or high school teachers and administrators' perception of teacher leadership within the PLC model. The study included a review of data collected from the Professional Learning Communities Assessment-Revised (PLCA-R) from a purposeful sample of high school teachers and administrators from a large suburban school district in southeast Texas. A purposeful sample of high school teachers, teacher leaders, administrators, and the Director of Professional Growth were interviewed in an attempt to provide a more in-depth understanding of their perceptions of teacher leadership within the PLC model. Quantitative data were analyzed using frequencies and percentages, while an inductive coding process was used to analyze the collected qualitative data. Quantitative data analyzed the five dimensions of PLCs varied based on the campuses of the teachers and administrators. Qualitative analysis reinforced quantitative data gathered while bringing

additional clarity to teachers, teacher leaders, administrators and the Director of Professional Growth perceptions of teacher leadership in PLCs. Quantitative analysis revealed that there is evidence of the implementation model of PLCs in the district, however there is some inconsistency in the shared and supportive leadership domain. The qualitative analysis supported the inconsistency in shared and supportive leadership evidence in the teacher leaders role in PLCs from the perspectives of the teachers, teacher leaders, administrators' and the Director of Professional Growth.

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CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

According to the National Staff Development Council (NSDC, 2001), professional development has been a comprehensive, sustained, and intensive approach to improving teachers effectiveness in raising student achievement. It has been the process by which educators acquire or enhance the knowledge, skills, attitudes, and beliefs necessary to create high levels of learning for all students. Traditional models of professional development have focused primarily on providing teachers with the skills and knowledge necessary to become better educators. These models have typically been grounded in the assumption that the purpose of professional development has been to convey to teachers the knowledge for practice (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1999).

A common practice amongst administrators was to select professional development content learning for teachers. Decisions for selection were determined based upon many factors, however, these trainings were not necessarily devoted to student achievement or directed at what the teachers needed to improve classroom practice. Teachers did not have a choice in what professional development they received. Therefore, the professional development that teachers attended was not meeting their educational needs. Darling-Hammond and Sykes (2003) contended that traditional models of professional development have not been high quality therefore, they did not meet the needs of teachers or students. The traditional models of professional development lacked teacher's communication when it came to what teachers needed instructionally to increase learning in their classroom. Many reasons existed as to why typical professional development has hindered exemplary teaching and stifles teachers professional learning experiences. One reason has been the professional developments have been selected based on what administrators think teachers need. A second reason

has been the professional developments are not meaningful to what teacher needs to improve instruction in the classroom.

The No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB, 2002) ushered in a new framework for teacher professional learning with the recognition that high-quality professional development has been key to ensuring that teachers have the knowledge and skills necessary to help all students meet high standards. In an effort to meet the demands of NCLB, and to provide high-quality professional development, school administrators have been organizing their schools into Professional Learning Communities (PLCs). Professional Learning Communities have been defined as a concentrated, ongoing process that has involved teachers and principals working collaboratively to seek and share learning and to act on their learning with the collective goal of enhancing their effectiveness as professionals for students' benefit (Hord, 1997). The creation of a PLC has meant an end to teacher isolation, has provided teachers autonomy over professional development needs, and promoted their shared professional development learning environments (Hellner, 2008). Teachers have learned when professional development in the school has been structured to help them learn from one another as part of their routine teaching practice (DuFour, 2011). Professional Learning Communities have yielded positive results for teaching practices (Linder, Post, & Calabrese, 2012).

The central focus of PLCs has been a collaborative culture occurring through time set aside during the contracted day to evaluate student performance and improve classroom instruction (DuFour, DuFour, & Eaker, 2008). Professional Learning Communities have provided the opportunity for teachers to work collegially, take risks, reflect about practices, and share their knowledge and expertise with each other (Darling-Hammond & Richardson, 2009). The PLC model represents a fundamental shift away from the traditional model of professional development. With this shift, teachers have

been seen as the experts and create their own professional development in collaboration with other teachers. According to DuFour (2004), a PLC has been a form of professional development that has been structured to ensure that students learn, fosters a culture of collaboration, and focuses on results. During the collaborative process, the needs of students have been at the center of discussions and what can be done to improve the learning for each child (DuFour, 2004).

Elementary PLCs

Elementary schools in particular, have had to be responsive to these high-stakes accountability policies that enforce tightened “output” controls as a means to raise student performance. In response to this external pressure from national and local educational policies, many schools have been increasingly involved in large-scale educational reforms directed at strengthening elementary teachers professional expertise and practice, with the ultimate goal of increasing student achievement (Slegers, den Brok, Verbiest, Moolenaar, & Daly, 2013). Reforms implemented at the elementary level typically aim to build school- and teacher-level capacity through professional development initiatives (Coburn, Russell, Kaufman, & Stein, 2012; Leithwood & Louis, 1998; Smylie & Hart, 1999). Lomos, Hofman, and Bosker (2011) have pointed out that PLCs in secondary schools have been organized in subject departments whereas, PLCs in primary schools (K-fifth) have been based on the collaboration between all members of the school team. Team members that regularly collaborate and have been focused on continuously improving the way in which they meet learner needs have been a professional learning community (Reichstetter, 2006).

Secondary PLCs

Typical secondary or high school PLCs have been comprised of teachers, either from the same grade level or content area, varying in number from as few as two to as

many as 12 who meet regularly and use their meeting time in a structured manner to review and improve instructional practices and student achievement (Bolam, McMahon, Stoll, Thomas, & Wallace, 2005). The nature and structure of secondary high schools present a number of challenges for professional learning. These schools have been typically larger and more complex than elementary schools. Poskitt (2001) has noted that such characteristics may create communication and organizational challenges. A key feature that has been highlighted is that secondary schools are organized by subject-area departments (Bolam et al., 2005; Stoll & Louis, 2007; Timperley, Wilson, Barrar, & Fung, 2007). The critical difference of departmentalization from the elementary grade levels creates an additional challenge due to the content specialization of the teachers comprising the PLCs. King and Newmann (2001) suggested that teacher learning has been most likely to occur when teachers have opportunities to collaborate with professional peers. Learning in groups across the school will better support school-wide improvement.

Teacher Leadership

Professional learning communities facilitate teacher leadership by allowing teachers to collaborate on their professional work, analyze student data, and assess student learning (Wilson, 2016). The concept of teacher leadership has been complicated by the fact that often, teacher leaders do not hold the same titles across schools. Within the literature, teacher leaders have been given titles such as coordinator, instructional specialists/coaches, lead teacher, department chair, and mentor teacher, just to name a few (Mangin & Stoelinga, 2008; Neumerski, 2012). Initial forms of teacher leadership involved formal roles, such as department head, master teacher, or union representative. Essentially such roles consisted of managerial tasks with the primary purpose of

efficiency in school operations rather than in instructional leadership (York-Barr & Duke, 2004).

Professional learning communities facilitate teacher leadership by allowing teachers to collaborate on their professional work, analyze student data, and assess student learning (Wilson, 2016). The rationale for teacher leadership in PLCs stems in part from extensive research highlighting the profound impact effective instruction has on student learning (Taylor, 2008). As Curtis (2013) argues, school systems must leverage this impact, putting the most effective teachers “in front of the greatest number of students, or the students with the greatest learning needs” (p. iii). Teacher leadership opportunities have enabled career pathways (ladders, lattices) for teachers to remain highly engaged in their practice and extend their influence, especially in high-needs schools.

The literature also asserts that the principal reason for teacher leadership has been to transform schools into professional learning communities (Katzenmeyer & Moller, 2001) and to empower teachers to become involved closely in decision-making within the school, thus contributing to the democratization of schools (Gehrke, 1991). While the quality of teaching most strongly influences levels of pupil motivation and achievement, it has been demonstrated that the quality of leadership matters in determining the motivation of teachers and the quality of teaching in the classroom (Fullan, 2001; Sergiovanni, 1999).

Teacher Perception of Teacher Leadership

A focused characterization of teacher leadership has been further obscured by their self-perception, which often differs from the perceptions of their colleagues therefore, teacher leaders may alternately see themselves as reflective practitioners, action researchers, collaborators, mentors, instructional experts, or risk takers (Wynne,

2001). Teacher leaders, at times, perceive themselves as professional development trainers and curriculum innovators (Mimbs, 2002), while their colleagues may perceive them either in a positive light as teacher advocates (Beauchum & Dentith, 2004), in a negative light as elitists, harmful to teacher morale, or detrimental to accepted classroom practices (Smylie & Denny, 1990).

Teacher leaders have many roles depending on how they see themselves as leader. Teacher leaders may have a specific role based on their campus needs. It could be all the above, however, teachers may not know how to effectively implement these roles as teacher leaders. If teachers perceptions of teacher leaders have been viewed as negative, then teachers may become resentful and lose trust in the teacher leader. This attitude and lack of trust could negatively impact the growth of teacher because of how they perceive the teacher leader. If the teachers feel like teacher leaders have not been there to support them, they may become non-receptive to anything the teacher leaders may present. Allen (2004) examined teacher leadership in terms of their voice, pointing out that too often the teacher's voice focuses on everyday management issues rather than school renewal efforts.

Valentine and Prater (2011) postulated that transformational forms of leadership encourage secondary school principals to seek competent teachers who can become teacher leaders. Therefore, the leadership that high school department heads provide could be critical to teachers wellbeing, quality of teaching and learning, and student achievement (Kuhlemeier & van den Bergh, 2000). Principals have meaningful insights to share about how teacher leadership helps the campus as a whole, and that they have their methods of facilitating and sustaining this leadership (Boyd, 2005).

High school principals may see teacher leadership roles as much more than delegating tasks or trying to ease their own burden. High school principals may depend

on teacher leadership for communicating information, raising concerns, encourage staff to support each another, addressing students' progress and well-being, and establishing a positive culture on campus (Boyd, 2005). In high school, teacher leaders have been the bridge between administrators and teacher. Administrators use their teacher leaders to serve as instructional leaders to support teachers in the area of their instruction to ensure students' success.

The PLC Model

In recent years, schools have expressed an increasing interest in PLCs nationally to address challenges with implementing school improvement strategies designed to improve teaching and learning (Huffman & Hipp, 2010; Huffman, 2011). Research suggests that PLCs positively impact school improvement when they have been properly implemented, when teachers work collaboratively, and when schools prioritize student learning (DuFour, 2004; Eaker & Keating, 2008).

Due to increased accountability measures in student achievement, many school districts have been implementing PLCs as a teacher leadership model focused upon the necessary support in identifying appropriated instructional strategies to meet students' learning needs (Thessin & Starr, 2011). PLCs have been collaborative groups of teachers usually from the same grade level, or subject areas who work interdependently to align curriculum, create and administer common learning assessments, analyze student achievement data, and implement classroom-based interventions and enrichment opportunities for students. Professional Learning Communities use data such as district common assessment, campus common assessment, and state assessments to make informed decisions about how to best serve students (DuFour, DuFour, Eaker, & Many, 2006).

As part of the NCLB, all states' educational leaders were required to establish curriculum standards and assessment tools that demonstrated if and how schools were making adequate yearly progress. As a result of these ongoing mandates, educators in school systems across the United States (U.S.) continually implement initiatives and strategies that will assist their schools in improving student learning. Professional Learning Communities has been one tool that receives major attention and momentum to address school reform and provides schools with an organizational structure to meet the academic performance standards set by NCLB, as well as the learning needs of all students (Blankstein, 2004; DuFour et al., 2006; Feger & Arruda, 2008; Fullan, 2005; Hord, 2004; Reeves, 2007).

Stapleton and Robles-Pina (2009) contended that, due to teacher and school accountability, retention has become an increasingly larger problem throughout the United States. The findings from Jimerson and et al., (2006), indicated that research shows nearly three million students have been retained in the United States each year. The U.S. Department of Education's National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) and the U.S. Department of Education Statistics (2008) reported 10% of students in kindergarten through twelfth grade had previously been retained (Stapleton & Robles-Pina, 2009). Dillow (2003) noted that for many public school students, particularly male students from low-income or ethnic minority families, graduating from high school has remained problematic, even as the nation's general educational level has increased and improved academically.

The professional learning community model ensures that the emphasis has been on student learning rather solely on teaching (DuFour, 2004). "Therefore, this shift from a focus on teaching to a focus on learning may better ensure student achievement" (DuFour, 2004, p. 6). Researchers who have studied schools implementing the

professional learning community concept or practice have consistently cited professional learning communities as the best hope for sustained, substantive school improvement (Darling-Hammond, 2001; Fullan, 2005; Louis & Marks, 1998; McLaughlin & Talbert, 2001; Reeves, 2006; Saphier, 2005; Schmoker, 2005; Sparks, 2005).

In order to improve successful student achievement in high schools and create effective PLCs, one approach has been to organize PLCs by subject areas because this is how most high schools are organized (Levin, 2012). Hence, PLCs in high schools can be organized through professional subject areas because teachers may feel allegiance to this setting (Levin, 2012). PLCs usually involve teachers and instructional specialists. Occasionally some administrators will participate in PLCs based on their assigned grade level or content area.

Professional Learning Communities has been a professional learning practice used to institute a school-wide culture that increases teacher leadership and focuses on building and sustaining school improvement efforts (Louis, 2006). Professional Learning Communities have been built on two assumptions: (a) knowledge is gained through job-embedded experiences where teachers of similar grades or content areas reflect on their practice and (b) teachers who participate in PLCs will strengthen their professional knowledge which will improve student learning (DuFour, DuFour, Eaker, & Many, 2008).

A professional learning community is an ongoing process in which educators work collaboratively in recurring cycles of collective inquiry and action research to achieve better results for the students they serve. Team members regularly collaborate and have been focused on continuously improving the way in which they meet learner needs, which have been through professional learning communities (Dufour, Dufour, Eaker, & Many, 2010, Reichstetter, 2006). Professional learning communities have

created a structure that has enhanced the quality of teacher professional development, coordinated adult learning with student needs, adopted research-based strategies, increased teacher leadership, and brought about a sense of community focused on a common vision that aligned with school and district goals (Mullen, 2008).

Most importantly, given the need to improve the quality of instruction and the lack of clarity, and shared knowledge about what systems and activities improve teaching; this has been the right time for educators to have taken the lead in what has been known (DeMonte, 2013). In addition, educators need to know, what kinds of activities have been currently taking place; and what will be needed going forward as reforms move through the educational system (DeMonte, 2013). Equally important, has been the work of improving instruction to help students achieve, which deserves educators' attention, particularly, when it has been an important part of powerful reforms, which has been the landscape of professional learning (Bezzina, 2006; DeMonte 2013).

All content area such as reading, math, science, and social studies typically have designated days for PLCs in which teachers have been collaborating through the review of data and sharing best practices. DuFour (2004) describes a PLC as a systematic process in which teachers work together to analyze and improve their classroom practice. During PLCs, teachers analyze data to identify strengths, weakness, and trends; and collaborate on the next steps to ensure student success. The intended outcome of PLCs has been that teachers will implement best instructional practices and student achievement and success will increase. PLCs, by definition, exist for the purpose of improving teacher professional learning for the purpose of improved student learning (Stoll & Louis, 2007).

Professional Learning Communities are opportunities for professional development and reflective practice within schools to support students' needs (Dufour,

2011). Ideally all stakeholders who have been teachers, instructional specialists, and administrators share the same vision and goals. Communication and collaboration between all stakeholders have been major elements in PLCs, and what makes PLCs engaging and meaningful for participating teachers. Schools that foster continuous discussions among its PLC members for the purpose of teacher and student growth can improve overall functionality (Danielson, 2002). The implementation of professional learning communities in some schools serves as a framework for developing continuous, effective professional growth for teachers and administrators. An effective professional learning community has the capacity to promote and sustain the learning of all professionals in the school community with the collective, moral purpose of improving student learning (Bolam et al., 2005).

School Leadership in PLCs

It has been unrealistic to expect any school principal to know everything about leading complex organizations like schools (Spillane, 2006). Accordingly, principals have been increasingly tasked with creating opportunities for improving professional learning and development for teachers as a key aspect of school improvement (Hargreaves & Fullan, 2012). Research shows that the principal has been a primary agent in the success and effectiveness of implementing conditions for a learning community culture (Fullan, 2001; Harris, 2002; Lambert, 1998; Mitchell & Sackney, 2000; Speck, 1999). Hargreaves and Fullan (2012), argue that principals should join with teachers to cultivate three forms of capital essential for improving teaching in all schools: (a) human capital (the knowledge and skills of teaching and learning); (b) social capital (the processes and structures that enable relationships built on trust and respect to form bonds among teachers that support the hard work of learning to improve teaching); (c) and decision-making capital (the ability to make wise and informed decisions that reflect the

level of professionalism required as a teacher). According to Hargreaves and Fullan (2012), an effective use of PLCs has been to promote all three forms of capital among teachers, with teachers and administrators jointly ensuring the conditions for collective responsibility for continuous learning for improvement have been established and sustained.

Research Problem

According to Bond (2015), teacher leadership was recognized as an important field of study in the 1980s and since then, articles and books have been written on the subject. There have always been teachers who have been leaders, however now there has been a more of a demand on the implementation of teacher leadership in PLCs as it could possibly impact teachers and students' learning which can lead to student achievement.

A review of current literature has revealed inconsistency in defining teacher leadership due to a myriad of concept variations, from leading by example to assuming a specific leadership position (Bowman, 2004; Crowther, Kaagan, Ferguson, & Hann, 2002; Frost, Durrant, Head, & Holden, 2000; Katzenmeyer & Moller, 2001; Murphy, 2005; Wasley, 1991). Most teachers who have taken on leadership roles do not see themselves as leaders, reserving the term leader for those who have taken on formal roles, such as principals or district supervisors. Instead, they perceive that most of their work has been done informally through collaboration (Moller, Childs-Bowen, & Scrivner, 2001). Although definitions of teacher leadership differ, a commonly held notion has been the expanded view of leadership beyond traditional classroom boundaries (Beauchum & Dentith, 2004).

Research has been limited regarding the principal's definition of the concept of teacher leadership though researchers generally acknowledge that teacher leaders cannot be successful in school reform without the support of the school leader (Crowther et al.,

2002; Katzenmeyer & Moller, 2001; Murphy, 2005). There has not been much research on administrators and teachers in regards to teacher leadership and teacher leadership in PLCs. Therefore, it has been unclear about teachers and administrators' understanding of teacher leadership roles in PLCs. Silva, Gimbert and Nolan (2000) noted that teachers and principals' voices have been missing from much of the literature advocating for teacher leadership, leading to the conclusion that teacher leadership has yet to be defined by those who actually practice the concept.

While it has been a unique form of leadership not necessarily vested in a formal hierarchy or role description, it also has been legitimately grounded within the boundaries of several other leadership theories. Professional learning communities facilitate teacher leadership by allowing teachers to collaborate on their professional work, analyze student data, and assess student learning (Wilson, 2016). The literature supports the notion that professional learning communities have been shown to be successful in improving student achievement and enhancing professional growth within teachers (Dufour, Dufour, & Eaker, 2008; Lieberman & Miller, 2004; Newmann & Wehlage, 1995; Senge, 1990).

Significance of Study

The purpose of this study has been to examine secondary teachers and administrators' perceptions of teacher leadership in professional learning communities. Teacher leadership has been increasingly viewed as an essential part of effective school leadership, as one person cannot work alone to make the changes needed to meet ever-changing campus and district needs (Timperley, 2005). According to Lieberman (2015), for teacher leadership to become more widely recognized, researchers need to explore and understand practices that nurture teacher leadership skills. York-Barr and Duke (2004) concluded that the success of teacher leadership depends on interrelated, foundational conditions in three areas: (a) school culture, (b) relationships, and (c) school

structures. First, researchers have argued that, for schools to exhibit positive change through teacher leadership, they must have cultures that foster communication, collaboration, and learning (Little 2006; Wood 2007).

The principal must be open to and supportive of teacher leaders, understand the teacher leaders work, and ensure they have a prominent and visible role in developing the mission and values of the school (Drago-Severson, 2007; Little, 2006; Mangin, 2007; Wood, 2007). Moreover, researchers have concluded that teacher leaders have the capacity to lead the school via increasing teacher collaboration, spreading best practices, encouraging teacher professional learning, offering assistance with differentiation, and focusing on content-specific issues (Curtis, 2013; Muijs & Harris, 2003, 2006).

Research Purpose and Questions

The purpose of this study was to examine secondary or high school teachers and administrators' perception of teacher leadership within the PLC model.

1. What are high school teachers perceptions of the teacher leadership role within their participation in PLCs?
2. What are high school administrators' perceptions of the role of teacher leadership within their participation in PLCs?
3. What qualities and attributes from the perspectives of high school teachers and high school administrators contribute to effective implementation of PLCs?

Definitions of Key Terms

Administrators are the principals who have been hired to manage the school (Levin, 2005).

Distributed leadership is defined as varieties of expertise and decision-making widely distributed across many people (Bennet, Wise, Woods, & Harvey, 2003).

Collective learning and the application of the learning is described as the dimension of professional learning communities which “requires that the school staff at all levels are engaged in processes that collectively seek new knowledge among staff and application of the learning to solutions that address students’ needs” (Hord, 2004, p. 7).

General education is defined as the instructional setting of students without disabilities; the placement was formerly termed regular education (Algozzine & Ysseldyke, 2006).

Instructional leadership is learning-focused, in that it “increases the school’s capacity for improving teachers instructional capacity” (Heck & Hallinger, 2014, p. 658).

Perceptions refers to habits of mind that teachers bring to their daily work in the classroom; a way that an individual understands something (Vescio, Ross, & Adams, 2008).

Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) is defined as a concentrated, ongoing process that involves teachers and principals in working collaboratively to seek and share learning and to act on their learning with the collective goal of enhancing their effectiveness as professionals for students’ benefit (Hord, 1997).

Reculturing is a process of developing new values, beliefs, and norms (Fullan, 1996) focusing on: (a) collaboration, (b) developing mission, vision, values, and goals, (c) focusing on learning, (d) leadership, (e) focused school improvement plans, (f) celebration, and (g) persistence (Eaker, DuFour, & Burnette, 2002).

Shared personal practice is described as the dimension of professional learning communities, which “involves the review of a teacher’s behavior by colleagues and includes feedback and assistance activity to support individual and community improvement” (Hord, 2004, p. 7).

Shared and supportive leadership is the dimension of professional learning communities which “requires the collegial and facilitative participation of the principal who shares leadership – and thus, power and authority – by inviting staff input and action in decision making” (Hord, 2004, p. 7).

Shared values and vision is described as the dimension of professional learning communities, which “include an unwavering commitment to learning that is consistently articulated and referenced in the staff’s work” (Hord, 2004, p. 7).

Student achievement is defined as demonstrating proficiency on state academic achievement standards and State academic assessments (NCLB, 2002).

Supportive conditions is described as the dimension of professional learning communities, which “include physical conditions and human capacities that encourage and sustain a collegial atmosphere and collective learning” (Hord, 2004, p. 7).

Teacher leadership are “leaders who lead within and beyond the classroom, identify with and contribute to a community of teacher learners and leaders, influence others toward improved educational practice” (Katzenmeyer & Moller, 2001, p. 5).

Teacher Learning is related to increased content and pedagogical knowledge and skills, and/or changes in knowledge and beliefs about the nature of a discipline, teachers and teaching, and/or learners and learning (Loucks-Horsley, Love, Stiles, Mundry, & Hewson, 2003).

Conclusion

The focus of this study was to examine secondary or high school teachers and administrators’ perceptions of teacher leadership on the effective implementation of PLCs. It has been imperative for teacher leaders and administrators to understand their individual roles within the PLC structure, which can better, ensure more effective PLCs. This key understanding can lead to teacher learning and student’s success in the

classroom. The lack of communication and understanding what teacher leadership has been can have a negative effect on the implementation of PLCs. This study will help teacher leaders and administrators have a clearer understanding of their perceptions of teacher leadership in PLCs and will give recommendations to teacher leaders and administrators on their roles in PLCs so that they can be more effective. The chapter discussed the significance of the importance of having a clear understanding of the role of teacher leadership as it can have a significant impact the effectiveness of PLCs. This chapter presents an introduction to PLCs, the research problem to be studied, and the significance of the study, the identified research questions and definition of key terms. The next chapter will provide a review of the research literature about PLCs and a theoretical framework for this study.

CHAPTER II: LITERATURE REVIEW

This study has examined secondary teachers and administrators' perceptions of teacher leadership in PLCs. In this chapter, basic information regarding the history of PLCs, characteristics of PLCs and various PLC models has been discussed. In addition, secondary PLCs, teacher leadership, and principal roles have been discussed. The chapter also includes professional development in PLCs and the gap in research has been presented. Finally, the theoretical framework has been discussed as it related to the study that has been being researched. Each of the stated variables has an impact on teacher leadership in PLCs and allowed me to fully comprehend the research and understand teacher leadership in PLCs. This study has addressed the following questions: (a) What are high school teachers perceptions of the teacher leadership role within their participation in PLCs? (b) What are high school administrators' perceptions of the role of teacher leadership within their participation in PLCs? (c) What qualities and attributes from the perspectives of high school teachers and administrators' of teacher leadership contribute to effective implementation of PLCs?

History of Professional Learning Communities

The professional learning community practice to improve learning in education has been an offshoot of a learning organization model which began in the business sector, but with many easily transferable traits and characteristics, made its way into the field of education (Hughes & Kritsonis, 2006). Learning organizations have been effective when people increase their capacity to design important outcomes, encourage unreserved thinking, and support an environment where individuals have been comfortable learning from each other (Senge, 2006).

During an interview with Schultz (1999), Senge stated the following, “To meet today’s challenges of globalization, changing work forces, evolving competition, and new technologies, the only hope for building and sustaining momentum in a learning organization requires a fundamental shift in thinking and actions” (p. 1). Therefore, as educational leaders became more familiar with the practice of a learning organization, the name was changed to professional learning community (Hughes & Kritsonis, 2006). In this way, PLC has modified the learning organization model to create an environment that supports a collaborative culture for teachers (Vescio, Ross, & Adams 2006). It was hoped that the creation of PLCs, which emphasized the characteristics of a learning organization, would result in more schools being more creative and productive (Hughes & Kritsonis, 2006).

A changing focus transpired in schools as a result of the provisions of the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) of 2001 requiring all schools to be accountable for student performance (DuFour et al., 2008). A substantial body of research indicated that schools with PLC characteristics have increased expectations for student achievement and behavior, created a positive learning environment, improved teacher instructional practices, and narrowed student achievement gaps (Childs-Bowen, 2007; Schmoker, 2006).

Characteristics of PLCs

Professional Learning Communities has provided a proven conceptual framework for transforming schools on all levels (DuFour, 2007; DuFour & Eaker, 2006). Professional Learning Communities have been ongoing meetings of educators who gather on a regular basis to increase their own learning as well as that of their students (Lieberman & Miller, 2011). Professional Learning Communities have been implemented at the elementary, middle and high school level to promote student achievement and

teachers growth in instructional methods and strategies. Each group has been characterized by the same fundamental core beliefs and values: that educators can learn from each other, and that PLCs foster a supportive and collaborative environment designed to increase teacher effectiveness thereby promoting student learning and achievement (Lieberman & Miller, 2011). Professional learning communities have been built on two assumptions: (a) knowledge has been gained through job-embedded experiences where teachers of similar grades or content areas reflect on their practice and (b) teachers who participate in PLCs will strengthen their professional knowledge which will improve student learning (DuFour et al., 2008).

The central focus of PLCs has been a collaborative culture occurring through time set aside during the contracted day to evaluate student performance and improve classroom instruction (DuFour et al., 2008). Typical PLCs have been comprised of teachers, either from the same grade level or content area, varying in number from as few as two to as many twelve who meet regularly and use their meeting time in a structured manner to review and improve instructional practices and student achievement (Bolam et al., 2005). Professional learning communities have created a structure that has enhanced the quality of teacher professional development, coordinated adult learning with student needs, adopted research-based strategies, increased teacher leadership, and brought about a sense of community focused on a common vision that aligned with school and district goals (Mullen, 2008).

PLCs Model Overview

Hord (1997) conducted a thorough analysis of the literature to determine the following: (a) the definition of a learning community; (b) what the literature says about what constitutes a learning community; (c) what happens when a school staff studies, works, plans, and takes action collectively to increase student learning; (d) and to reveal

what has been known about how to create PLCs in schools. Continuing with the direction of her work, DuFour (2004) and others committed to developing and sustaining PLCs continued to explore the factors that will enable others to create and sustain an authentic PLC to promote both teacher and student learning. According to DuFour (2004), PLCs have been comprised of three big ideas. The first idea has been to ensure that all students learn. DuFour (2004) clarified the first idea by pointing out that it has simply not been enough to teach children; the focus must be on making sure that children learn. DuFour (2004) suggested that schools find a discrepancy...“between their commitment to ensure learning for all students and their lack of a coordinated strategy to respond when all students do not learn” (p. 8).

According to DuFour (2004), the PLCs’ response to students who experience difficulty has been timely because it has been based on intervention rather the remediation, and has been also a plan that requires students to devote extra time and receive additional assistance until they have mastered the necessary concepts. DuFour’s (2004) second big idea was fostering a culture of collaboration. It was his belief that teachers recognize the fact that they must work together to achieve their collective purpose, learning for all. DuFour (2004) called for the creation of structures that promote a collaborative culture, and recognized that the powerful collaboration of PLCs occurs when teachers work together to analyze and improve their classroom practice. This collaboration itself fosters an ongoing cycle of questions designed to promote deep team learning, thus allowing the collaborative cycle or process to lead to higher levels of student achievement. DuFour’s (2004) third big idea was that there must be a focus on results, and the effectiveness of the PLC must be based on the results of the students. DuFour (2004) has been clear when he states, “Every teacher team participates in ongoing process of identifying the current level of student achievement, establishing a

goal to improve the current level, working together to achieve that goal and providing evidence of progress” (p. 10).

The goals of the team continually shift as the student data has been analyzed and the needs of students change. By utilizing common formative assessments, teachers could see how their own students performed, but even more importantly, according to DuFour (2004), “...teachers can call on their team colleagues to help them reflect on areas of concern. Each teacher has access to the ideas, materials, strategies and talents of the entire team” (p. 10). Given that Senge’s (2006) original list of five disciplines for learning organizations: personal mastery, mental model, shared vision, team learning, and system thinking, researchers involved in PLCs, Hord (1997), DuFour & Eaker (1998), and Huffman & Hipp (2003) have made adaptations. The most common adaptation has been the Hord (1997) model which described several notable attributes of PLCs including: (a) supportive and shared leadership, (b) collective creativity, (c) shared values and vision, (d) supportive conditions, (e) physical conditions, (f) people capacities, and (g) shared personal practice. According to Hord (1997), each of those attributes has been a key to having an academically successful PLC and it is essential for the principal to participate in the PLC process. Hord (1997) believed a shared vision was another important aspect for the implementation of a successful PLC, and it was essential that all parties develop that vision based on, “...an unswerving commitment on the part of the staff to students’ learning and that has been consistently articulated and referenced for the staff’s work” (p.18).

In addition, Hord (1997) expressed that collective learning must occur among the staff and that the end results must address each of the students’ needs, he recommended peer feedback and assistance for PLC members as part of the plan to provide assistance activities to support both the individual and community as a means for systematic

improvement. Finally, Hord (1997) reported that there must be a provision in the plan for, “...physical conditions and human capacities that support such an operation” (p. 18) and supportive conditions have been those conditions that determine when, where, and how the staff regularly comes together to do the work of the PLC.

Secondary PLCs

Wells and Feun (2007) conducted a mixed method study that tracked the efforts of teacher and administrative leaders from six high schools who has worked to develop professional learning communities. The participants who completed the series of training sessions were the ones who were interviewed in their schools to discover their perceptions of the level of implementation of the learning community concepts within their departments and throughout the school. Five of the six schools had the following characteristics: higher socioeconomic levels, high level of student achievement, large percentage of graduates attending four-year institutions, large percentage of a White student population, and suburban districts in a large metropolitan area in Michigan. The sixth school was located north of the suburban schools in a semirural area. All of the principals were experienced high school leaders. A survey was designed to align with the five dimensions of a learning community as defined by Hord, (1997). The dimensions have been the following: supportive and shared leadership, collective creativity, shared values and vision, supportive conditions, and shared personal practice.

For each school, the study began with an interview with each participant within the school. The interviewer spent approximately thirty minutes meeting privately with the educators who completed the training, asking the questions from the survey, and scripting the answers. A copy of the survey was given to each participant to follow along during the interview process. The results from this survey indicated that the highest level of agreement was in the area of collaboration. Four of the six schools expressed the need to

collaborate as the highest mean. The areas of least agreement centered around comparing learning results of their students, discussing instructional methods used to teach students, assisting failing students, and agreeing with administrators about what should be done with students who have not been learning. These data supported what the research on learning communities has yielded; that high schools seldom spend time analyzing student learning results—an essential component of a learning community (Eaker et al., 2002; McLaughlin & Talbert, 2001). All six schools built in time for professionals to meet the purpose of doing learning community work (i.e. creating common assessments and reviewing student learning). The teachers in this study revealed that they were not using the test results to collaboratively analyze student learning. They indicated that reviewing student learning results seldom happened. The administrators talked about the need for both a conceptual understanding of the professional learning communities and the understanding of how to lead the change while dealing with the cultural aspects of the school.

Bond (2015) conducted an action research study to investigate the implementation of Hord's and Tobia's (2012) model of PLCs with a group of pre-service secondary teachers in a field based teacher preparation course. The study examined 20 undergraduate pre-service teachers seeking licensure in a variety of content areas at the secondary level. The participants attended a large public university located in the southwestern United States and classified as an Emerging Research Institution and a Hispanic Serving Institution (HSI). Throughout the study, data came from four sources: (a) written documents produced by the participants, (b) one-hour telephone interviews with key informants, (c) the official course curriculum and assignments, and (d) researcher field notes. The written documents included the following items prepared by each of the 20 participants: four portfolio artifacts, four reflections, four post-PLC

meeting reflections, and a final reflection at the end of the semester on the entire contents of the portfolio.

The written documents also included twelve total sets of minutes taken by a member of each PLC during the meetings. The participants enjoyed meeting with classmates, offering emotional support to one another, and sharing their experiences from the university course and cooperating teachers classes. With regard to the negative aspects, some participants did not readily buy into the idea of a PLC in the beginning although they did for the most part later in the study. Some who liked the idea of a PLC tended to focus on themselves rather than on their high school students' needs. The findings in the study affirmed the power of professional conversations, which has been well documented in the literature for both in-service and pre-service teachers.

Peppers (2015) conducted a qualitative study that explored teachers perceptions prior to the implementation of professional learning communities (PLCs) and after the implementation of PLCs in a large suburban high school. The study was a narrative ethnography study that used face- to- face, open-ended semi-structured interviews to collect data from core discipline teachers. This study focused on teachers perceptions and implementation of PLCs in the following areas: (a) focusing on students' retention and achievement, (b) retention of teachers, and (c) teachers views of leadership in a schools' learning environment. This qualitative research design included narrative and ethnographic processes in studying teachers perceptions of PLCs prior to and following their implementation in a large suburban high school learning environment. The findings revealed that in this high school PLCs: (a) teachers professional development have been successful; (b) that collaboration, sharing, planning, and effective transformational leadership was vital to professional development; (c) and teachers perception and implementation of PLCs did influence the schools' learning environment.

Stewart (2017) conducted a qualitative case study to examine teachers perceptions of the implementation of PLCs and teachers views in PLCs as a means of promoting a positive school culture and increasing academic achievement among students. A purposeful sampling was used to select 13 seventh through ninth grade teachers as participants. Qualitative data were collected through questionnaires and telephone interviews and then analyzed for emergent themes. The findings revealed that the current PLCs were beneficial, but needed refinement related to relevance, intent, and planning. The majority of the participants viewed PLCs as beneficial and a mechanism for acquiring knowledge and instructional strategies geared towards school improvement and student achievement.

Many participants were able to share at least one strategy learned, but also shared that overall effectiveness has been lacking. Therefore moving forward, teachers have been advocating for PLCs that consider the importance of teacher input; acknowledge the importance of teacher collaboration and sharing of experiences; recognize that teachers need time to implement and assess the effectiveness of strategies before new strategies have been introduced; understand that teachers need ongoing support and feedback; and respect that data-driven PLCs have been important but so have been student-driven PLCs planned with the real-time needs of students in mind.

Teacher Leadership

Teacher leaders have been those who “lead within and beyond the classroom, identify with and contribute to a community of teacher learners and leaders, and influence other toward improved educational practice” (Katzenmeyer & Moller, 2009, p. 6). The literature alternately suggests that teacher leaders have been those who have the ability to "encourage colleagues to change" (Wasley, 1991, p. 23) and have the willingness to "lead beyond the classroom and contribute to the community of learners" (Katzenmeyer &

Moller, 2001, p. 17). Evidence from the literature suggests that generating teacher leadership, with its combination of increased collaboration and increased responsibility, has positive effects on transforming schools as organizations and on helping to diminish teacher alienation. Research by Crowther et al., (2000); Hann, McMaster, & Ferguson (2000) has revealed that teacher leadership has been an important factor in improving the life chances of students in disadvantaged high schools.

Jacobs, Gordon, and Solis (2016) conducted a qualitative study to identify: (a) teacher leaders descriptions of their roles and activities, (b) perceptions of characteristics, knowledge, and skills of successful teacher leaders, (c) barriers to and support needed for teacher leadership, (d) the extent to which teacher leaders helped teachers understand and respond to different cultures, and (e) the rewards of teacher leadership. Phase I of the study consisted of a national survey of teacher leaders. The survey was qualitative as it consisted primarily of open-ended questions and focused on teacher-leader perceptions. Phase I of the study consisted of a survey of one hundred seventy-seven teacher leaders across eight states representing all regions of the country. Elementary school teachers made up 60% of the respondents, 17% were middle school teachers, and 23% were high school teachers. In Phase II researchers conducted interviews with twenty of the survey respondents to supplement survey data. Researchers randomly selected twenty of the teacher leaders who had agreed to be interviewed when they completed their surveys.

These interviews were selected from seven of the twelve states. The interviewees served a variety of school levels, with ten teacher leaders working in elementary, nine in middle school, and six in high schools. Some teacher leaders worked across multiple levels. Findings revealed that the teacher leaders tended to have multiple roles at multiple levels of the school organization, with myriad leadership activities attached to their roles, and with roles and activities evolving over time. The teacher leader's perceptions of

attributes necessary for successful teacher leadership included having multiple areas of experience, the ability to work collaboratively with others, commitment, innovative ideas, organizational skills, and ethical behavior. Within the surveys and interviews, the participants described several areas where they faced challenges in order to be successful as teacher leaders such as workload and time. A lack of time to carry out their responsibilities was often brought up as a perceived barrier in connection to a heavy workload. Participants identified teachers resistance to change as a major barrier to successful teacher leadership. One perception expressed by several participants was that some teachers simply have been comfortable with the way things have been and have a low capacity for change. About half the participants in the study mentioned the issue of role ambiguity was a challenge to them as teacher leaders. When reported, role ambiguity was described in different ways. Some of the teacher leaders said their role had never been clearly defined by the district or school.

A few of the participants reported that an inaccurate perception of some teachers was that part of the teacher leader's role was to monitor teachers or assist administrators with teacher evaluation, which created a lack of trust between teacher leaders and teachers. The teacher leaders reported a need for collaboration with other teachers that, when present, helped them to be more successful leaders. Throughout their responses to their questions, teacher leaders reported that administrative support was a critical need. While the majority of teacher leaders reported that they did have the administrator support described above, a minority of participants described a lack of administrator support. Sometimes this lack of support was at the campus level, at other times the district level. Some teacher leaders reported administrator expectations that were too high, and others described a lack of clear expectations. Many of the teacher leaders also reported that they needed professional development relevant to their roles and

responsibilities as teacher leaders. The teacher leaders said they needed professional development to develop general leadership skills such as communication, problem solving, and conflict resolution skills, as well as skills for dealing with the resistant teacher.

Teacher Leadership in PLCs

Gabriel (2005) described teachers as essential to students' academic success and stressed that only through their recognition of their personal leadership capabilities can teachers have maximum impact on student achievement. The lack of the definition "teacher leadership" may be due, in part, to the expansive territory encompassed under the umbrella term "teacher leadership." Silva et al., (2000) describe this evolution in three waves. In the first wave, teachers served in formal roles (e.g., department heads, union representatives), essentially as managers, whose main purpose was to further the efficiency of school operations. Wasley (1991) described this use of teachers as an extension of the administration "designed [not] to change practice but to ensure the efficiency and effectiveness of the existing system" (p. 4). In the second wave, according to Silva and her colleagues, teacher leadership was intended to capitalize more fully on the instructional expertise of teachers by appointing teachers to roles such as curriculum leaders, staff developers, and mentors of new teachers. The third wave of teacher leadership, viewed as emerging currently, recognizes teachers as central to the process of "reculturing" schools such that the intentions of the second wave (i.e., maximizing teachers instructional expertise) can be realized. This third wave reflects an increased understanding that promoting instructional improvement requires an organizational culture that supports collaboration and continuous learning and that recognizes teachers as primary creators and re-creators of school culture (Darling-Hammond, 1988; Silva et

al., 2000). This involves teachers as leaders both within and outside their classrooms (Ash & Persall, 2000).

York- Barr and Duke (2004) theorized teacher leadership similarly as a process by which “teachers, individually or collectively, influence their colleagues, principals, and other members of school communities to improve teaching and learning practices with the aim of increased student learning and achievement,” (p. 287). Jackson (2009) conducted a qualitative case study to evaluate the impact of implementing a PLCs model on the role of teacher-leaders in a suburban school district. The population from which the sample was drawn included 37 of the teacher-leaders in the Dovington Public Schools. There have been four categories of teacher-leaders in Dovington: Curriculum Specialists, Elementary Team Leaders, Middle School Team Leaders and High School Department Leaders.

The instruments for this study included pre- and post-study interviews, document review, researcher-observation of relevant events and the results of several surveys conducted by others during the implementation of the initiative. The findings of the study concluded that the role of teacher-leaders changed during the course of the PLC implementation with teacher-leaders becoming more active in school improvement efforts. Also, the study found that principals were more willing to distribute leadership to teachers and teacher-leaders after the Professional Learning Community initiative and teachers and teacher-leaders became more committed to working on school improvement efforts as well.

Principals’ Roles in PLCs

An important aspect of understanding how learning community theory has been enacted in schools has been attending to the role of the school principal in establishing the conditions and climate for cultivating a learning community culture. Research

indicates that the principal has been a primary agent in the success and effectiveness of implementing conditions for a learning community culture (Fullan, 2001; Harris, 2002; Lambert, 1998; Mitchell & Sackney, 2000; Speck, 1999). Cherkowski's (2016) study has been an ongoing, qualitative case study of one high school principal, in order to gain a rich description of the experiences of the principal as he worked to cultivate a climate of professional learning among all the teachers and staff in the school. The school in this study has been a small secondary school (n=180 students) in a rural community that has been geographically at the outer edge of a rural school district.

Narrative data were collected during conversation sessions with the principal. The conversation sessions were transcribed and analyzed as an iterative process of coding, categorizing, and abstracting data using grounded theory (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). The findings concluded the following: (a) creating a shared vision for learning emerged as the principal worked to cultivate a sense of possibility for change in the school; (b) a more personal approach to learning was important for creating a climate of hope and trust among the teachers; (c) and modeling a commitment to publically shared professional learning was a key element in cultivating a learning climate among teachers.

Duling (2012) conducted a multi-site case study to understand the types of principal behaviors as perceived by both teachers and principals that have been most meaningful in the support of PLCs. The study also examined the intersection of the dimensions of learning centered leadership and the critical attributes of PLCs. Patton (2002) suggested that participants should be selected based upon their richness of information; therefore, at each site, the principal was asked to select three to four teachers who had participated heavily in the work of the professional learning community since its initiation.

The data collection for this case study was extensive, drawing on interviews, documents, and artifacts. This study concluded that in professional learning communities, principals and teachers share a vision for learning and address the needs of all learners. The following leadership dimensions were perceived to be important in the support of professional learning communities: the principal's knowledge and involvement in curriculum and instruction, the principal's knowledge and involvement in the assessment program, and the principal's influence on organizational culture. The study also revealed that when learning-centered leadership and professional learning communities intersect, shared leadership and collective learning have been perceived to occur

Professional Development in PLCs

Thessin (2015) conducted a study on one mid-sized urban district that attempted to implement and support PLCs in developing essential PLC characteristics, implementing an improvement process, and establishing an instructional goal, research-based practices shown to facilitate improvement. This district also provided professional development to teachers and administrators in the implementation process. Overall, 939 teachers, or approximately 67% of the district's teaching staff, responded to the district-wide survey. The researcher interviewed twenty-eight teachers at six schools and observed thirteen PLC teams in action. Researchers divided the district's schools into high-, mid- and low-participation groups based on the number of teachers at each school site who had elected to participate in these professional development sessions. Participation ranged from 2 - 36% of faculty attending across the district's school. A purposeful sampling of teachers were selected from within the six school sites to participate in interviews and PLC observations, contacting two teachers who had participated in the PLC Facilitators' Training and two teachers who had not participated at each school.

Findings from this study affirm the research-based practices on which this district's implementation plan was based, while suggesting that additional school-based conditions also needed to be in place: (a) the provision of school-based professional development in PLCs; (b) a school culture focused on collaboration; and (c) a readiness by school leaders to engage in and communicate expectations for PLC work. Data gathered from both high-functioning and struggling PLC teams made it clear that additional preconditions needed to be in place before the guidance of an improvement process and the provision of professional development would foster collective work to improve instruction. The majority of the district's survey respondents, 66% of elementary teachers and 54% of middle and high school teachers, indicated that their instructional goals guided their work in PLC teams.

Gaps in the Research

Research at the secondary level focuses on perceptions and implementation of PLCs however, there has been not much research on teacher leadership in PLCs. Some districts have teacher leaders who facilitate PLCs, however there has been no clear understanding on the teacher leaders role in PLCs due to very little research. The literature states there has been lack of understanding on the definition and role of teacher leadership from both the administrator and the teacher perspective. Silva et al., (2000) noted that teachers and principals' voices have been missing from much of the literature advocating for teacher leadership, leading to the conclusion that teacher leadership in PLCs has yet to be defined by those who actually practice the concept.

Summary of the Findings

Research on the development of secondary PLCs conducted by Wells & Feun (2007) indicates that teachers stated they were not using test results to collaborate and analyze student data. Administrators indicated that there has been a need for an

understanding of PLCs. In research conducted by Bond (2015) findings suggested that powerful conversations have been needed to have effective PLCs.

Peppers (2015) conducted a study on teachers perceptions before the implementation of PLCs and after the implementation of PLCs. Researcher found that there was teacher and student success after PLCs were implemented. In 2017, Stewart examined teacher's perceptions of the implementation of PLCs and teachers views on school culture and student academic achievement. Findings revealed that PLCs were beneficial however they need to be refined based on relevance, intent, and planning.

Research on teacher leadership suggests that having teacher leaders could have an impact on school improvement and teacher receptiveness. In 2016, Jacobs et al., found that teacher leaders tend to have multiple roles at various levels within their campus. In 2009, Jackson conducted a study on implementing a PLC model on the role of teacher leaders. Findings revealed that teachers became more active in school improvement and principals were more willing to distribute leadership to teacher leaders after PLC implementation.

In 2012, Duling study found that teachers and principals share a vision for learning and addressing the needs of all students. Cherkowski's (2016) study conducted an ongoing study on a high school principal as he worked to cultivate a professional learning environment. The findings concluded that a shared vision emerged, personal approach to learning was important to build trust and hope, and modeling a commitment to publically shared professional learning was essential for creating a learning climate among teachers. Research on professional development in PLCs conducted by Thessin (2015) suggested that additional schools based on conditions needed the school based professional development in PLCs, school culture, school leaders engaging and communication expectations for PLCs.

Theoretical Framework

Distributed leadership has been defined as varieties of expertise and decision-making widely distributed across many people (Bennett et al., 2003) Distributed leadership provides a rich conceptual framework to study PLCs (Spillane, 2006; Stoll et al., 2006) because a distributed framework can help clarify the varied roles assumed by principals, teachers, and other staff and how their actions, orientations, and leadership contribute to organizational learning. Current educational reform calls for more distributed leadership among school stakeholders (Spillane & Diamond, 2007; Wallace Foundation, 2016). While it has been evident that there have been many sources of leadership within schools, principals remain the central source in moving schools forward (Johnston, 2010). Theories of distributed leadership highlight how leadership has been spread across an organization, involves concerted action from teachers and school administrators, and extends beyond task delegation to more profound levels of collective action (Gronn, 2009; Heikka, Waniganayake, & Hujala, 2013). Who leads and who follows has been not just associated with traditional roles but to what the problem, task, or situation dictates, or who has the prerequisite knowledge and skills under particular circumstances (Copland, 2003).

A distributed framework provides a way of thinking about and analyzing leadership (Spillane & Orlina, 2005). When analyzing leadership through a distributed perspective, one should focus on the interactions of leaders and followers. The focus should not be solely on the individual leader, but rather focus on the context and specific tasks engaged in by both leaders and followers (Spillane, Halverson, & Diamond, 2001; Spillane & Orlina, 2005). A distributive perspective also allows the consideration of individuals not formally designated as leaders to take-on leadership responsibilities and provides an opportunity to consider how this collective group leads and manages

(Spillane & Orlina, 2005; Spillane & Healey, 2010). When looking through a distributed leadership lens there have been key aspects to consider including leadership practices and interactions between leaders, followers, and their situations (Spillane & Orlina, 2005). This mixed method study approach allowed me to analyze the perceptions of high school teachers and administrators' perceptions of teacher leadership in PLCs and the framework of teacher leadership in PLCs. The distributed leadership theoretical framework can provide critical information and insight on perceptions of teacher leadership in PLCs from teachers and administrators' point of view.

Conclusion

This chapter presented a review of relevant literature relating to the purpose of this study, which was to examine secondary teachers and administrators' perceptions of teacher leadership in PLCs. Key details discussed include history of PLCs characteristics of PLCs, PLCs model, secondary of PLCs, teacher leadership, teacher leadership in PLCs, administrators' role in PLCs, and professional development in PLCs. In the next chapter, an overview of the research problem, operationalization of theoretical constructs, research purpose, questions, research design, population and sampling selection, instrumentation used, data collection procedures, data analysis, privacy and ethical considerations, and the limitations to the research design will be described.

CHAPTER III: METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this study was to examine secondary teachers and administrators' perceptions of teacher leadership in Professional Learning Communities (PLCs). This mixed methods study collected data from a purposeful convenience sample of ninth -12th grade high school teachers and administrators within a large urban school district located in southeast Texas. Data from the Professional Learning Community Assessment Revised (PLCA-R) survey (Olivier, Hipp, & Huffman, 2010) were analyzed using frequencies and percentages, while an inductive coding process was used to analyze data collected from the focus group. This chapter presents an overview of the research problem, operationalization of theoretical constructs, research purpose and questions, research design, population and sample selection, instrumentation employed, data collection procedures, data analysis, validity, privacy and ethical considerations, and limitations to the study.

Overview of Research Problem

A review of current literature has revealed inconsistency in defining teacher leadership due to a myriad of concept variations, from leading by example to assuming a specific leadership position (Bowman, 2004; Crowther et al., 2002; Frost et al., 2000; Katzenmeyer & Moller, 2001; Murphy, 2005; Wasley, 1991). Most teachers who have taken on leadership roles do not see themselves as leaders, reserving the term leader for those who have taken on formal roles, such as principals or district supervisors. Instead, they perceive that most of their work has been done informally through collaboration (Moller et al., 2001).

Teacher leaders, at times, perceive themselves as professional development trainers and curriculum innovators (Mimbs, 2002), while their colleagues may perceive

them either in a positive light as teacher advocates (Beauchum & Dentith, 2004) or in a negative light as elitists, harmful to teacher morale, or detrimental to accepted classroom practices (Smylie & Denny, 1990). Silva et al., (2000) noted that teachers and principals' voices have been missing from much of the literature advocating for teacher leadership, leading to the conclusion that teacher leadership has yet to be defined by those who actually practice the concept. There has not been much research on administrators and teachers in regards to their perceptions of teacher leadership and teacher leadership in PLCs. Therefore, it has been unclear about teachers and administrators' understanding of teacher leadership roles in PLCs.

Operationalization of Theoretical Constructs

This study consisted of the following constructs: (a) Professional Learning Communities (PLC) and (b) teacher leadership. A PLC is a group of educators that have been dedicated to working collaboratively in sustained processes of collective inquiry and action research to achieve increased results for the students they serve and operates under the notion that improved learning for all students is continuous, job-embedded learning for educators (DuFour et al., 2006). Teacher leadership is defined as “leaders who lead within and beyond the classroom, identify with and contribute to a community of teacher learners and leaders, influence others toward improved educational practice” (Katzenmeyer & Moller, 2001, p. 5). The constructs were measured using the Professional Learning Community Assessment Revised (PLCA-R) survey (Olivier et al., 2010).

Research Purpose and Questions

The purpose of this study was to examine secondary or high school teachers and administrators' perceptions of teacher leadership in the implementation of Professional Learning Communities. This study addressed the following questions:

1. What are high school teachers perceptions of the teacher leadership role within their participation in PLCs?
2. What are high school administrators' perceptions of the role of teacher leadership within their participation in PLCs?
3. From the perspective of high school teachers and administrators, what qualities and attributes contribute to effective implementation of PLCs?

Research Design

For this study, I applied a sequential mixed-methods design (QUAN→qual). This design consisted of two phases: first, a quantitative phase and second, a qualitative phase. The advantage of implementing this design was it allows for a more thorough and in-depth exploration of the quantitative results by following up with a qualitative phase. A purposeful sample of ninth-12th grade general education teachers and administrators from a large sized urban school district in the Southeast region of Texas were solicited to complete Professional Learning Community Assessment Revised (PLCA-R) survey (Olivier et al., 2010) to assess perceptions of teacher leadership in PLCs. In addition, individual interviews and administrator focus groups were conducted with participants to provide a deeper analysis of how teachers, teacher leaders and administrators perceive the role of teacher leadership and its influence in PLCs. Also, an individual interview was conducted with the Director of Professional Growth who oversees professional learning for the district. Quantitative data were analyzed using frequencies and percentages, while qualitative data were analyzed using an inductive coding process.

Population and Sample

The population of this study consisted of a large urban school district in southeast Texas. This school district was composed of 46 campuses (five high schools, six middle

schools, six intermediate schools, one alternative school, and 25 elementary schools), employs 3,329 teachers, and has a student population of 47,227 students (TEA, 2016). One high school, an alternative school, was not included in the study. Another high school teachers and administrators participated in the surveys but not the interviews due to a low participation rate. Table 3.1 provides the student district data obtained from the 2016-2017 Texas Academic Performance Report for the four district high schools.

Table 3.1
Students Demographics based on TEA 2016-2017 APR

High School	Total number of students	African American	Hispanic	White	American Indian	Asian	Pacific Islander
A	3,999	28.7%	55.0%	3.1%	1.8%	11.0%	0.2%
B	3,223	33.4%	49.4%	2.1%	3.4%	11.2%	0.0%
C	4,209	29.2%	56.5%	2.9%	0.6%	10.3%	0.0%
D	804	12.1%	18.0%	4.6%	0.1%	64.6%	0.1%

A purposeful sample of high school teachers and administrators (9th – 12th grade) in the participating district was solicited to participate in this study. The three high schools within this study were grades ninth -12th campuses with teacher enrollment ranging from 180 to 290. Table 3.2 presents teachers demographics. Each campus has only one principal and most have between 9-16 assistant principals. Table 3.3 presents administrators data.

Table 3.2
Teacher Demographics based on TEA 2016-2017 APR

High School	Total number of Teachers	Number of Male Teachers	Number of Female Teachers
A	289.2	109.9	179.3
B	182.5	63.2	119.3
C	250.3	100.1	150.2
D	41.4	12.7	28.7

Table 3.3

Administrator Demographics based on TEA 2016-2017 APR

High School	Total number of Administrators
A	17.5
B	9.8
C	15.0
D	2.0

Instrumentation

The survey instrument Professional Learning Community Assessment Revised (PLCA-R) survey (Hipp, & Huffman, 2010) was used for this study. I received permission to use the PLCA-R instrument prior to investigation (see Appendix A). The creation of the PLCA-R was an extension of the early work by Horde (1997) at the Southwest Educational Development Laboratory (SEDL) (Olivier, 2003). Horde (1997) developed the School Professional Staff as a Learning Community questionnaire based on the professional learning community dimensions defined in her review of literature. The professional learning community dimensions identified in Hord's (1997) work included: (a) supportive and shared leadership, (b) collective creativity, (c) shared values and vision, (d) supportive conditions – people capacities and structures, and (e) shared personal practice.

The original Professional Learning Community Assessment (PLCA) was a 48-item survey designed to assess classroom and school-level practices based on PLC the dimensions as described by Hord (Olivier, 2003). The PLCA has been administered throughout the U.S. in numerous schools and grade levels to determine practices within each PLC dimension: (a) shared vision, (b) shared and supportive leadership, (c) collective learning, (d) supportive conditions, and (e) shared personal practice (Hipp & Huffman, 2010, p. 30). Additional research suggested that a very important component

was missing from the PLCA instrument. According to Hord and Hirsh (2008), the process of collection, analysis, and use of data to inform improvement efforts was not essential component of PLC work. As a result, the PLCA was revised into the PLCA-R.

The PLCA-R consists of 52-items describing the five professional learning community dimensions by which the participant rates each statement using a forced choice 4-pt Likert scale, (1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Agree, and 4 = Strongly Agree) (Hipp & Huffman, 2009). The PCLA-R contains the following subscales: (a) shared and supportive leadership (Items 1-11), (b) shared values and vision (Items 12-20), (c) collective learning and application (Items 21-30), (d) shared personal practice (Items 31-37), (e) supportive conditions-relationships (Items 38-42), and (f) supportive conditions-structures (Items 43-52). The rating associated with the PLCA-R scale was used to calculate individual questions and mean dimension scores, as well as a mean overall questionnaire score. Additionally, the participants completed additional basic demographic questions, including years of teaching experience, years as a member of a PLC, and their subject area. These questions did not alter the reliability or validity of the survey because the additional questions only have taken into account the demographics of the participant.

The most recent analysis of the PLCA confirmed internal consistency in the following Cronbach Alpha reliability coefficients: Shared and Supportive Leadership (.94); Shared Values and Vision (.92); Collective Learning and Application (.91); Shared Personal Practice (.87); Supportive Conditions- Relationships (.82); Supportive Conditions-Structures (.88); and one factor solution (.97) (Hipp & Huffman, 2010, p. 30). The greater the subscale composite score, the more the dimensions of PLCs were being implemented effectively on campus.

Data Collection Procedures

Quantitative

Prior to data collection, I gained approval from the University of Houston-Clear Lake's (UHCL's) Committee for Protection of Human Subjects (CPHS) and the school district in which the study took place. The participating high school teachers and each campus principal were contacted via email with information regarding the purpose of the study and the process for collecting the surveys. Teachers and administrators at the participating campuses were given an electronic copy of the survey cover letter (see Appendix B), along with an electronic link containing access to the (PLCA-R) survey through the use of Qualtrics. The survey cover letter stated that participation will be voluntary, the requirement for participation, an estimated timeframe to complete the survey (10-20 minutes), and that personal identifying information will remain completely confidential. Teachers and administrators completed the survey at their schools or home, and it could be completed during or outside of work hours.

The survey responses were collected over a six-week period. The campus teachers and administrators were notified of the survey via email at the beginning of the data collection period. Follow-up emails were sent to teachers and administrators during the first two weeks and again during weeks five and six of the data collection period. Upon receipt of the survey responses, the data were entered into quantitative research software Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) for further analysis. All data was secured in a password-protected folder on my computer and in my office within a locked file cabinet at all times. At the culmination of the study, the data will be maintained for five years, which was the time required by CPHS and district guidelines. I will destroy the contents of the file once the deadline expired.

Qualitative

At the end of the survey, teachers and administrators from the participating four campuses were asked if they would like to participate in a teacher interview or administrator focus group. In addition, an email was sent out to the participating campuses asking teachers, teacher leaders, and administrators to voluntarily participate in an interview. The administrators' perceptions of teacher leadership in PLCs were examined using a focus group protocol. The individual interview with teachers, teacher leaders, and the Director of Professional Growth perception were examined using a semi-structured format. Based on responses from the survey, I developed interview questions for one-on-one sessions with teachers (see Appendix D), teacher leaders (see Appendix E), the Director of Professional Growth (see Appendix G), and administrator focus groups (see Appendix F). For each campus, I conducted individual interviews with teachers and teacher leaders. The individual interviews took place in the teachers' and teacher leaders' classroom at their campus. Administrator focus groups were also conducted on each campus. The administrator focus group took place in one of the administrator's offices at their campus. In addition, an individual interview was conducted with the Director of Professional Growth, the person responsible for PLCs in the district. The individual interview with the Director of Professional Growth took place in her office at the administration building.

A purposeful sample of teachers and administrators with at least three years of PLCs experience was solicited from the participating high school to participate in a 40-50 minute interview. I hand delivered the informed consent form in an envelope to the participating campuses for the participants and the Director of Professional Growth who voluntarily responded to the email and survey. The informed consent form stated the purpose of the study, voluntary participation, the timeframe for completing the interview

(40-50 minutes), the location based on campuses, as well as ethical and confidentiality considerations was communicated to teachers and administrators through a cover letter (see Appendix B).

The teachers and administrators turned in the envelope sealed to the principal's secretary. I picked up the envelopes every Friday from the secretary for three weeks. Also, I emailed weekly reminders for three weeks about the voluntary focus groups to administrators and the one-on-one session to teachers, teacher leaders, and the Director of Professional Growth. I informed teachers, teacher leaders, administrators, and the Director of Professional Growth that the interviews are voluntary and will be recorded for transcription purposes. Each focus group and the one on one session were recorded for accuracy of the transcription process. I assigned code names to the participants' responses to protect their identity.

Data Analysis

Quantitative

Following data collection, the data were downloaded from Excel into an SPSS spreadsheet for further analysis. In order to answer the research questions one and two, data were analyzed using frequencies and percentages to identify patterns in perceptions toward leadership in professional learning communities. The data were examined to determine the similarities and differences between campuses as it relates to teacher leadership role in relations to PLCs.

Qualitative

To answer research question three, What qualities and attributes from the perspectives of high school teachers and high school administrators contribute to effective implementation of PLCs?, qualitative data gathered from the interview with teachers, teacher leaders, the Director of Professional Growth, and administrator focus

groups were examined using constant comparative analysis, and coded for themes (Miles & Huberman, 1984). Qualitative interview data were measured using thematic analysis (Lichtman, 2013). Following the transcription, interview transcripts were transferred into NVivo, a qualitative analysis software package, for coding. Inductive coding was used to analyze the teachers interview, teacher leaders interviews, the Director of Professional Growths interview, and administrator focus group data. Interview data were coded to identify patterns and emergent themes (Lichtman, 2013). Codes were the smallest unit of meaning that can be derived from a statement; for this study, codes were selected based on explicit statements within the interview and from emergent concepts; to increase the validity of findings, codes were connected to research literature and survey results. After all responses within the interview transcripts were coded, the codes were organized into larger groups of themes. I analyzed each teacher interview, teacher leader interview, the Director of Professional Growth interview, and administrator focus group data to find common themes. I conducted a final code on the teachers interviews, teacher leaders interviews, the Director of Professional Growth interview, and administrator focus group to examine how all of the codes from the different groups were similar and different. The constant comparative analysis was used to compare all participants' responses to get a better view of how teachers, teacher leaders, administrators, and the Director of Professional Growth responses were similar or different.

Validity

The qualitative analysis process entailed validation by using triangulation of individual teacher responses by campuses. In order to increase validity, data obtained from the surveys and interview questions were compared and cross-checked among participant groups. The interview questions and results were peer reviewed by experienced educators to ensure the questions were valid. The responses received from

the interview questions were subject to member checking by having teacher participants review the preliminary results and transcripts in order to enhance the validity of the responses provided. I used triangulation to analyze the findings between the survey data and interview data.

Privacy and Ethical Consideration

Prior to collecting data, permission was obtained from UCHL's CPHS and the school district. After permission, teachers and administrators were provided with a survey cover letter stating the purpose of the study, in which participation will be completely voluntary, and that identities would remain confidential. Confidentiality of survey data will be maintained, and confidentiality of focus group discussion was encouraged, but not guaranteed. When transcribing focus group dialogue, pseudonyms were utilized to protect anonymity. A series of multiple strategies were used to remain neutral and objective throughout the data analysis process, including member checking, triangulation of data, and peer reviews. Accuracy and precision of transcription recordings were ensured. All hardcopies of personally identifiable information have been stored in a locked file in my office, and all electronic copies have been stored on my hard drive and password protections have been in place. Hard copies and electronic copies will be destroyed after five years.

Research Design Limitations

This study had several limitations to external and internal validity. First, the sample used was purposeful and derived from a single urban school district. This may affect the generalizability of the findings. Second, teachers, administrators, and the Director of Professional Growth were honest in the survey and interviews. Some teachers and administrators might be afraid to tell the truth even though I have stated that all data is confidential. Third, teacher's experiences with PLC's may vary from campus to

campus. Fourth, the study included four high schools, which could have an impact on the number of participants. One high school, an alternative school, was not included in the study. Another high school teachers and administrators participated in the surveys but not the interviews due to a low participation rate. Fifth, administrators may not actively be involved in PLCs which may affect the interview process by not being aware of what was happening during PLCs and the lack of teacher leadership support during PLCs. Sixth, I work in the district where the study was being conducted at the elementary level as a instructional specialist who assists with PLCs at the campus level, this may cause me to be biased, which could affect the study. It was important for me to keep biases clear and focus on my study with an open mind. Also, being an insider can be an asset.

Conclusion

The purpose of this study was to examine secondary teachers and administrators' perceptions of teacher leadership in Professional Learning Communities (PLCs). This chapter identified the need to further examine the relationship amongst the constructs. In order to better understand the teachers and administrators' perceptions of teacher leadership in PLCs, both the quantitative and qualitative finding was essential to the study. In Chapter IV, survey and focus group results are discussed.

CHAPTER IV:

RESULTS

The purpose of this study was to examine secondary teachers and administrators' perceptions of teacher leadership in professional learning communities. More specifically, this study explored the similarities and differences between high school teachers and administrators' perceptions of teacher leadership in PLCs. This chapter presents the finding of quantitative and qualitative data analysis of the study. First, an explanation of the participants' demographics of the study has been presented, followed by results of the data analysis for each of the three research questions. It concludes with a summary of the findings.

Participant Demographics

Teachers

High school teachers at four participating high schools were sent an e-mail soliciting their participation in this study. Of the 762 teachers contacted, 100 completed and submitted the survey via Qualtrics; two respondents were deleted due to an enormous amount of missing data leaving 98 eligible participants (12.9% response rate). Table 4.1 displays the participants based on their campus: High School A (20.4%, $n = 20$), High School B (35.7%, $n = 35$), and High School C (32.7%, $n = 32$), and High School D (11.2%, $n = 11$). Table 4.2 displays the participant demographics regarding gender and race/ethnicity. The majority of the participants were female comprising 73.5% ($n = 72$) of the sample, while male participants comprised only 26.5% ($n = 26$). Regarding race/ethnicity the participants identified themselves as Caucasian or White (53.1%, $n = 53$), African American or Black (28.6%, $n = 28$), Hispanic or Latino (7.1%, $n = 7$), American Indian or Native American (2.0%, $n = 2$), Asian or Pacific Islander (4.1%, $n = 4$), and other (5.1%, $n = 5$).

Table 4.1
Participating Teachers Per Campuses

	Frequency (<i>n</i>)	Percentage (%)
All	98	100.0
High School A	20	20.4
High School B	35	35.7
High School C	32	32.7
High School D	11	11.2

Table 4.2
Participating High School Teacher Demographics

		Frequency (<i>n</i>)	Percentage (%)
1. Gender	Male	26	26.5
	Female	72	73.5
2. Race/Ethnicity	Caucasian/White	52	53.1
	African American/Black	28	28.6
	Hispanic/Latino	7	7.1
	American Indian/Native	2	2.0
	Asian/Pacific Islander	4	4.1
	Other	5	5.1

Table 4.3 illustrates the teacher grade level, subject taught, number of years teaching, and number of years in PLCs. Based on the survey responses, 3.1% ($n = 3$) teaches 9th grade, 6.1% ($n = 6$) teaches 10th grade, 10.2% ($n = 10$) teaches 11th grade and 8.2% ($n = 8$) teaches 12th grade. Participants based on subjects taught have been as follows English Language Arts 37.8% ($n = 37$), Math 23.5% ($n = 23$), Social Studies 18.4% ($n = 18$), and Science 15.3% ($n = 15$). Of the 98 study participants, 15.3% ($n =$

15) have been in their current position between three to five years, 13.3% ($n = 23$) have been in their current position between six to 10 years, and 71.4 % ($n = 70$) have been in their current position ten or more years. Along with years of experience teachers were asked how many years have they participated in PLCs. Based on the responses, 5.1% ($n = 5$) have participated in PLCs between zero and two years, 23.5% ($n = 23$) have participated in PLCs between three and five years, 29.6% ($n = 29$) have participated in PLCs between six and 10 years, and 41.8% ($n = 48$) have participated in PLCs for 10 or more years.

Table 4.3
Participating Teacher Grade Level, Subjects and Years of Experience

		Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
1. Grade Level	9 th	3	3.1
	10 th	6	6.1
	11 th	10	10.2
	12 th	8	8.2
2. Subjects Taught	English Language Arts	37	37.8
	Mathematics	23	23.5
	Social Studies	18	18.4
	Science	15	15.3
3. Years of Experience	0-2 years	0	0.0
	3-5 years	15	15.3
	6-10 years	13	13.3
	10+ years	70	71.4
4. Years of Experience in PLCs	0-2 years	5	5.1
	3-5 years	23	23.5
	6-10 years	29	29.6
	10+ years	41	41.8

Note: Numbers may vary due to some teachers teaching multiple grade levels and multiple subject areas.

Administrators

High school administrators at the four participating high schools in Drake ISD were sent an e-mail soliciting their participation in this study. Of the 43 administrators contacted, 15 completed and submitted the survey via Qualtrics (34.9% response rate). Table 4.4 displays the participants based on their campus: High School A (33.3%, $n = 5$), High School B (13.3%, $n = 2$), High School C (33.3%, $n = 5$), and High School D (20.0%, $n = 3$). Table 4.5 displays the participant demographics regarding gender, race/ethnicity, and number of years in PLCs. Female participants comprised of 53.3% ($n = 8$) of the sample, while male participants comprised 46.7% ($n = 7$). Regarding race/ethnicity, study participants identified themselves as Caucasian or White (53.3%, ($n = 8$) and African American or Black (46.7%, $n = 7$). Based on the responses, 6.7% ($n = 1$) have participated in PLCs between zero and two years, 46.7% ($n = 7$) have participated in PLCs between six and 10 years, and 46.7% ($n = 7$) have participated in PLCs for 10 or more years.

Table 4.4
Participating Administrators per Campus

	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
All	15	100.0
High School A	5	33.3
High School B	2	13.3
High School C	5	33.3
High School D	3	20.0

Table 4.5
Demographics of Participating Administrators

		Frequency (<i>n</i>)	Percentage (%)
1. Gender	Male	7	46.7
	Female	8	53.3
2. Race/Ethnicity	Caucasian/White	8	53.3
	African American/Black	7	46.7
3. Administrators Years of PLCs	0-2 years	1	6.7
	3-5 years	0	0.0
	6-10 years	7	46.7
	10+ years	7	46.7

Research Question One

Research question one, What are high school teachers perceptions of the teacher leadership role within their participation in Professional Learning Communities?, was measured calculating frequencies and percentages of the responses to the Professional Learning Community Assessment Revised (PLCA-R) Survey, a 52-item survey which required participants to rate themselves using a frequency scale (1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Agree, 4 = Strongly Agree).

Shared and Supportive Leadership

The first 11 items in the survey pertain to shared and supportive leadership in PLCs. Table 4.6 illustrates the results of the teachers responses to the eleven items geared towards shared and supportive leadership. As illustrated in Table 4.7, the majority of teachers agree/strongly agree that they are involved in the decision-making process,

principal include teacher when making decisions (81.6%), have access to key information, principal support (80.6%), leadership was promoted among staff, decision committee across grade levels (83.7%), and staff use multiple resources of data to make decisions about teaching and learning (86.7%).

Some of the other statements posed a difference of opinion. For instance, 76.6% of teachers agree/strongly agree that staff has access to key information, while 23.5% strongly disagree/disagree. In addition, 72.5% of teachers agree/strongly agree that opportunities have been provided for staff to initiate change, while 27.5% strongly disagree/disagree. Most teachers (79.6) % agree/strongly agree the principal shares responsibility and rewards innovative actions, while 20.4% strongly disagree/disagree. Most teachers (78.6) % agree/strongly agree that leadership was promoted and nurtured among staff while 21.4% strongly disagree/disagree. Furthermore, 31.6% of teachers strongly disagree/disagree that staff members have been consistently involved in discussing and making decision about most school issues, 36.7% of teachers strongly disagree/disagree that the principal participates democratically with staff sharing power and authority, and 38.8% of teachers strongly disagree/disagree that stakeholders assume shared responsibility and accountability for student learning without evidence of imposed power and authority.

Table 4.6
Shared and Supportive Leadership Teacher Participant (%)

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
1. Staff members are consistently involved in discussing and making decisions about most school issues.	7.1 (n = 7)	24.5 (n = 24)	46.9 (n = 46)	21.4 (n = 21)
2. The principal incorporates advice from staff members to make decisions.	8.2 (n = 8)	10.2 (n = 10)	56.1 (n = 55)	25.5 (n = 25)
3. Staff members have accessibility to key information.	4.1 (n = 4)	19.4 (n = 19)	53.1 (n = 53)	23.5 (n = 23)
4. The principal is proactive and addresses areas where support is needed.	4.1 (n = 4)	15.3 (n = 15)	45.9 (n = 45)	34.7 (n = 34)
5. Opportunities are provided for staff members to initiate change.	7.1 (n = 7)	20.4 (n = 20)	48.0 (n = 47)	24.5 (n = 24)
6. The principal shares responsibility and rewards for innovative actions.	7.1 (n = 7)	13.3 (n = 13)	54.1 (n = 53)	25.5 (n = 25)
7. The principal participates democratically with staff sharing power and authority.	10.2 (n = 10)	26.5 (n = 26)	42.9 (n = 42)	20.4 (n = 20)
8. Leadership is promoted and nurtured among staff members.	5.3 (n = 5)	16.3 (n = 16)	53.1 (n = 52)	25.5 (n = 25)
9. Decision-making takes place through committees and communication across grade and subject areas.	6.1 (n = 6)	10.2 (n = 10)	58.2 (n = 57)	25.5 (n = 25)
10. Stakeholders assume shared responsibility and accountability for student learning without evidence of imposed power and authority.	9.2 (n = 9)	29.6 (n = 29)	46.9 (n = 46)	14.3 (n = 14)
11. Staff members use multiple sources of data to make decisions about teaching and learning.	2.0 (n = 2)	11.2 (n = 11)	55.1 (n = 54)	31.6 (n = 31)

Table 4.7

Collapsed Shared and Supportive Leadership Teacher Participants (%)

	Strongly Disagree/Disagree	Agree/Strongly Agree
1. Staff members are consistently involved in discussing and making decisions about most school issues.	31.6 (n = 31)	68.3 (n = 67)
2. The principal incorporates advice from staff members to make decisions.	18.4 (n = 18)	81.6 (n = 80)
3. Staff members have accessibility to key information.	23.5 (n = 23)	76.6 (n = 75)
4. The principal is proactive and addresses areas where support is needed.	19.4 (n = 19)	80.6 (n = 79)
5. Opportunities are provided for staff members to initiate change.	27.5 (n = 27)	72.5 (n = 71)
6. The principal shares responsibility and rewards for innovative actions.	20.4 (n = 20)	79.6 (n = 78)
7. The principal participates democratically with staff sharing power and authority.	36.7 (n = 36)	63.3 (n = 62)
8. Leadership is promoted and nurtured among staff members.	21.4 (n = 21)	78.6 (n = 77)
9. Decision-making takes place through committees and communication across grade and subject areas.	16.3 (n = 16)	83.7 (n = 82)
10. Stakeholders assume shared responsibility and accountability for student learning without evidence of imposed power and authority.	38.8 (n = 38)	61.2 (n = 60)
11. Staff members use multiple sources of data to make decisions about teaching and learning.	13.2 (n = 13)	86.7 (n = 85)

Shared Values and Vision

Items 12-20 in the survey pertained to shared values and vision in PLCs. Table 4.8 illustrates the results of the teachers responses to the eleven items geared towards shared values and vision. Table 4.9 illustrates the teachers collapsed responses on shared values and vision. As illustrated in Table 4.8, 82.7% of teachers agree/strongly agree that there is collaboration of values among staff, 81.7% of teacher believe that shared values support norms that guide decisions about teaching and learning, 80.6% of teachers believe that staff share vision for school improvement that focus on student learning, 85.8% of teachers believe that decisions have been aligned with school values and vision, collaboration of shared vision among staff, school goal focus on learning, policies and programs have been aligned to school vision, stakeholders have been actively involved in student achievement, and 82.7 % of teachers believe that data have been used to prioritize actions to reach a shared vision.

As indicated in Table 4.9, 21.4% of teachers strongly disagree/disagree that a collaborative process exists for developing a shared vision among staff, 31.6% of teachers strongly disagree/disagree that school goals focus on students learning beyond the test scores and grades, 35.8 % of teacher strongly disagree/disagree that stakeholders have been actively involved in creating high expectations that serve to increase student achievement. Of the nine statements, there was a significance difference of opinions on one of the statements. For example, 31.6% of teachers agree/strongly agree that policies and programs have been aligned to the school's vision however 68.4% strongly disagree/disagree.

Table 4.8
Shared Values and Vision Teacher Participants (%)

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
12. A collaborative process exists for developing a shared sense of values among staff.	1.0 (n = 1)	16.3 (n = 16)	55.1 (n = 54)	27.6 (n = 27)
13. Shared values support norms of behavior that guide decisions about teaching and learning.	3.1 (n = 3)	15.3 (n = 15)	58.2 (n = 57)	23.5 (n = 23)
14. Staff members share visions for school improvement that have an undeviating focus on student learning.	4.1 (n = 4)	15.3 (n = 15)	57.1 (n = 57)	23.5 (n = 23)
15. Decisions are made in alignment with the school's values and vision.	3.1 (n = 3)	11.2 (n = 11)	53.1 (n = 52)	32.7 (n = 32)
16. A collaborative process exists for developing a shared vision among staff.	4.1 (n = 4)	17.3 (n = 17)	52.0 (n = 51)	26.5 (n = 26)
17. School goals focus on student learning beyond test scores and grades.	6.1 (n = 6)	25.5 (n = 25)	43.9 (n = 43)	24.5 (n = 24)
18. Policies and programs are aligned to the school's vision.	0.0 (n = 0)	8.2 (n = 8)	60.2 (n = 59)	31.6 (n = 31)
19. Stakeholders are actively involved in creating high expectations that serve to increase student achievement.	8.2 (n = 8)	27.6 (n = 27)	51.0 (n = 50)	13.3 (n = 13)
20. Data are used to prioritize actions to reach a shared vision.	3.1 (n = 3)	14.3 (n = 14)	58.2 (n = 57)	24.5 (n = 24)

Table 4.9
Collapsed Shared Values and Vision Teacher Participants (%)

	Strongly Disagree/Disagree	Agree/Strongly Agree
12. A collaborative process exists for developing a shared sense of values among staff.	17.3 (<i>n</i> = 17)	82.7 (<i>n</i> = 81)
13. Shared values support norms of behavior that guide decisions about teaching and learning.	18.4 (<i>n</i> = 18)	81.7 (<i>n</i> = 80)
14. Staff members share visions for school improvement that have an undeviating focus on student learning.	19.4 (<i>n</i> = 19)	80.6 (<i>n</i> = 79)
15. Decisions are made in alignment with the school's values and vision.	14.3 (<i>n</i> = 14)	85.8 (<i>n</i> = 84)
16. A collaborative process exists for developing a shared vision among staff.	21.4 (<i>n</i> = 21)	78.5 (<i>n</i> = 77)
17. School goals focus on student learning beyond test scores and grades.	31.6 (<i>n</i> = 31)	68.4 (<i>n</i> = 67)
18. Policies and programs are aligned to the school's vision.	68.4 (<i>n</i> = 8)	31.6 (<i>n</i> = 90)
19. Stakeholders are actively involved in creating high expectations that serve to increase student achievement.	35.8 (<i>n</i> = 35)	64.3 (<i>n</i> = 63)
20. Data are used to prioritize actions to reach a shared vision.	17.4 (<i>n</i> = 17)	82.7 (<i>n</i> = 81)

Collective Learning and Application

Items 21-30 in the survey pertained to collective learning and application in PLCs. Table 4.10 illustrates the results of the teachers responses to the nine items geared towards collective learning and application. Table 4.11 illustrates the teachers collapsed

responses on collective learning and application. As illustrated in Table 4.11 majority of 85.5% teachers agree/strongly agree that the staff works together to seek knowledge, skills and strategies, and apply new learning, 89.8% teachers agree/strongly agree collegial relationship among staff that reflects commitment to school improvement, 87.7% teachers agree/strongly agree staff plan and work together to address the diverse needs of students, 81.6% teachers agree/strongly agree variety of opportunities and structures for collective learning through open dialogue, 84.6% teachers agree/strongly agree staff engage in dialogue that respects diverse ideas, 85.7% teachers agree/strongly agree professional development focus on teaching and learning, staff and stakeholders learn together and apply new knowledge, 88.7% teachers agree/strongly agree staff committed to programs that enhance learning, 86.7% teachers agree/strongly agree staff collaboratively analyze multiple sources of data to assess effectiveness of instructional practices, and 83.7% teachers agree/strongly agree staff collaboratively analyze student work to improve teaching and learning. Furthermore, 69.4% of teachers agree/strongly agree staff and stakeholders learn together and apply new knowledge whereas 30.6% of teachers strongly disagree/disagree.

Table 4.10
Collective Learning and Application Teacher Participants (%)

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
21. Staff members work together to seek knowledge, skills and strategies and apply this new learning to their work.	2.0 (n = 2)	12.2 (n = 12)	58.2 (n = 57)	27.6 (n = 27)
22. Collegial relationships exist among staff members that reflect commitment to school improvement efforts.	2.0 (n = 2)	8.2 (n = 8)	66.3 (n = 65)	23.5 (n = 23)
23. Staff members plan and work together to search for solutions to address diverse student needs.	2.0 (n = 2)	10.2 (n = 10)	61.2 (n = 60)	26.5 (n = 26)
24. A variety of opportunities and structures exist for collective learning through open dialogue.	4.1 (n = 4)	14.3 (n = 14)	61.2 (n = 60)	20.4 (n = 20)
25. Staff members engage in dialogue that reflects a respect for diverse ideas that lead to continued inquiry.	3.1 (n = 3)	12.2 (n = 12)	62.2 (n = 61)	22.4 (n = 22)
26. Professional development focuses on teaching and learning.	4.1 (n = 4)	10.2 (n = 10)	54.1 (n = 53)	31.6 (n = 21)
27. School staff members and stakeholders learn together and apply new knowledge to solve problems.	8.2 (n = 8)	22.4 (n = 22)	54.1 (n = 53)	15.3 (n = 15)
28. School staff members are committed to programs that enhance learning.	2.0 (n = 2)	9.2 (n = 9)	67.3 (n = 67)	21.4 (n = 21)
29. Staff members collaboratively analyze multiple sources of data to assess the effectiveness of instructional practices.	3.1 (n = 3)	10.2 (n = 10)	64.3 (n = 63)	22.4 (n = 22)
30. Staff members collaboratively analyze student work to improve teaching and learning.	3.1 (n = 3)	13.3 (n = 13)	58.2 (n = 57)	25.5 (n = 25)

*Table 4.11**Collapsed Collective Learning and Application Teacher Participants (%)*

	Strongly Disagree/Disagree	Agree/Strongly Agree
21. Staff members work together to seek knowledge, skills and strategies and apply this new learning to their work.	14.2 (n = 14)	85.8 (n = 84)
22. Collegial relationships exist among staff members that reflect commitment to school improvement efforts.	10.2 (n = 10)	89.8 (n = 78)
23. Staff members plan and work together to search for solutions to address diverse student needs.	12.2 (n = 12)	87.7 (n = 86)
24. A variety of opportunities and structures exist for collective learning through open dialogue.	18.4 (n = 18)	81.6 (n = 70)
25. Staff members engage in dialogue that reflects a respect for diverse ideas that lead to continued inquiry.	15.3 (n = 15)	84.6 (n = 83)
26. Professional development focuses on teaching and learning.	14.3 (n = 14)	85.7 (n = 84)
27. School staff members and stakeholders learn together and apply new knowledge to solve problems.	30.6 (n = 30)	69.4 (n = 68)
28. School staff members are committed to programs that enhance learning.	11.2 (n = 11)	88.7 (n = 87)
29. Staff members collaboratively analyze multiple sources of data to assess the effectiveness of instructional practices.	13.3 (n = 13)	86.7 (n = 85)
30. Staff members collaboratively analyze student work to improve teaching and learning.	16.3 (n = 16)	83.7 (n = 82)

Shared Personal Practice

Items 31-37 in the survey pertained to shared personal practice in PLCs. Table 4.12 illustrates the results of the teachers responses to the six items geared towards shared personal practice. Table 4.13 illustrates the teachers collapsed responses on shared personal practice. There are three statements that majority of teachers indicated they agree/strongly agree that staff collaboratively review student work to share and improve instructional practices (97.0%), individuals and teams have the opportunity to apply learning and share the results of their practices (82.6%), and staff members regularly share students work to guide overall school improvement (89.8%). In addition, 78.6% of teachers agree/strongly agree that staff informally share ideas and suggestions for improving student learning where as 21.4% of teachers strongly disagree/agree, and 76.6% of teachers agree/strongly agree opportunities exist for coaching and mentoring where as 23.4% of teachers strongly disagree/agree. The remaining responses had opposing differences. For instance, 35.7% of teachers strongly disagree/disagree that opportunities exist for staff members to observe peers and offer encouragement, and 37.8% of teachers strongly disagree/disagree that staff members provide feedback to peers related to instructional practices.

Table 4.12
Shared Personal Practice Teacher Participants (%)

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
31. Opportunities exist for staff members to observe peers and offer encouragement.	13.3 (n = 13)	22.4 (n = 22)	46.9 (n = 46)	17.3 (n = 17)
32. Staff members provide feedback to peers related to instructional practices.	5.1 (n = 5)	32.7 (n = 32)	43.9 (n = 43)	18.4 (n = 18)
33. Staff members informally share ideas and suggestions for improving student learning.	5.1 (n = 5)	16.3 (n = 16)	58.2 (n = 57)	20.4 (n = 20)
34. Staff members collaboratively review student work to share and improve instructional practices.	0.0 (n = 0)	3.1 (n = 3)	68.4 (n = 67)	28.6 (n = 28)
35. Opportunities exist for coaching and mentoring.	2.0 (n = 2)	21.4 (n = 21)	58.2 (n = 57)	18.4 (n = 18)
36. Individuals and teams have the opportunity to apply learning and share the results of their practices.	3.1 (n = 3)	14.3 (n = 14)	56.1 (n = 55)	26.5 (n = 26)
37. Staff members regularly share student work to guide overall school improvement.	2.0 (n = 2)	8.2 (n = 8)	68.4 (n = 67)	21.4 (n = 21)

*Table 4.13**Collapsed Shared Personal Practice Teacher Participants (%)*

	Strongly Disagree/Disagree	Agree/Strongly Agree
31. Opportunities exist for staff members to observe peers and offer encouragement.	35.7 (<i>n</i> = 35)	64.2 (<i>n</i> = 63)
32. Staff members provide feedback to peers related to instructional practices.	37.8 (<i>n</i> = 37)	62.3 (<i>n</i> = 61)
33. Staff members informally share ideas and suggestions for improving student learning.	21.4 (<i>n</i> = 21)	78.6 (<i>n</i> = 77)
34. Staff members collaboratively review student work to share and improve instructional practices.	3.1 (<i>n</i> = 3)	97.0 (<i>n</i> = 95)
35. Opportunities exist for coaching and mentoring.	23.4 (<i>n</i> = 23)	76.6 (<i>n</i> = 75)
36. Individuals and teams have the opportunity to apply learning and share the results of their practices.	17.4 (<i>n</i> = 17)	82.6 (<i>n</i> = 81)
37. Staff members regularly share student work to guide overall school improvement.	10.2 (<i>n</i> = 10)	89.8 (<i>n</i> = 88)

Supportive Conditions – Relationships

Items 38-42 in the survey pertained to supportive conditions- relationships in PLCs. Table 4.14 illustrate the results of the teachers responses to the five items geared towards supportive conditions- relationships. Table 4.15 illustrates the teachers collapsed responses on supportive conditions- relationships. As illustrated in Table 4.16 majority of teachers agree/strongly agree that a caring relationship among staff and students that have been built on trust and respect, culture of respect and trust for taking risks (94.9%), outstanding achievement was recognized and celebrated (80.6%), staff and stakeholders

exhibit a sustained and unified effort to embed change into the culture (87.8%), and relationship among staff support honest and respectful examination of data to enhance teaching and learning. There seems to be a slight difference in opinions on the remaining two statements. For example, 27.6% of teachers strongly disagree/disagree that caring relationships exist among staff and students that have been built on trust and respect, and 26.5% of teachers strongly disagree/disagree that relationships among staff support honest and respectful examination of data to enhance teaching and learning.

Table 4.14
Supportive Conditions- Relationships Teacher Participants (%)

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
38. Caring relationships exist among staff and students that are built on trust and respect.	3.1 (n = 3)	24.5 (n = 24)	57.1 (n = 56)	15.3 (n = 15)
39. A culture of trust and respect exists for taking risks.	0.0 (n = 0)	5.1 (n = 5)	59.2 (n = 58)	35.7 (n = 35)
40. Outstanding achievement is recognized and celebrated regularly in our school.	5.1 (n = 5)	14.3 (n = 14)	56.1 (n = 55)	24.5 (n = 24)
41. School staff and stakeholders exhibit a sustained and unified effort to embed change into the culture of the school.	4.1 (n = 4)	8.2 (n = 8)	53.1 (n = 52)	34.7 (n = 34)
42. Relationships among staff members support honest and respectful examination of data to enhance teaching and learning.	7.1 (n = 7)	19.4 (n = 19)	59.2 (n = 58)	14.3 (n = 14)

*Table 4.15**Collapsed Supportive Conditions- Relationships Teacher Participants (%)*

	Strongly Disagree/Disagree	Agree/Strongly Agree
38. Caring relationships exist among staff and students that are built on trust and respect.	27.6 (n = 27)	72.4 (n = 71)
39. A culture of trust and respect exists for taking risks.	5.1 (n = 5)	94.9 (n = 93)
40. Outstanding achievement is recognized and celebrated regularly in our school.	19.4 (n = 19)	80.6 (n = 79)
41. School staff and stakeholders exhibit a sustained and unified effort to embed change into the culture of the school.	12.3 (n = 12)	87.8 (n = 86)
42. Relationships among staff members support honest and respectful examination of data to enhance teaching and learning.	26.5 (n = 26)	73.5 (n = 72)

Supportive Conditions - Structures

Items 43-52 in the survey pertained to supportive conditions - structures in PLCs. Table 4.16 illustrates the results of the teachers responses to the five items geared towards supportive conditions- structures. Table 4.17 illustrates the teachers collapsed responses on supportive conditions- relationships. As illustrated in Table 4.21 majority of teachers agree/strongly agree that time was provided to facilitate collaborative work (84.6%), school schedule promotes collective learning and shared practice, fiscal resources have been available for professional development, appropriate technology and instructional materials have been available to staff (81.6%), resource people provide expertise and support for continuous learning, school facility was clean, attractive and inviting (82.7%), proximity of grade level and department personnel allows for ease in collaborating with colleagues (91.8%), communication systems promote a flow of information among staff members (91.9%), communication systems promote a flow of

information across the entire school community including: central office personnel, parents, and community members (90.8%), and data have been organized and made available to provide easy access to staff members (85.7%). Teachers tend to slightly strongly disagree/disagree that the school schedule promoted collective learning and shared practice (23.5%), fiscal resources are available for professional development (25.5%), and resource people provide expertise and support for continuous learning (22.4%).

Table 4.16
Supportive Conditions-Structures Teacher Participants (%)

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
43. Time is provided to facilitate collaborative work.	5.1 (n = 5)	10.2 (n = 10)	67.3 (n = 66)	17.3 (n = 17)
44. The school schedule promotes collective learning and shared practice.	3.1 (n = 3)	20.4 (n = 20)	57.1 (n = 56)	19.4 (n = 19)
45. Fiscal resources are available for professional development.	4.1 (n = 4)	21.4 (n = 21)	53.1 (n = 52)	21.4 (n = 21)
46. Appropriate technology and instructional materials are available to staff.	5.1 (n = 5)	13.3 (n = 13)	59.2 (n = 58)	22.4 (n = 22)
47. Resource people provide expertise and support for continuous learning.	7.1 (n = 7)	15.3 (n = 15)	51.0 (n = 50)	26.5 (n = 26)
48. The school facility is clean, attractive and inviting.	4.1 (n = 4)	13.3 (n = 13)	55.1 (n = 54)	27.6 (n = 27)
49. The proximity of grade level and department personnel allows for ease in collaborating with colleagues.	2.0 (n = 2)	6.1 (n = 6)	46.9 (n = 46)	44.9 (n = 44)
50. Communication systems promote a flow of information among staff members.	0.0 (n = 0)	8.2 (n = 8)	59.2 (n = 58)	32.7 (n = 32)
51. Communication systems promote a flow of information across the entire school community including: central office personnel, parents, and community members.	2.0 (n = 2)	7.1 (n = 7)	66.3 (n = 65)	24.5 (n = 24)
52. Data are organized and made available to provide easy access to staff members.	3.1 (n = 3)	11.2 (n = 11)	60.2 (n = 59)	25.5 (n = 25)

Table 4.17

Collapsed Supportive Conditions- Structures Teacher Participants (%)

	Strongly Disagree/Disagree	Agree/Strongly Agree
43. Time is provided to facilitate collaborative work.	15.3 (n = 15)	84.6 (n = 83)
44. The school schedule promotes collective learning and shared practice.	23.5 (n = 23)	76.5 (n = 75)
45. Fiscal resources are available for professional development.	25.5 (n = 25)	74.5 (n = 73)
46. Appropriate technology and instructional materials are available to staff.	18.4 (n = 18)	81.6 (n = 80)
47. Resource people provide expertise and support for continuous learning.	22.4 (n = 22)	77.5 (n = 76)
48. The school facility is clean, attractive and inviting.	17.4 (n = 17)	82.7 (n = 81)
49. The proximity of grade level and department personnel allows for ease in collaborating with colleagues.	8.1 (n = 8)	91.8 (n = 90)
50. Communication systems promote a flow of information among staff members.	8.2 (n = 8)	91.9 (n = 90)
51. Communication systems promote a flow of information across the entire school community including: central office personnel, parents, and community members.	9.1 (n = 9)	90.8 (n = 89)
52. Data are organized and made available to provide easy access to staff members.	14.3 (n = 14)	85.7 (n = 84)

Research Question Two

Research question two, What are high school administrators' perceptions of the teacher leadership role within their participation in Professional Learning Communities?, was measured using frequencies and percentages of the Professional Learning Community Assessment Revised (PLCA-R) Survey, a fifty-two item survey which required participants to rate themselves using a frequency scale (1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Agree, 4 = Strongly Agree). The first eleven items in the survey pertained to shared and supportive leadership in PLCs. Table 4.18 illustrates the results of the administrators' responses to the eleven items geared towards shared and supportive leadership. Table 4.19 illustrates administrators' collapsed responses on the eleven shared and supportive leadership.

Of the eleven components of shared and supportive leadership, administrators agree/strongly agree with eight of the statements. These statements had indicated the principal incorporated advice from staff to make decisions (93.3%), staff have had access to key information (93.4%), the principal was proactive and addresses areas where support was needed (100.0%), opportunities have been provided for staff to initiate change (93.3%), the principal shares responsibility and rewards for innovative actions (93.3%), the principal participates democratically with staff sharing power and authority (93.3%), decision-making takes place through committees and communication across grade level (93.4%), and staff use multiple sources of data to make decisions about teaching and learning (100.0%).

A few administrators (twenty percent) strongly disagree/disagree that staff have been consistently involved in discussion making decisions about most school issues, that leadership was promoted and nurtured among staff, and that stakeholders assume shared

responsibility and accountability for student learning without evidence of imposed power and authority.

Table 4.18

Shared and Supportive Leadership Administrator Participants (%)

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
1. Staff members are consistently involved in discussing and making decisions about most school issues.	0.0 (n = 0)	20.0 (n = 3)	53.3 (n = 8)	26.7 (n = 4)
2. The principal incorporates advice from staff members to make decisions.	0.0 (n = 0)	6.7 (n = 1)	60.0 (n = 9)	33.3 (n = 5)
3. Staff members have accessibility to key information.	0.0 (n = 0)	6.7 (n = 1)	46.7 (n = 7)	46.7 (n = 7)
4. The principal is proactive and addresses areas where support is needed.	0.0 (n = 0)	0.0 (n = 0)	53.3 (n = 8)	46.7 (n = 7)
5. Opportunities are provided for staff members to initiate change.	0.0 (n = 0)	6.7 (n = 1)	53.3 (n = 8)	40.0 (n = 6)
6. The principal shares responsibility and rewards for innovative actions.	0.0 (n = 0)	6.7 (n = 1)	40.0 (n = 6)	53.3 (n = 8)
7. The principal participates democratically with staff sharing power and authority.	0.0 (n = 0)	6.7 (n = 1)	60.0 (n = 9)	33.3 (n = 5)
8. Leadership is promoted and nurtured among staff members.	0.0 (n = 0)	20.0 (n = 3)	40.0 (n = 6)	40.0 (n = 6)
9. Decision-making takes place through committees and communication across grade and subject areas.	0.0 (n = 0)	6.7 (n = 1)	46.7 (n = 7)	46.7 (n = 7)
10. Stakeholders assume shared responsibility and accountability for student learning without evidence of imposed power and authority.	6.7 (n = 1)	13.3 (n = 2)	53.3 (n = 8)	26.7 (n = 4)
11. Staff members use multiple sources of data to make decisions about teaching and learning.	0.0 (n = 0)	0.0 (n = 0)	60.0 (n = 9)	40.0 (n = 6)

*Table 4.19**Collapsed Shared and Supportive Leadership Administrator Participants (%)*

	Strongly Disagree/Disagree	Agree/Strongly Agree
1. Staff members are consistently involved in discussing and making decisions about most school issues.	20.0 (<i>n</i> = 3)	80.0 (<i>n</i> = 12)
2. The principal incorporates advice from staff members to make decisions.	6.7 (<i>n</i> = 1)	93.3 (<i>n</i> = 14)
3. Staff members have accessibility to key information.	6.7 (<i>n</i> = 1)	93.4 (<i>n</i> = 14)
4. The principal is proactive and addresses areas where support is needed.	0.0 (<i>n</i> = 0)	100.0 (<i>n</i> = 15)
5. Opportunities are provided for staff members to initiate change.	6.7 (<i>n</i> = 1)	93.3 (<i>n</i> = 14)
6. The principal shares responsibility and rewards for innovative actions.	6.7 (<i>n</i> = 1)	93.3 (<i>n</i> = 14)
7. The principal participates democratically with staff sharing power and authority.	6.7 (<i>n</i> = 1)	93.3 (<i>n</i> = 14)
8. Leadership is promoted and nurtured among staff members.	20.0 (<i>n</i> = 3)	80.0 (<i>n</i> = 12)
9. Decision-making takes place through committees and communication across grade and subject areas.	6.7 (<i>n</i> = 1)	93.4 (<i>n</i> = 14)
10. Stakeholders assume shared responsibility and accountability for student learning without evidence of imposed power and authority.	20.0 (<i>n</i> = 3)	80.0 (<i>n</i> = 12)
11. Staff members use multiple sources of data to make decisions about teaching and learning.	0.0 (<i>n</i> = 0)	100.0 (<i>n</i> = 15)

Shared Values and Vision

Items 12-20 in the survey pertained to shared values and vision in PLCs. Table 4.20 illustrates the results of the administrators' responses to the eight items geared towards shared values and vision. Table 4.21 illustrates the administrators' collapsed responses on shared values and vision. As illustrated in Table 4.21, 100.0% of administrators agree/strongly agree that shared values support norms of behavior that

guide decisions about teaching and learning, 100.0 % of administrators agree/strongly agree that staff share visions for school improvement that have an undeviating focus on student learning, and 100.0% of administrators' agree/strongly agree that a collaborative process exists for developing a shared vision among staff.

In addition, 100.0% of administrators agree/strongly agree that school goals focus on student learning beyond test scores and grades, 100.0% of administrators' agree/strongly agree that policies and programs have been aligned to the school's vision, and 100.0% of administrators' agree/strongly agree that data have been used to prioritize actions to reach a shared vision however, 6.7% of administrators strongly disagree/disagree that a collaborative process exists for developing a shared sense of values among staff, 6.7% of administrators strongly disagree/disagree that decision have been made in alignment with the school's clause and vision, and 13.4% of administrators strongly disagree/disagree that stakeholders have been actively involved in creating high expectations that serve to increase student achievement

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Table 4.20

Shared Values and Vision Administrator Participants (%)

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
12. A collaborative process exists for developing a shared sense of values among staff.	0.0 (n = 0)	6.7 (n = 1)	60.0 (n = 9)	33.3 (n = 5)
13. Shared values support norms of behavior that guide decisions about teaching and learning.	0.0 (n = 0)	0.0 (n = 0)	66.7 (n = 10)	33.3 (n = 5)
14. Staff members share visions for school improvement that have an undeviating focus on student learning.	0.0 (n = 0)	0.0 (n = 0)	80.0 (n = 12)	20.0 (n = 3)
15. Decisions are made in alignment with the school's values and vision.	0.0 (n = 0)	6.7 (n = 1)	53.3 (n = 8)	40.0 (n = 6)
16. A collaborative process exists for developing a shared vision among staff.	0.0 (n = 0)	0.0 (n = 0)	66.7 (n = 10)	33.3 (n = 5)
17. School goals focus on student learning beyond test scores and grades.	0.0 (n = 0)	0.0 (n = 0)	46.7 (n = 7)	53.3 (n = 8)
18. Policies and programs are aligned to the school's vision.	0.0 (n = 0)	0.0 (n = 0)	60.0 (n = 9)	40.0 (n = 6)
19. Stakeholders are actively involved in creating high expectations that serve to increase student achievement.	6.7 (n = 1)	6.7 (n = 1)	53.3 (n = 8)	33.3 (n = 5)
20. Data are used to prioritize actions to reach a shared vision.	0.0 (n = 0)	0.0 (n = 0)	46.7 (n = 7)	53.3 (n = 8)

*Table 4.21**Collapsed Shared Values and Vision Administrator Participants (%)*

	Strongly Disagree/Disagree	Agree/Strongly Agree
12. A collaborative process exists for developing a shared sense of values among staff.	6.7 (<i>n</i> = 1)	93.3 (<i>n</i> = 14)
13. Shared values support norms of behavior that guide decisions about teaching and learning.	0.0 (<i>n</i> = 0)	100.0 (<i>n</i> = 15)
14. Staff members share visions for school improvement that have an undeviating focus on student learning.	0.0 (<i>n</i> = 0)	100.0 (<i>n</i> = 15)
15. Decisions are made in alignment with the school's values and vision.	6.7 (<i>n</i> = 1)	93.3 (<i>n</i> = 14)
16. A collaborative process exists for developing a shared vision among staff.	0.0 (<i>n</i> = 0)	100.0 (<i>n</i> = 15)
17. School goals focus on student learning beyond test scores and grades.	0.0 (<i>n</i> = 0)	100.0 (<i>n</i> = 15)
18. Policies and programs are aligned to the school's vision.	0.0 (<i>n</i> = 0)	100.0 (<i>n</i> = 15)
19. Stakeholders are actively involved in creating high expectations that serve to increase student achievement.	13.4 (<i>n</i> = 2)	86.6 (<i>n</i> = 13)
20. Data are used to prioritize actions to reach a shared vision.	0.0 (<i>n</i> = 0)	100.0 (<i>n</i> = 15)

Collective Learning and Application

Items 21-30 in the survey pertained to collective learning and application in PLCs. Table 4.22 illustrates the results of the administrators' responses to the nine items geared towards collective learning and application. Table 4.23 illustrates the administrators' collapsed responses on collective learning and application. As illustrated in Table 4.23 majority of administrators 100.0% agree/strongly agree that the staff works together to seek knowledge, skills and strategies and apply new learning, 100.0% teachers agree/strongly agree collegial relationship among staff that reflects commitment to school improvement, 100.0 % teachers agree/strongly agree staff plan and work together to address the diverse needs of students, 100.0% teachers agree/strongly agree professional development focus on teaching and learning, and 100.0% teachers agree/strongly agree staff committed to programs that enhance learning.

On the other hand 6.7% of administrators strongly disagree/disagree that a variety of opportunities and structures exist for collective learning through open dialogue, 6.7% of administrators strongly disagree/disagree that staff engage in dialogue that reflects a respect for diverse ideas that lead to continued inquiry, 6.7% of administrators strongly disagree/disagree staff collaboratively analyze multiple sources of data to assess the effectiveness of instructional practices, and 13.3% of administrators strongly disagree/disagree staff collaboratively analyze student work to improve teaching and learning.

Table 4.22

Collective and Learning Application for Administrator Participants (%)

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
21. Staff members work together to seek knowledge, skills and strategies and apply this new learning to their work.	0.0 (n = 0)	0.0 (n = 0)	80.0 (n = 12)	20.0 (n = 3)
22. Collegial relationships exist among staff members that reflect commitment to school improvement efforts.	0.0 (n = 0)	0.0 (n = 0)	73.3 (n = 11)	26.7 (n = 4)
23. Staff members plan and work together to search for solutions to address diverse student needs.	0.0 (n = 0)	0.0 (n = 0)	66.7 (n = 10)	33.3 (n = 5)
24. A variety of opportunities and structures exist for collective learning through open dialogue.	0.0 (n = 0)	6.7 (n = 1)	60.0 (n = 9)	33.3 (n = 5)
25. Staff members engage in dialogue that reflects a respect for diverse ideas that lead to continued inquiry.	0.0 (n = 0)	6.7 (n = 1)	73.3 (n = 11)	20.0 (n = 3)
26. Professional development focuses on teaching and learning.	0.0 (n = 0)	0.0 (n = 0)	60.0 (n = 9)	40.0 (n = 6)
27. School staff members and stakeholders learn together and apply new knowledge to solve problems.	6.7 (n = 1)	0.0 (n = 0)	66.7 (n = 10)	26.7 (n = 4)
28. School staff members are committed to programs that enhance learning.	0.0 (n = 0)	0.0 (n = 0)	80.0 (n = 12)	20.0 (n = 3)
29. Staff members collaboratively analyze multiple sources of data to assess the effectiveness of instructional practices.	0.0 (n = 0)	6.7 (n = 1)	80.0 (n = 12)	13.3 (n = 2)
30. Staff members collaboratively analyze student work to improve teaching and learning.	0.0 (n = 0)	13.3 (n = 2)	66.7 (n = 10)	20.0 (n = 3)

*Table 4.23**Collapsed Collective and Learning Application for Administrator Participants (%)*

	Strongly Disagree/Disagree	Agree/Strongly Agree
21. Staff members work together to seek knowledge, skills and strategies and apply this new learning to their work.	0.0 (n = 0)	100.0 (n = 15)
22. Collegial relationships exist among staff members that reflect commitment to school improvement efforts.	0.0 (n = 0)	100.0 (n = 15)
23. Staff members plan and work together to search for solutions to address diverse student needs.	0.0 (n = 0)	100.0 (n = 15)
24. A variety of opportunities and structures exist for collective learning through open dialogue.	6.7 (n = 1)	93.3 (n = 14)
25. Staff members engage in dialogue that reflects a respect for diverse ideas that lead to continued inquiry.	6.7 (n = 1)	93.3 (n = 14)
26. Professional development focuses on teaching and learning.	0.0 (n = 0)	100.0 (n = 15)
27. School staff members and stakeholders learn together and apply new knowledge to solve problems.	6.7 (n = 1)	93.4 (n = 14)
28. School staff members are committed to programs that enhance learning.	0.0 (n = 0)	100.0 (n = 15)

Shared Personal Practice

Items 31-37 in the survey pertained to shared personal practice in PLCs. Table 4.24 illustrates the results of the administrators' responses to the six items geared towards shared personal practice. Table 4.25 illustrates the administrators' collapsed responses on shared personal practice. Administrators (100.0%) agree/strongly agree that staff regularly share students work to guide overall school improvement, staff collaboratively

review student work to share and improve instructional practices (93.4%), and individuals and teams have the opportunity to apply learning and share the results of their practices (93.3%).

When surveyed 26.7% of administrators strongly disagree/disagree that opportunities exist for staff to observe peers and offer encouragement, 20.0% of administrators strongly disagree/disagree that staff provide feedback to peers related to instructional practices, 13.3% of administrators strongly disagree/disagree that staff informally share ideas and suggestions for improving student learning, and 13.3% of administrators strongly disagree/disagree that opportunities exist for coaching and mentoring.

Table 4.24

Shared Personal Practice for Administrator Participants (%)

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
31. Opportunities exist for staff members to observe peers and offer encouragement.	0.0 (n = 0)	26.7 (n = 4)	53.3 (n = 8)	20.0 (n = 3)
32. Staff members provide feedback to peers related to instructional practices.	6.7 (n = 1)	13.3 (n = 2)	66.7 (n = 10)	13.3 (n = 2)
33. Staff members informally share ideas and suggestions for improving student learning.	0.0 (n = 0)	13.3 (n = 2)	60.0 (n = 9)	26.7 (n = 4)
34. Staff members collaboratively review student work to share and improve instructional practices.	0.0 (n = 0)	6.7 (n = 1)	66.7 (n = 10)	26.7 (n = 4)
35. Opportunities exist for coaching and mentoring.	0.0 (n = 0)	13.3 (n = 2)	73.3 (n = 11)	13.3 (n = 2)
36. Individuals and teams have the opportunity to apply learning and share the results of their practices.	0.0 (n = 0)	6.7 (n = 1)	60.0 (n = 9)	33.3 (n = 5)
37. Staff members regularly share student work to guide overall school improvement.	0.0 (n = 0)	0.0 (n = 0)	66.7 (n = 10)	33.3 (n = 5)

*Table 4.25**Collapsed Shared Personal Practice for Administrator Participants (%)*

	Strongly Disagree/Disagree	Agree/Strongly Agree
31. Opportunities exist for staff members to observe peers and offer encouragement.	26.7 (<i>n</i> = 4)	73.3 (<i>n</i> = 11)
32. Staff members provide feedback to peers related to instructional practices.	20.0 (<i>n</i> = 3)	80.0 (<i>n</i> = 12)
33. Staff members informally share ideas and suggestions for improving student learning.	13.3 (<i>n</i> = 2)	86.7 (<i>n</i> = 13)
34. Staff members collaboratively review student work to share and improve instructional practices.	6.7 (<i>n</i> = 1)	93.4 (<i>n</i> = 14)
35. Opportunities exist for coaching and mentoring.	13.3 (<i>n</i> = 2)	86.6 (<i>n</i> = 13)
36. Individuals and teams have the opportunity to apply learning and share the results of their practices.	6.7 (<i>n</i> = 1)	93.3 (<i>n</i> = 14)
37. Staff members regularly share student work to guide overall school improvement.	0.0 (<i>n</i> = 0)	100.0 (<i>n</i> = 15)

Supportive Conditions- Relationships

Items 38-42 in the survey pertained to supportive conditions- relationships in PLCs. Table 4.26 illustrate the results of the administrators' responses to the five items geared towards supportive conditions- relationships. Table 4.27 illustrates the administrators' collapsed responses on supportive conditions- relationships. As illustrated in Table 4.27 all administrators agree/strongly agree that a culture of trust and respect exists for taking risks (100.0%), and school staff and stakeholders exhibit a sustained and unified effort to embed changed into the culture of the school (100.0%). At least one to two administrators strongly disagree/disagree that caring relationships exist among the

staff and students that have been built on trust and respect (13.3%), outstanding achievement was recognized and celebrated regularly in our school (6.7%), and relationships among staff support honest and respectful examination of data to enhance teaching and learning (6.7%).

Table 4.26
Supportive Conditions-Relationships for Administrator Participants (%)

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
38. Caring relationships exist among staff and students that are built on trust and respect.	0.0 (n = 0)	13.3 (n = 2)	73.3 (n = 11)	13.3 (n = 2)
39. A culture of trust and respect exists for taking risks.	0.0 (n = 0)	0.0 (n = 0)	80.0 (n = 12)	20.0 (n = 3)
40. Outstanding achievement is recognized and celebrated regularly in our school.	0.0 (n = 0)	6.7 (n = 1)	66.7 (n = 10)	26.7 (n = 4)
41. School staff and stakeholders exhibit a sustained and unified effort to embed change into the culture of the school.	0.0 (n = 0)	0.0 (n = 0)	73.3 (n = 11)	26.7 (n = 4)
42. Relationships among staff members support honest and respectful examination of data to enhance teaching and learning.	0.0 (n = 0)	6.7 (n = 1)	73.3 (n = 11)	20.0 (n = 3)

*Table 4.27**Collapsed Supportive Conditions-Relationships for Administrator Participants (%)*

	Strongly Disagree/Disagree	Agree/Strongly Agree
38. Caring relationships exist among staff and students that are built on trust and respect.	13.3 (<i>n</i> = 2)	86.6 (<i>n</i> = 13)
39. A culture of trust and respect exists for taking risks.	0.0 (<i>n</i> = 0)	100.0 (<i>n</i> = 15)
40. Outstanding achievement is recognized and celebrated regularly in our school.	6.7 (<i>n</i> = 1)	93.4 (<i>n</i> = 14)
41. School staff and stakeholders exhibit a sustained and unified effort to embed change into the culture of the school.	0.0 (<i>n</i> = 0)	100.0 (<i>n</i> = 15)
42. Relationships among staff members support honest and respectful examination of data to enhance teaching and learning.	6.7 (<i>n</i> = 1)	93.3 (<i>n</i> = 14)

Supportive Conditions- Structures

Items 43-52 in the survey pertained to supportive conditions- structures in PLCs. Table 4.28 illustrate the results of the administrators' responses to the five items geared towards supportive conditions- structures. Table 4.29 illustrates the administrators' collapsed responses on supportive conditions- relationships. As illustrated in Table 4.29 out of the ten statements all administrators agree/strongly agree with time was provided to facilitate collaborative work (100.0%), school schedule promoted collective learning and shared practice (100.0%), fiscal resources have been available for professional development (100.0%), appropriate technology. instructional materials have been available to staff (100.0%), and resource people provide expertise and support for continuous learning (100.0%), school facility was clean, attractive, and inviting (100.0%), and proximity of grade level and department personnel allows for ease in collaborating with colleagues. At least one to two administrators strongly

disagree/disagree that communication systems promote flow of information among staff (13.3%), communication systems promote flow of information across the entire school community (6.7%), and data have been organized and made available to provide easy access to staff (6.7%).

Table 4.28
Supportive Conditions-Structures for Administrator Participants (%)

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
43. Time is provided to facilitate collaborative work.	0.0 (n = 0)	0.0 (n = 0)	80.0 (n = 12)	20.0 (n = 3)
44. The school schedule promotes collective learning and shared practice.	0.0 (n = 0)	0.0 (n = 0)	66.7 (n = 10)	33.3 (n = 5)
45. Fiscal resources are available for professional development.	0.0 (n = 0)	0.0 (n = 0)	66.7 (n = 10)	33.3 (n = 5)
46. Appropriate technology and instructional materials are available to staff.	0.0 (n = 0)	0.0 (n = 0)	66.7 (n = 10)	33.3 (n = 5)
47. Resource people provide expertise and support for continuous learning.	0.0 (n = 0)	0.0 (n = 0)	53.3 (n = 8)	46.7 (n = 7)
48. The school facility is clean, attractive and inviting.	0.0 (n = 0)	0.0 (n = 0)	60.0 (n = 9)	40.0 (n = 6)
49. The proximity of grade level and department personnel allows for ease in collaborating with colleagues.	0.0 (n = 0)	0.0 (n = 0)	73.3 (n = 11)	26.7 (n = 4)
50. Communication systems promote a flow of information among staff members.	0.0 (n = 0)	13.3 (n = 2)	46.7 (n = 7)	40.0 (n = 6)
51. Communication systems promote a flow of information across the entire school community including: central office personnel, parents, and community members.	0.0 (n = 0)	6.7 (n = 1)	66.7 (n = 10)	26.7 (n = 4)
52. Data are organized and made available to provide easy access to staff members.	0.0 (n = 0)	6.7 (n = 1)	60.0 (n = 9)	33.3 (n = 5)

*Table 4.29**Collapsed Supportive Conditions Structures for Administrator Participants (%)*

	Strongly Disagree/Disagree	Agree/Strongly Agree
43. Time is provided to facilitate collaborative work.	0.0 (<i>n</i> = 0)	100.0 (<i>n</i> = 15)
44. The school schedule promotes collective learning and shared practice.	0.0 (<i>n</i> = 0)	100.0 (<i>n</i> = 15)
45. Fiscal resources are available for professional development.	0.0 (<i>n</i> = 0)	100.0 (<i>n</i> = 15)
46. Appropriate technology and instructional materials are available to staff.	0.0 (<i>n</i> = 0)	100.0 (<i>n</i> = 15)
47. Resource people provide expertise and support for continuous learning.	0.0 (<i>n</i> = 0)	100.0 (<i>n</i> = 15)
48. The school facility is clean, attractive and inviting.	0.0 (<i>n</i> = 0)	100.0 (<i>n</i> = 15)
49. The proximity of grade level and department personnel allows for ease in collaborating with colleagues.	0.0 (<i>n</i> = 0)	100.0 (<i>n</i> = 15)
50. Communication systems promote a flow of information among staff members.	13.3 (<i>n</i> = 2)	86.7 (<i>n</i> = 13)
51. Communication systems promote a flow of information across the entire school community including: central office personnel, parents, and community members.	6.7 (<i>n</i> = 1)	93.4 (<i>n</i> = 14)
52. Data are organized and made available to provide easy access to staff members.	6.7 (<i>n</i> = 1)	93.3 (<i>n</i> = 14)

Research Question Three

Research question three, What qualities and attributes from the perspectives of high school teachers and administrators' contribute to effective implementation of PLCs?, was answered by using a qualitative inductive coding process. In an attempt to

capture a more in-depth understanding of teacher leadership in PLCs, teachers and administrators were interviewed regarding their perceptions on the teacher leadership role in the implementation of PLCs as a professional development model. An inductive coding analysis developed themes based on the interview data from teachers and administrators. From the major themes identified, subthemes emerged from feedback received from all participants. The emergent themes and subthemes obtained from teacher and administrator responses have been provided below followed by sample comments.

In an attempt to capture a more in-depth understanding of PLCs and teacher leadership in PLCs, nine high school teachers, six high school teacher leaders, six high school administrators, and the Director of Professional Growth were interviewed regarding their perceptions of PLCs. Pseudonyms have been used when referring to participants' responses and the name of the district. This section of the chapter presents the analysis of qualitative data collected from interviews, participant demographics, and processes of answering each of the stated research questions.

Teachers Perspectives

Interviews were conducted with high school teachers about their perceptions of PLCs. All nine teachers agreed that collaboration was an essential component of PLCs. The thematic analysis coding process revealed three themes regarding teachers views of PLCs: (a) views of collaboration in PLCs, (b) barriers in PLCs, and (c) teacher leaders role in PLCs. The emergent themes obtained from teachers responses have been provided below followed by a sample of the participants' responses from the interviews.

Views of Collaboration in PLCs Based on the interview responses obtained through the interview process regarding defining PLCs, all teachers mentioned collaboration as an essential component of PLCs. Teachers views of collaboration in

PLCs were disaggregated into four subthemes: (a) new learning of instructional methods in PLCs, (b) sharing ideas and resources in PLCs, (c) team planning in PLCs, and (d) data analysis of student performance.

New Learning of Instructional Methods in PLCs. Teacher participants viewed PLCs as a way to collaborate with one another to gain new instructional methods to improve student learning that they have not heard of or used before in their classrooms. Six out of the nine participants expressed their views of PLCs as a way to come together to gather as a team to learn new instructional methods. Of the six, four expressed that new learning influenced their teaching. Chad, who teaches math, learned about technology integration in the classroom:

There are some things we learn and talk about literally the next day that I can implement in the classroom. For instance, with the Schoology assessments and having them migrate directly into my E.S.P. That was something I did the next day once I learned how to do that in PLC.

Bettye, who teaches math, learned new instructional strategies that she can use in her classroom:

Teachers collaborating and learning from one another about new instructional strategies that worked for others on the team. I look forward to PLCs because I walk away with new things that I have learned and can try in my classroom.

Richard, who teaches history, was able to implement new learning of instructional methods from PLCs in his classroom, “most of the time when I leave PLCs I have something new to implement in my classroom.” Bruce, who teaches English Language Arts, gained new learning in PLCs, which impacted his teaching, “I learn something new at every PLCs that impacts me as a teacher and my instruction. It is a great learning experience when it is effective.”

Of the six, two explained that new learning is about growing and learning together. Adrian, who teaches English Language Arts, learned a lot through collaboration in PLCs:

Through collaboration I've learned so much from the veteran teachers that were here when I started. Even though things change all the time, I learn so much from the people that I work with now on a daily basis.

Tracy, who teaches science, learned and grew from being able to come together in PLCs, “PLCs are about new learning and and growing from one another. This is our time to come together and learn from another.”

These comments indicate that teachers experienced new learning during PLCs. Teachers viewed it as a gain and wealth of new instructional knowledge that could be used in their classroom. Overall, most of the teachers had some type of new learning experience in PLCs, which they all seem to like about PLCs.

Sharing Ideas and Resources in PLCs. Teachers acknowledged that collaborating through sharing ideas and resources helped them with their various approaches to their classroom instruction. Seven teachers shared ideas and resources that they have used in their classroom. Seven out of nine teachers felt like PLCs gave them an opportunity to share ideas and learn from one another. Some teachers expressed that they like coming together as a team to share and bounce ideas off each other.

Three teachers expressed that during PLCs they were able to hear and see other teachers ideas and resources. Michelle, who teaches science, stated that her team shares ideas and collaborates about their classroom experiences:

We share ideas with fellow colleagues so you can get a better perspective on what's going on. We look at the whole picture, such as where you're stuck and

think, "This is not working for me." So you share, for an example, "I have a student. This is what's going on. How can I make it better?"

Diante, who teaches math, expressed team sharing allowed her to differentiate classroom instruction:

It is a time of sharing and collaboration during PLC. It allows me to deliver or differentiate my instruction based on the collaboration from teammates on how they present or approach a particular topic.

Betty described that sharing helped her because she was able to see the way it was taught:

It is an opportunity for all teachers to come together and share ideas. PLCs are the time we are allowed to come together and share ideas. PLCs have been really fantastic because it forces me to work with others when I normally wouldn't because I'm a solo person. I get to see their ideas, their projects and the way they taught it.

Four teachers explained that through sharing and collaborating they were able to hear what other teachers on the team are doing. Richard expressed that each team member shared a variety of resources that he could use for unit lessons, "Each team member can come with ideas. It may be scavenger hunts, Kahoot, and handouts. We go over things that are going to be useful for the up coming unit." Chad, through experiences, learned brand new ideas from his teammates:

It gives us a chance to collaborate, plan, and bounce ideas off of one another.

Coming in brand new, I hadn't experienced it and it was really an eye-opening experience to have that opportunity to do that. I didn't get that opportunity in my previous district.

Bruce stated they are able to share and see what other teachers are doing in their classrooms:

I look forward to PLCs because we are able to share ideas with one another. It is hard to see what someone else is doing and we really don't have time to meet as department until we get to PLCs. I like sharing my ideas and hearing other ideas and this is what happens during PLCs.

Bessie, who teaches history, liked the idea of being able to hear what other teacher have done in the classroom, "I like coming together with my team in terms of sharing and collaborating. Sharing is huge for me because I get to hear other people thoughts and ideas." These comments indicate teachers shared ideas and resources with each other during PLCs. Teachers stated sharing allowed them to see what others do and gain other instructional tools for their classroom.

Team Planning in PLCs. Five out of nine teachers stated that planning is a part of their PLCs. Two teachers shared how they collaborated with one another about the changes and/or adjustments that needed to be made to the lesson plans for this year as well as shared ideas. Bettye explained that the team looked over lessons and discussed changes that need to be made:

We look over our lessons for the upcoming week, talking about what went well last year, what we need to make sure we change for this year, and how each of us is going to teach it because we all teach so different.

Adrian stated that his content team collaborated with one another to analyze the plans to see what changes need to be made and ideas, "Let's talk about planning, let's talk about what's working, what's not, and lesson ideas, and that's where I think PLC is most useful." Two teachers explained that team planning is the team planning together and supporting one another.

Chad described his team planning as being divided amongst the team:

You may have subgroups, such as one group might focus on lesson planning and delivery and another group may be focusing on assessment and project based learning, and another group may be focusing on Schoology and implementing strategies of that nature. We've talked about formative assessments, how to properly use them.

Tracy described team planning as a time where her team plans together for support and offers advice, “We plan together so that we can seek advice and get support from other teammates.” One teacher, Bessie described her administrators’ interference and unrealistic suggestions during PLCs affects team planning:

The team leader usually has several pieces of lessons or paperwork that she intends to give us. We try to go through our lessons for the next week. It is supposed to be a pretty straightforward process, but we keep getting interference from the AP who will chime in and suggest we only need one day to teach a certain topic when I know that’s not plausible or effective for students.

These comments indicate teachers used PLCs as a time to plan with their team. Teachers stated they like being able to come together and plan with one another. Some teachers expressed that sharing and supporting one another gives them the instructional tools they need to be successful in the classrooms.

Data Analysis of Student Performance. Four out of the nine teachers described how they examined student data during PLCs and disaggregate these data to make adjustments to instruction. Two teachers described the process of breaking down data to strengthen classroom instruction. Bruce explained that during PLCs they are looking at problematic areas, “We talk about the the data and breaking the data down, looking at problematic areas and taking those problematic areas and focusing in on them and how

we can strengthen those problematic areas.” Tracy explained how teacher’s breakdown data to drive instruction:

We use data and the breakdown of data to drive instruction. We look at each assessment to track student’s growth and based on this information we determine what skills we need to target with each student.

The comment indicates that teachers are analyzing student data during PLCs to adjust instruction and track student’s growth to target student’s needs. The other two teachers explained how they look at various types of data to analyze and make adjustments. Bessie expressed that at her campus they look at all types of data to determine where students are, “We are looking at all types of data to determine student’s challenges and success.” Diante described a different way her team analyzes data by, “reviewing the data on that common assessment for the preview year. Making sure that we make some adjustments as needed again being data driven.” These comments indicate that during PLCs teachers viewed and analyzed data with their team. Teachers stated how they went in depth with the data and tracked the progress of their students. Four teachers stated how they use data to determine their next steps for their students.

Barriers in PLCs

Based on the interview responses obtained through the interview process regarding structure of PLCs, five teachers expressed their concerns with barriers in PLCs that impacts the implementation of PLCs being effective. Teachers barriers in PLCs can be broken down into two subthemes: (a) leadership decisions, and (b) lack of structure and organization.

Ineffective Leadership. Two teachers expressed a variety of current and past barriers that lead to the implementation of PLCs not being effective. The barriers that

teachers shared have to do with leadership decisions such as using PLCs for meetings that are non-existent to them.

One teacher explained, sometimes PLCs are used for other meetings that do not apply to them. Michelle complained that some PLCs do not apply to her:

Sometimes we have PLCs with the whole entire school. It is not in reference to me, or to what we're doing. So we're sitting there going, 'why are we having this PLC for us, sometimes because it does not reference what we need to know.'

Another teacher stated that meetings called by administrators hinder their time in PLCs when it is really needed. Chad's concern is PLCs being replaced with campus meetings when teachers really need the PLC time to collaborate:

The biggest barrier is when our PLCs get taken from us. Usually you plan to have certain meetings, to have certain discussions and if something comes up like an emergency meeting with the principal or with the superintendent, or testing, usually we lose PLC during that time.

Two teachers expressed that leadership on campus replaces PLCs for other meetings that do not relate to PLCs. Both teachers shared that this affected their PLCs time to collaborate with their teams.

Lack of Structure and Organization. Three teachers described their barriers as teachers venting or teachers debating which could lead to a lack of structure and organization in PLCs. Diante, expressed that PLCs turns into venting sessions, "Our teachers feel that they have a venting session or a griping session." Bettye explained that strong opinions sometime affect PLCs:

We're generally pretty effective, but some weeks we just get nothing done. People always have an opinion about something, or people are very vocal in my team so we'll spend the entire PLC debating like two questions on a test and how much we

hate it and how much we love it, and why we shouldn't teach it. Sometimes, when we're very easily distracted, our PLCs don't go anywhere.

Bessie expressed her PLCs experience as a lack of structure and organization:

There is a lack of organization, going over materials that are relevant to what we're teaching, staying on task, or on topic, monitoring time is a problem. It is not a very organized PLC. We're constantly interrupted by administration coming in, giving their two cents as well as other individuals who aren't teachers interfering in the collaboration process, giving their two cents.

These comments indicate teachers barrier in PLCs that impacted the implementation of PLCs. Teachers wanted their PLCs time to be used in meaningful and effective way.

Also, teachers expressed how the team lack of structure and organization affected PLCs in a negative way.

Teacher leaders Role in PLCs

Based on the interview responses obtained through the interview process regarding shared leadership in PLCs, some teachers explained their views of the teacher leader role in PLCs. Teachers views of the teacher leader role in PLCs can be broken down into three subtheme: (a) creating agendas and facilitating PLCs, (b) present professional development, and (c) campus news.

Creating Agendas and Facilitating PLCs. Five teacher participants described the teacher leaders role in PLCs as the person who creates the agenda and facilitates PLCs. Diante shared, “The teacher leader during PLC facilitates the meeting, creates the agenda, provides any feedback or information from the administration to keep us current on things that we need to enhance, or just for our information.” Bettye stated that the teacher leader role is to make the agenda and facilitate PLCs:

Teacher leader makes our agenda and she kind of drives our meeting, whenever we get off task. She makes sure that things get done. I feel like she takes a lot of the responsibility on to herself. She does not delegate it out to us, but she's always the one who really drives our PLCs forward.

Bruce explained that the teacher leader takes the lead in PLCs through facilitating, "They facilitate, they take the lead, depending upon how they've set it up. We've had teacher leads and administrators tag team throughout the PLC, so they do a really good job in my opinion."

Bessie described the teacher leader role as the one to select the topics and provide information from the administrator:

I think she's supposed to lead the PLCs, like set up the topics for discussion, move us along to the next topics that need to be covered, inform us of any important information coming from admin. Also she relates any school related events and reminders about things we have to turn in.

Adrian described the role of the teacher leader as the one, who facilitates and requires active participation in PLCs:

They pretty much set the agenda, and then everyone has a job. So you assign every person a job or they sort of get in groups and people take a job. She facilitates the meeting and kind of keeps it moving in the right direction. If it gets off the rails they bring it back.

These comments indicate that some teachers viewed their teacher leaders' role as the person who creates the agenda and facilitates PLCs.

Present Professional Development. Chad's perspective of the teacher leader role was to present professional development and lead the meetings, "Usually the teacher leaders are responsible for presenting any professional developments or, new ideas. They

kind of run the meeting, and really try to enforce the whole collaboration piece in the departments.”

Campus News. Michelle shared that the teacher leader role is to talk about things that are happening around campus, “Our department head is our leader. Sometimes we talk about bad things that happen in the moment, and then things that happen daily kind of gets overlooked.” Tracy explained that the teacher leader role was to act like an administrator, “the teacher leader role is to act as an administrator by telling us what administrator don’t have time to tell for whatever reason.” Richard clearly stated that he was not sure what the teacher leader role is at his campus, “I am unsure of the teacher leader’s role. The teacher leader tries to facilitate but the administrator frequently interrupts the process.”

These comments indicate that the teachers views of their teacher leader roles in PLCs while similar, can vary by campus. Most of the teachers said their teacher leader role was to facilitate and create an agenda for PLCs. Three teachers stated various perceptions of their teacher role such as presenting professional development, sharing campus news, however, one teacher expressed uncertainty about the teacher leader role.

Teacher leaders Perspectives.

Interviews were conducted with high school teacher leaders about their perceptions of PLCs. Teacher leaders acknowledged that collaboration was an essential component of PLCs. The thematic analysis coding process revealed three themes regarding teacher leaders views of PLCs: (a) views of collaboration in PLCs, (b) barriers in PLCs, and (c) teacher leadership in PLCs. The emergent themes obtained from teacher leaders responses are provided below followed by a sample of the participants’ responses from the interview.

Views of Collaboration in PLCs

Based on the interview responses obtained through the interview process regarding defining PLCs different views of collaboration was expressed by the teacher leaders, six teacher leaders mention collaboration as an essential component of PLCs. The teacher leaders' views of collaboration in PLCs can be broken down into four subthemes: (a) new learning of instructional methods in PLCs, (b) sharing ideas and resources in PLCs, (c) team planning in PLCs, and (d) data analysis of student performance.

New Learning of Instructional Methods in PLCs. Teacher leaders stated that during PLCs teachers gained new learning from one another. Three out of six teacher leaders stated that during PLCs teachers experienced new learning. Joe stated during PLCs his teachers are learning new strategies, "It allows you time to do things other than your normal planning, to implement or to even to try to implement new learning strategies or new activities for students." Eleanor explained during PLCs teachers communicate about learning, "We reserve PLC as a time for professionals to really come together and discuss learning whether it is the assessment part or the teaching part." Roni incorporates learning in his PLCs:

The largest chunk of our meeting is going to be some type of learning. I usually try to make sure that it is not a sit and get. I want it to be very interactive. I'm simply facilitating, and my teachers are actually engaged in the learning, and doing most of the talking and most of the thinking.

These comments indicate that three teacher leaders structured PLC time for teachers to gain new learning. The teacher leaders used PLC time for teacher to share and explore new learning with one another.

Sharing Ideas and Resources in PLCs. Teacher leaders indicated that sharing ideas and resources in PLCs are great opportunities for the team. Five out of six teacher leaders mentioned that sharing ideas and resources was a part of their PLCs. They expressed that PLCs are a great opportunity for teachers to come together to share ideas and resources. Roni stated teacher are able to share their expertise, “My view of PLCs is that they can be very productive opportunities for staff members to share their expertise.” Linda described PLCs as time where teachers are able to share their ideas and resources, “I think it is a wonderful opportunity for a teacher to collaborate, as well as to share best practices.” Joe expressed teachers come to PLCs with strategies to share, “Whatever we're teaching, we decide in a PLC or someone comes to the PLC with a different strategy that we can use to teach the concept.”

Nzinga stated she liked sharing ideas and resources, “It should be a time when your team can come together, collaborate, and exchange ideas.” Eleanor described her experience as a way to share and give insight to teachers, “It gives ideas to other teachers who are dealing with a different demographics whether it be special education. But it is a time for all of the professionals to come together and share ideas.” The comments by five teacher leaders indicated they used PLCs time to allow teachers to share ideas and resources. They expressed how it was done through collaborating with the team on various levels based on their classroom needs.

Team Planning in PLCs. Two teacher leaders stated that during PLCs, content teams had the opportunity to plan with one another. Teachers collaborated about lesson plans through conversations of what was working and what was not working and received feedback to adjust lesson plans based on classroom needs. Nzinga explained that teachers analyzed their lesson plans based on what's working and not working to create better lessons:

We discuss things that work, things that aren't working, why isn't it working? What can we do to improve? Then we will talk about ways to go back and re-teach things that students weren't successful on. From there, we'll go into lessons in like a round table discussion asking, How are you teaching specific topics? Do you have any new resources you want to share? Any new lessons that you've created?

One teacher leader described team planning as teachers analyzing the curriculum and the TEKS to create lesson plans. Shannon stated teachers look at the curriculum and TEKS to plan effective lessons, “We discuss what we should be teaching next week. We follow the curriculum, by the TEKS.”

These comments indicate that during PLC teacher leaders are able to lead teachers in discussion about their planning. During planning, the teacher leaders are asking various questions to better plan lesson so that all student have the opportunity to be successful.

Data Analysis of Student Performance. Teacher leaders explained that during PLCs they analyzed student data and refined their lessons based on the data. Five out of six teacher leaders expressed in the interview how they discuss data in PLCs. Three teachers used data as a comparison.” Joe made the statement that teachers look at data to determine if what was being taught was successful, “We look at the data from the previous time we taught it and look at the data through maybe two or three years ago to determine if it was successful or not.” Nzinga explained teachers analyzed data to see if it is working:

We analyze data. If we've recently taken a common assessment, we will compare our data against each other and see what's working, what's not, who scored well,

who did not, and we talk about those things. We reflect on if it's the fault of the teacher or the student?

Two teacher leaders stated teachers used data to have conversations about re-teaching and planning. Roni shared that teachers talk a lot about what needs to be retaught, "There's lots of conversations about how to best reteach anything that the data shows that we need to reteach." Shannon expressed what needed to be on next year's assessments based on the data, "We go over the tests, and analyze the tests, and then what should be emphasized again for next year." These comments indicate that during PLCs teacher leaders are analyzing data with teachers. They are looking at data from different aspects to help teachers adjust their assessments and instruction.

Barriers in PLCs

There are a variety of barriers that teacher leaders experienced in PLCs. All six of the teacher leaders explained that they experienced barriers in PLCs. The teacher leaders barriers in PLCs can be broken down into subthemes: (a) disagreements in PLCs and (b) lack of structure in the implementation of PLCs.

Disagreements in PLCs. There were two teacher leaders that suggested disagreement as a barrier in PLCs. Joe expressed there are times when teachers disagree in PLCs:

You're going to have someone that perhaps is not going to think maybe it is a good idea, and it may not be a good idea. When it is all said and done and we have to say we're sorry, that was a bad idea. You have those people that are not willing to jump on board. Then you just have the reluctant ones.

Shannon also suggested that sometime when teachers disagree it could cause conflict, "There's a few times that there was a conflict between team members. At that time it was not effective."

Lack of Structure in the Implementation of PLCs. Four teacher leaders shared different views of the lack of structure as barriers in the implementation of PLCs. Eleanor complained that at times PLCs are too collaborative which leads to venting:

One of the major barriers that I had to learn to overcome is sometimes allowing PLCs to be extremely collaborative, which I feel in nature it is designed to do. Sometimes you have teachers that complain or grumble a lot instead of focusing in on how to make the positive come out in some of the stresses that happen in the classroom. For example, let's say you have a bad day in class and maybe a student spoke disrespectfully to a teacher. You might have a teacher with a strong voice wanting to take over the PLC and just complain about that student instead of just saying hey what are some better ways that maybe a relationship could've been built around that student or what are some ways that you could've disciplined that student more appropriately to where it didn't affect classroom instruction. Instead of focusing on the positive thing that could've happened some of the barriers to PLC that I've experienced before are that it can become a complaint session.

Nzinga expressed that during PLCs there were no shared responsibilities:

I would say the team leader before me was very kind of controlling. They needed to do everything, so it was hard, especially that first year, to learn a lot. I'm dealing with a person who is used to doing it all for various reasons, and instead of taking the time to sit and mentor and teach, it was just kind of like, do this, do this, do this, do that.

Roni described how the time of the day affected teacher's ability to focus in PLCs:

I think that after you put teachers in a classroom with students all day long and then you take them out and you pretty much want them to become a student as opposed to being a teacher, I think that they take that literally a lot of times. Even

unconsciously, or subconsciously, they go into a role of a student. They don't want to pay attention. They're tired. They're just not focused. They don't have the, I guess, stamina really. If your PLC is not organized well enough, they don't have the stamina to sit there and just listen to somebody overload them with information.

These comments indicate that during PLC teacher leaders experienced disagreements and lack of structure as barriers in PLCs. Five teachers expressed their concerns that hinder PLCs from being effective.

PLC Training

Based on the interview responses obtained through the interview process regarding PLC training, a majority of the teacher leader had not received any formal trainings in PLCs. Teacher leaders experience in being trained in PLCs can be broken down into two subthemes: (a) informal trainings, and (b) formal trainings. Five out of six teacher leaders stated that they have not received formal training in PLCs instead they either learned through observation or informal training at the campus level. In addition, one teacher leader attended a formal training sin PLCs.

Informal Trainings. Five teacher leaders shared their experiences on being trained informally in PLCs. Linda stated that she was trained through exposure, “Not formally but through exposure and just being part of it. Not necessarily been trained per se. It is more of just contact with other PLC specialists and other folks. Again, not a formal training.” Roni made the statement that he learned through professional developments:

No, I lived and I learned. I have not had any formal training. I've just pretty much been able to take everything that I've learned from the professional developments

that I've attended and been a part of, as well as the PLCs, and what I've watched other instructional coaches do during PLCs.

Nzinga expressed that she learned informally about PLCs from experience:

No, I was just kind of thrown in. I had to go into PLCs and do what was asked of me, and that's kind of where I learned what it is, how it should function, and those kinds of things with no formal training.

Shannon also learned informally from her experiences, "No just what I have learned from being on this campus." Eleanor explained that she would like to attend a formal training but has only be trained informally:

No, I wish that we did have training on what a PLC, like an official one. I've never been to a PLC training before. I think that going to one would be very beneficial. A lot of my trainings have happened informally. Maybe passing in the hallway I would see my administrator and we would talk about, hey this what we see in our observations. What should we do about it? And then from there we talk about what PLC should look like. So I'm kind of blessed with the fact that my campus is very small. And it is just one grade level. So I'm able to see my administrator in passing quite often so we can have these informal conversations. But if I were at a larger campus and maybe if I weren't able to see my administrator so often I think that probably would have inhibited my ability to make sure that my PLCs stay focused on student progress.

These comments indicate that five teacher leaders have been trained informally or through experiences in PLCs. The teacher leaders have not received any formal trainings on PLCs.

Formal Trainings. One teacher said he did receive several formal trainings in PLCs. Joe shared his PLC experience in being training in PLCs:

I've gone to conferences for training. I would have to say over the last six to eight years, I've been to more than one in that time frame. My campus perhaps has had some, but they haven't had any since I have been here, campus wide.

These comments indicate that very few teacher leaders in the district have been trained in PLCs.

Teacher Leadership in PLCs

Based on the interview responses obtained through the interview process regarding shared leadership, teacher leaders described their roles in PLCs and their communication with their administrator within PLCs. Teacher leaders perceptions of the teacher leadership role can be broken down into two subthemes: (a) create agendas and facilitate, and (b) identify content department needs and feedback.

Create Agendas and Facilitate. Four of out six teacher leaders stated that their role in PLCs is to create agendas and facilitate. Shannon described her role as the one facilitating and leading PLCs as far as what the team plans are for the following week, “To facilitate what are we going to follow for next week, what we should cover, what we should teach for that concept, chapter what we should cover.” Joe stated his role as the one who brings resources and facilitates PLCs:

My role with PLC at my campus, I am the one who brings those things to the meeting for us to try something else, because maybe we weren't successful at this one. I facilitate PLC probably 90% and I create the agendas.

In addition, Nzinga explained that her role is to create the agendas and to follow through with it in PLCs, “To create the agenda for PLC, and then to execute, just make sure that we stick to the agenda, we're following through.” Linda expressed her role as facilitating the progression of PLCs, “In essence I'm facilitating to see what we need to do progress wise, and where we are. What we need to do, and what can we do to get

there?” These comments indicate that four out of six teacher leaders described their role as the ones who create agendas and facilitate PLCs.

Identify Content Department Needs and Feedback. Two teacher leaders had different roles from the others, which were to identify the needs of the content department and give feedback based on data. Roni state that his role is to identify the needs of the department:

My role within the PLC is to make sure that I am identifying the needs of the department, and then addressing them at the meeting. I am making sure that we are focused on student data and we are focused on what's going to be best for our kids.

Eleanor describes her role as giving feedback based on data:

My role for PLC is to give my teachers a lot of feedback, not just with the assessments. So I do use PLC to talk about data, but not just quantitative data. I also discuss qualitative data. I reserve the PLC time to really give the teachers a lot of feedback and data so that they can make informative decisions when they collaborate with each other.

These comments indicate that two teacher leaders shared that their role was to identify the content department needs and give feedback during PLCs.

Communication with Administrators

Teacher leaders described their interactions and communications with administrators. Teacher leaders communicate with administrators as a way to make sure they are on track in PLCs. All teacher leaders responded to the interview explaining that they communicated and interacting with their designated administrators in regards to PLCs. This was broken down into three subthemes: (a) positive interaction with

administrators, (b) clear expectations from administrators, and (c) follow up interactions with administrators.

Positive Interaction with Administrators. Two teacher leaders felt like they had positive interactions with their administrators. Joe said that his communication with his administrator was very positive:

I would have to think it is very positive. I think all of our roles are positive with our administrator and we have a good administrator. Administrators, I think they appreciate the fact that it flows so smoothly that they have little to no implementation to do.

Nzinga shared her interaction with her administrator as the one, who cares and offers support:

Matter of fact, I just met with him yesterday. It was not even PLCs related, but he just wanted to catch up and see how things were going and where I was at this point in the year, so my relationship with my administrator is great. I've worked with him now for two years, and he's someone that genuinely cares, and I can go to him for advice. He offers sound advice, gives great feedback. Even if it is not what I want to hear, he always finds a way to make it not seem so bad. So yeah, overall my relationship is really good with my administrator.

These comments indicate that two teacher leaders experienced a positive interaction with their administrators in regards to the implementation of PLCs.

Clear Expectations from Administrators. Two teacher leaders shared that their administrator has clear expectations when they communicate with them about PLCs.

Shannon expressed that her interactions with her administrator is straightforward:

I interact with my API a lot, but not with the principal. She's very organized and straightforward, and gives clear direction for us. I've been here for ten years.

Eleanor shared that her administrators has clear expectations:

My administrators have pretty much set a clear expectation on how they do PLC. They do want it to be collaborative and it is been like that I believe my entire time as a specialist. The communication about what PLC should look like was open communication but it was one that my administrators would sit down with us and say hey, these are some things that we would like to see in PLC. Now how you go about doing it that's kind of where you take your leadership role and try your best to make sure that teachers are collaborating.

These comments indicate teacher leaders knew what was expected of them during PLCs because their administrator had clear expectations when they communicated with them.

Follow Up Interactions with Administrators. Two teacher leaders explained that they have follow up conversations with their administrators about PLCs. Roni shared that he communicated with his administrator weekly, “Basically we have an Assistant Principal that is directly in charge of our department. Then, of course, we have our head supervisor. The most that they require is that I communicate with them my agenda for our weekly meetings.” Linda expressed that she communicated with her administrator to let him know where they are as a team:

My role with my administrator is to let them know in terms of my department where we are as a whole. There's a goal for us. I'll let them know where we are, and I'll let them know if we have any hiccups in the process and they need to be aware of those hiccups. If there's any success, they need to know the success as well. I do communicate to let them know where we are so to speak, and progress wise, and where we are with our projections and how close or how far we are from our timeline.

These comments indicate that two teacher leaders roles were to follow up with their administrators in regards to the implementation of PLCs. One teacher leader shared that he communicated weekly to his administrator about PLCs while the other teacher leader shared that she communicated with her administrator to let them know where they are in PLCs as a content department.

Administrators' Perspectives

Focus group interviews were conducted with high school administrators about their perceptions of PLCs. Six administrators acknowledged that collaboration is an essential component of PLCs. The thematic analysis coding process revealed five themes of administrators' views of PLCs: (a) views of collaboration in PLCs, (b) administrators training in PLCs, (c) teacher leaders trainings in PLCs, (d) teacher leaders roles in PLCs, and (e) administrators' roles in PLCs. The emergent themes obtained from administrators' responses are provided below followed by a sample of the participants' responses from the interview.

Views of Collaboration in PLCs

Based on the interview responses obtained through the interview process regarding defining PLCs, three administrators mention collaboration as an essential component of PLCs. Administrators' views of collaboration in PLCs can be broken down into two subthemes: (a) sharing ideas and resources in PLCs and (b) team planning in PLCs.

Sharing Ideas and Resources. Three administrators stated during the interview that PLC is a designated time for teachers to share ideas and resources. Three out of six administrators acknowledged that teachers are collaborating during PLCs to share ideas and resources amongst each other. Kent described PLCs as a time to get together to communicate and share ideas:

It gets them together, gets them communicating, and gets them sharing ideas. It also gives teachers an opportunity to look at examples of what didn't go so well, and to possibly hear strategies from other teachers about what changes might be made, and to look at how they may have taught it a different way to be more effective.

Chris explained that during PLCs teachers are sharing strategies:

It gives teachers an opportunity to look at examples of what didn't go so well, and to possibly hear strategies from other teachers about what changes might be made, and to look at how they may have taught it a different way to be more effective.

Capriana explained that sharing in PLCs can help others learn new ideas, "I think it's hearing ideas and choices and sharing in that part of a collaboration, like strategies. Sometimes if you can talk it out with somebody else, you get new ideas." These comments indicated that half of the administrators see sharing ideas and resources as part of their PLCs. In addition, half of the administrators said that during PLCs teachers are using that time to share ideas and resources with one another.

Team Planning in PLCs. Three administrators mention team planning as a component of PLCs. Three out of six administrators shared that team planning is a part of their PLCs at their campuses and explained how team planning is embedded in PLCs. Kent explained that teams are planning assessments that aligns to instruction during PLCs:

It allows the team to help prepare assessments so they know they're aligning their instruction with the assessments that they're making. It gives the teachers an opportunity to have input as far as what specifically they want to see. We take it out or address the assessments they're giving.

Chris expressed that PLCs are a time for teams to plan together as a team:

PLCs are an opportunity to plan and check. I think that it gives teachers an opportunity to plan forward. I think looking forward as far as what teach should be taught that are coming up, and also planning for differentiating for students; whether it be for on level, or students that need a little support.

Bryan stated that teams are collaborating to be more effective, “I think it's to where they're collaborating daily and working to create better lessons or a better way of doing things.” These comments indicate that half of administrators view team planning as part of PLCs. Three of the administrators view team planning as a way for teams to collaborate about lessons and assessments.

Administrators Training in PLCs

Administrators were asked about their experience in trainings in PLCs. Five out of six administrators stated they have received some type of formal training in PLCs, whereas one administrator suggested that they did not receive any training in PLCs. The second major theme of trainings in PLCs was broken down into four subthemes: (a) district training in PLCs, (b) multiple trainings in PLCs, (c) presented PLC trainings, and (d) no trainings in PLCs.

District Training in PLCs. Three administrators shared their experience on being trained in PLCs within their district. Capriana stated she had training in PLCs through the district:

I have, it was in the district. It was big multi-day summit and I attended that training. We go back to our teacher leaders and revisited those things because people come and go and as you take on new staff, they may not have been trained on it.

Kristi describes her experience on being trained after attending the PLC training at a conference:

I have been trained. It was one year at the leadership conference, in the summer for the administrators. I think that PLC was just planning people came and planned. Now you definitely see people collaborative grading, and collaborative scoring, or reviewing best practices, and analyzing data. I can't specifically speak to my training, but clearly I get it and know what to do.

Kent expressed that he has been trained and that the training reinforced the purpose of PLCs:

Yes, but I can't remember the company that trained us on it. I thought it went well. I think the good thing about the training it's just a good way to reinforce what the purposes of PLCs are because I think they can turn into gripe sessions or something it shouldn't be. The training was just kind of a good way to rethink the purpose and the main rocks of what PLC is and to ask those questions, What do we want them to know? What are we going to do to help them get there and what do we do when they don't get there. So it kind of refocuses those goals. The training was good in that sense.

These comments indicated that three out of the six administrators received PLCs training at the district level.

Multiple Trainings in PLCs. One administrator, Chris explained he has been trained many times and he interpret it as a refresher for PLCs:

Yes, trained multiple times in 25 years in PLC. Some trainings are better than others but regardless of every training, its either intended to be a refresher for some part of PLC, or, I guess, new learning about how to facilitate the success of PLC. And that's just speaking overall globally of training. I've seen the power of PLC at elementary, middle, and high school. So I have a complete perspective of the power, and also the challenges, of PLC.

One out of six of the administrators shared that within his 25 years in PLCs he has received multiple trainings as refresher over the years.

Presented Trainings in PLCs. One administrator, Trenae shared that she attended a PLC training, as well as presented PLC training:

Yes, and I did a PLC training. I want to say it was early last school year. I brought it back to campus. In the previous years, we had PLCs, but I don't feel like they were as effective prior to this training being given to us.

This comment indicates that one out of the six administrators said that she has been trained in PLCs and she has presented PLCs training.

No trainings in PLCs. One administrator, Bryan shared that he has not been trained in PLCs, “I was not trained. My first year in the classroom was the year before when they started doing the early-release model for PLCs.” This comment indicates that one of the six administrators has not received any training in PLCs.

Training in PLCs for Teacher Leaders

Five of the administrators shared that their teacher leaders have been trained formally and informally. Only one administrator acknowledged that his teacher leader had not been trained in PLCs. The third major theme of teacher leader trainings in PLCs was broken down into three subthemes: (a) district trainings in PLCs, (b) campus level trainings in PLCs, and (d) no training in PLCs.

District Training in PLCs. Trenae stated that her teacher leaders attended the PLC training in the district, “Yes, they went to the training with me about 10 years ago in the district.” Capriana described how she and the APIs on campus train their teacher leaders in PLCs:

Yes, but it was not like a formal training. It was more of a 30-45 minute session with them, where myself and the two APIs talked about what we wanted it to look

like and then we prepared a presentation. It was more of this is where PLC should be, this is what it should look like, and here's your checklist to make sure you're doing it.

These administrator comments indicate that only selected teacher leaders attended the PLC training that was offered in the district ten years ago.

Campus Level Trainings in PLCs. Administrators shared that they have campus level training in PLCs. Bryan stated that they normally have a campus informal training in PLCs at the beginning of the school year, “We did not have a training this past August, but last year August we did. We usually have an informal PLC training on campus.” Kristi explained that some teacher leaders received training but was not sure which teachers received this training:

Someone received training. We probably couldn't say whom. There were probably some administrators, probably some team leaders. Maybe a department chair, maybe a team leader. We're real big on people going to a training. The team comes back and debriefs, and then they become the experts and train the other people. Every year we review the expectations for PLC. We do rotations in the beginning of the year. Besides that, well I guess the leader is well trained. Even if they're new, they're going to spend time working a specialist, whether it's theirs or another content specialist, to really understand how to do it.

Chris shared that his teacher leaders have been trained in PLCs, “They've been trained on PLC, but on actually being a coach and a facilitator, I'm not sure how much training teacher leaders have had. That one I don't know.” Kent expressed that he was not sure if his teacher leaders had been trained in PLCs, “I don't know. I think when we had our training that did include team leaders. So I believe they have, yes.” Based on five of the administrator's responses these comments indicate that teacher leaders had some type of

formal or informal trainings in PLCs. Administrators stated whether their teacher leaders had trainings at the district level or campus level, but not all knew who had been trained.

Teacher Leaders Roles in PLCs

Administrators were asked to describe their teacher leader roles at their campuses, all administrators stated the teacher leader role at their campus is to create the agenda and facilitate PLCs. Administrators' perceptions of the teacher leader role in PLCs can be broken down into four subthemes: (a) create agendas and facilitate PLCs, (b) bring data to PLCs, (c) communicate with team before PLCs, and (d) communicate with the department chair and specialists.

Creating Agendas and Facilitate PLCs. Three administrators mentioned their teacher leaders primary role is to create agendas and facilitate PLCs. Capriana stated that on her campus the teacher leader role is to create the agenda and facilitate PLCs, "Teacher leaders, to me the way I see, they're the facilitator of PLC. They really facilitate these PLCs on Wednesdays. Like creating the agendas and things like that. Putting the time in, working with your content specialists." Kristi described the teacher leader role as a hierarchy, which leads to planning and gathering materials, "I think it depends. There is a hierarchy, I guess, when you think about PLC. The teacher leader is responsible for planning the agenda, usually gathering the materials and I think with that designing the agenda, comes true facilitation."

Chris expressed that his teacher leader role is to guide and facilitate PLCs, "the role of a teacher leader here on campus is to be the guide for PLC. To make sure that PLC is implemented with fidelity." Bryan stated his teacher leader roles are to create the agendas based on lessons and to make sure topics are transitioning smoothly, "create the agenda for what lessons to bring in or pull in. They're the ones going from topic to topic and keeping things civil." These comments indicated that three of the administrators

explained that at their campus the teacher leader role is to create the agendas and facilitate PLCs.

Bring Data to PLCs. Two administrators shared that their teacher leaders role was to gather data to share with the team during PLCs. Bryan explained that his teacher leader role is to create the agenda and gather data from the content specialists, “Teacher leaders are the ones who create the agenda, work with the specialists to get the data from assessments.” Trena expressed that the teacher leader role on her campus is to bring data and create the agenda, “Our teacher leaders, they are the ones who are bringing data and the agenda to PLCs. They bring data along with the department chairs and the specialists to the PLCs.” These comments indicated that two out of the six administrators stated that their teacher leader role is to bring data to PLCs.

Communicate With Teams Before PLCs. One administrator mentioned the role of his teacher leader is to communicate with the teams prior to PLCs. Kent explained that the teacher leader role at his campus is to communicate with their team in PLCs by coordinating with the team:

Teacher leaders are responsible for communicating with their team. They prepare agendas for PLC, they coordinate with the team members in making sure if anyone is bringing something like student work and things like that, they're in charge of that. They also lead discussions and they lead with questioning to get participation from all the team members. So they're leading the discussions, they're coordinating, and they are looking at how the team members are engaged or not. So, they're looking at ways of engaging their team members.

This comment indicates that at one of the campuses the teacher leaders role is to communicate with their grade level team prior to their PLC time. This helps the teacher leader prepare the agenda and coordinate the facilitation of PLC.

Communicate with Department Chair and Specialists. Two administrators responded that teacher leaders communicated with the department chair and specialists as part of the PLC process. Chris stated that the role of the teacher leader at his campus is to guide the PLCs and communicate with the department chair, “to communicate with the department chair, meet with the department chair. That's part of their role. And also to seek support from administrator as needed, I would say is the key role for teacher leaders, here on campus.”

Trenae mentioned that the role of her teacher leader is to meet with the department chair prior to PLCs to discuss PLC for the week:

I know the teacher for English II, and our team lead meet prior to PLC to discuss this is what we're going to do or this is what we're going to implement for this particular PLC. They meet prior to the PLC to plan for the actual PLC with the department chair and the specialist.

These comments indicate that half of the administrators shared that communication is an essential part of the teacher leaders role in PLCs. One administrator stated the teacher leader role was to communicate with the teams before PLCs. Two administrators shared that their teacher leader role in PLCs was to communicate with the department head and content specialists.

Administrator Roles in PLCs

Based on the analysis from the interview questions each administrator described his/her role in PLCs differently. The fourth major theme of administrator perceptions of their roles in PLCs was broken down into three subthemes: (a) be supportive in PLCs, (b) participate in PLCs, and (c) observe the structure of PLCs.

Be Supportive in PLCs. All administrators felt like they were supportive to their teacher leaders in the implementation of PLCs on their campuses. Two administrators

shared that their role is to offer support in PLCs. Bryan explained that in PLCs he offered suggestions and answers questions, “I will offer suggestions here and there, answer a question about pacing if they have a question or if it's a suggestion.”

Kristi explained that she is supportive when she gets called in for lack of structure during PLCs:

There are times where we're called in and they need you to go sit in this PLC because they're off task or they're not doing what they need to do, or you need to go help them adjust the agenda because they're off the mark.

These comments indicate that two administrators felt like their role in PLCs is to be supportive by offering suggestions and being on call when PLCs are off task.

Participate in PLCs. Two administrators expressed that they are actively involved in PLCs with their teams. Kent stated that he attends PLCs as a model and guide to support the teacher leader as the team may have questions and need answers:

Well, you're there as a model, you're there as a guide. So if you need to come in and take a meeting on, you do that. You model for the teacher leader, you're there as a resource for questions if the one who's leading the PLC doesn't know the answer, you're there as a resource or help them find the answer. Not that you have all the answers, but you're there as a resource for them for materials and things like that. You're there as a support if they have some common issue, it's good to have an administrator present to say, you know, okay we can look at this and see how we can look for a solution.

Trenae expressed that she actively participates in PLCs:

I am in the PLCs with the teacher. Last week we had a PLC to where we had to look at SAT data and we broke down every question. The SAT compared to the PSAT. We broke down every question and we had the writing lab specialist, we

went over each question from the SAT to the PSAT, compared it. We also discussed what TEK it fell under.

These comments indicate that two administrators stated that their role was to participate in PLCs through modeling and participating in conversations.

Observe The Structure of PLCs. Two administrators stated they attend PLCs to see how the structure of PLCs is being implemented. Bryan expressed that he is in PLCs to watch the structure of PLCs and to adjust PLC if it gets off track:

Really it's a lot of watching the team leader, watching the entire dynamic, making sure that they're following protocol or if you see where you have to have conversations with the team lead where they're getting off topic or too much time is spent discussing a certain topic.

Chris shared that he attends PLCs to see how the teams are functioning:

So you have to really look to see how the team is functioning. I think that's a major thing. If the team is not functioning well, my role is to be able to go in with the teacher leader, to see what support might be given, what support is necessary. I would say the mistake would be for the administrator to go in and take over. Because any time that happens, than you're really not coaching an individual, some might say you'd be enabling the individual or the team to not be effective or to function in the way that it is structurally created to function.

One administrator, Capriana stated her role in PLCs is not needed as much, "I don't think any PLC doesn't use their time effectively. It doesn't need much from the administration as far as leading it." These comments indicate that each administrator sees his/her roles differently depending on the team and teacher leader. Each administrator had different perspectives on their roles in PLCs.

Director of Professional Growths Perspectives

An interview was conducted with Laney, the Director of Professional Growth in Drake ISD about her perceptions of PLCs. Laney acknowledged that collaboration is an essential component of PLCs. The thematic analysis coding process revealed six themes when it comes to the director of professional growth responses in regards to PLCs: (a) views of collaboration in PLCs, (b) training in PLCs, (c) teacher leader's roles in PLCs, (d) administrator's roles in PLCs, (e) the director of professional growth roles in PLCs, and (f) assistant principals' meetings.

Views of Collaboration in PLCs

Based on the interview responses regarding defining PLCs, Laney explained that collaboration through multiple aspects is an essential component of PLCs. The Director of Professional Growths' views of collaboration in PLCs can be broken down into two subthemes: (a) team collaboration in PLCs and (b) data analysis in PLCs.

Team Collaboration in PLCs. The Director of Professional Growth viewed PLCs as a way for teachers to collaborate on their instructional methods in the classroom to analyze what is working and what is not working for their students. Laney shared that PLC is a collective way to help teachers collaborate about their students' learning:

I believe that it's been a collective way to help teachers have discourse about where the kids are, what they need to learn, what do we do when they've learned it, what do we do when they do when they haven't learned it. And you know, what materials do we need? What strategies do we need to bring in? Who else do we need to involve to help make our students more successful?

This comment indicated that Laney viewed PLCs as a way for teachers to come together to discuss their individual classes in terms of where their students are and what they need.

Data Analysis in PLCs. Laney shared in the interview that campuses should look at data with a purpose to lead to students being successful. Laney explained that campuses are analyzing data to determine the next steps for student's success:

We look at data with a purpose and it set the platform to say, "What do we do next?" Instead of going, "Yeah, 60% of our kids did really well." If they take deeper dives they'll look at things by objective, they look at things by TEKS. So, teachers have a, a more critical eye not to be just, you know, on data overload. They're able to pull out the data that's relevant to help take the student to the next level. Reading data and interpreting is a learned skill. And so, they have to be guided by the, specialists on each campus and they have to practice it and they have to practice it routinely. And they do practice it routinely because they have the, time to meet on a weekly basis. So, I think the district looks upon it very favorably. No teacher's left in isolation.

This comment indicated that Laney viewed PLCs as a way to collaborate and interpret data. It gives teachers the time they need to really go deeper with their data and discuss the next steps.

Training in PLCs.

During the interview, Laney shared that the district offered a formal training through Solution Tree, but only a few selected leaders were able to attend. Laney explained that the district offered a formal training to whomever the administrators selected to go, however they were only given a certain amount of people that could go from each campus:

We had the large training, 46 campuses but administrators were not allowed to bring their entire campus, they brought their leadership team, and sometimes teachers. Each campus was allowed to bring ten with a combo of administrators

and teachers. So, there were about 500 people there, plus our central administration building. So, there were probably a good 600 people there, myself included. So, I was able to get an even broader look because I could see it all the way from this, the group that was the starter group, versus the advance group. So, I spent multiple hours across those two days in the trainings.

This comment indicates that formal training was brought to district ten years ago, but only selected candidates in the district were able to go. However, since then it has not been brought back to district.

Teacher Leader's Role in PLCs

Laney, the Director of Professional Growth shared that the role of teacher leaders has been to lead PLCs and share responsibilities with teachers to ensure participation within the team. Laney explained that the teacher leaders are the ones who are leading and assigning teachers on the team active roles in PLCs:

Principals want teachers leading teachers. They try to develop leadership capacity on the campus. For example, I know an intermediate that there is a teacher leader for one of the sixth grade teams for math. She doesn't do all the leading. She may have somebody bring in the data piece where they set up questions, or protocol to look at the data. She may bring, another member of the team in to say what questions do we need to look at to move our students for the next level. They tried to have teachers lead, or at least have a significant participatory role every week. So, it's not just a sit and get.

This comment indicates that Laney perceives the teacher leaders roles as the one who has been leading PLCs as well as sharing duties with other teachers on the team.

Administrator's Roles in PLCs

Based on analysis of the interview, Laney shared that the administrator role in PLCs has been to build leadership amongst their teachers as well as to support their teacher leaders in PLCs. Administrators roles were broken down into three subthemes: (a) teacher lead teachers, (b) build teacher leadership capacity, and (c) observe the structure in PLCs.

Teachers Leading Teachers. Laney stated that the administrators were trained to allow their teacher leaders to lead teachers in PLCs:

Our administrators have been trained in professional learning communities, in an extensive summer leadership conference that had a laser focus on professional learning communities. During that time they learned that they weren't to be the manager or the leader over professional learning communities. It was more about teachers leading teachers.

This comment indicated that during the formal training in PLCs administrators were informed to allow teachers to lead teachers in PLCs.

Build Teacher Leaders Capacity. Laney shared that the role of the administrators in PLCs was to build teacher leaders capacity through guiding questions, which will allow the teacher to go deeper in their data:

The administrators are not in the classroom every day with the kids. No one knows the kids like the first line teacher. Sometimes I might make suggestions or I might make some guiding questions because my role is not to say, "Do it my way." Because that's more of selective listening. To build leadership capacity, you have to get them to think, I might ask questions such as, "How could you look at this data in another way so that inferencing skills would improve?" And I would leave them with that and then they would, they'd have to, you know, look at me

and think about what their next steps would be, but they always rose to the occasion.

This comment indicated that administrators were informed to guide teacher leaders into going deeper into their questioning and data through professional learning conversations in PLCs.

Observes the Structure of PLCs. Laney referred to the administrator's as the one who observes to make sure the structure of PLCs are on the right track as well as giving feedback to the team leader when PLCs have not been effective:

So, definitely the administrator is the observer, and they're going to make sure that things are flowing on the right track. And you know, they might have to regroup with the specialist or the team leader for that grade level if they see things are going awry. And that would be the principal or the assistant principal who monitors either that grade level or content area.

This comment indicated that Laney perceives the role of the administrator as one who has been trained in PLCs to let the teachers lead the teacher, building capacity amongst teachers and observing the structure to ensure the flow in PLCs is smooth.

Director of Professional Growth Roles in PLCs

During the interview the Laney described her role as the one who collaborates with central administration based on what they are seeing on their campuses. The director of professional growth role can be broken down into four subthemes: (a) collaborate with area superintendents, (b) campus needs for PLCs training, (c) role in PLC training, and (d) district level PLC training.

Collaborate with Area Superintendents. Laney expressed that in the past she has collaborated with the area superintendent to refine PLCs base on campus needs:

I collaborated with the area superintendents, and based on their observations on their campuses, they felt like, it had been a significant amount of time since the last training that we had in PLCs probably almost ten years. So, I was charged with, coming up with a model to train the district.

This comment indicated that Laney collaborated with area superintendents to refine PLCs in the district ten years ago. They are designated times in the district for PLCs therefore, she and the area superintendents wanted to ensure that the implementation of the PLC model was being implemented with validity.

Campus Needs for PLC Training. Laney explained that she emailed a survey to all campuses in Drake ISD to see what they needed to be trained on in PLCs:

So, I did a survey with all the campuses and I said, ‘Think about where you are with professional learning communities? Do you think you're at the beginner, kind of in the middle, intermediate stage, or you in, are you in the advanced stages of professional learning communities?’ And I defined what each of those terms meant, and so they reported back to me with some rhetoric about why they felt they were there.

This comment indicates that Laney was aware that ten years ago PLCs needed to be redefined at the campus level. She sent surveys to campus administrators ten years ago to target what each campus needed in regards to PLCs.

Role in PLC Training. Laney explained her role in PLCs has been asking herself reflection questions about the district based on the surveys:

My role was asking myself the following reflective questions: How are my customers, my 46 campuses? How do I serve them best? How do I meet their needs? How do I meet them where they are so they can start in the progression of long-term professional learning community implementation?

This comment indicates that Laney viewed her role as the one who asked self-reflecting questions about the implementation of PLCs in the district. Through her self-reflection, it guided her to bring Solution Tree, a PLC training company, to the district to provide a formal training.

District Level PLC Training. Laney shared that ten years ago she spoke with each of the PLC consultants to ensure that each group needs were being met based on what they said their campus needed:

I talked with each one of those trainers individually to say, "This has been your group and these are the whys about starting from the beginning." "These are the whys about more of an advanced training." And so, each person was assigned to the group for a few days each one facilitated based on that group need. It was a huge project and went very well. We had our rate of return on the surveys was over 80%. Those participating in the survey felt like the conference was good at a rate at 80% or better.

This comment indicates that Laney took the initiative to meet with the PLC consultants from Solution Tree to describe to them what was needed for the groups she had created in the district for the PLC training based on the need of their campus.

Administrator Meetings

The Director of Professional Growth shared during the interview that she met with the assistant principals on a monthly basis. The administrator meetings can be broken down into two subthemes: (a) instruction based on campus needs and (b) build relationships with administrators and instructional coordinators. Laney shared that during assistant principal meeting they look at meaningful relationships and meaningful work such as working relationships with staff and students and relevant work for students to ensure success.

Instruction Based on Campus Needs. Laney explained that the year before she had content coordinators at the district level meet with the assistant principals based on their campus needs:

For three subsequent years, I had the content coordinators come in, and they would meet with the same group for the semester. So, if I am Antoinette, who's over elementary science, I met with the small group of administrators for three meetings in a row, so Antoinette, brought in, 'What are we studying? What's working well? What needs to be happening on the campus?' In essence this professional learning communities was as good as I could get them by grouping the assistant principals according to what they needed to be learning for their campus, and it was a pure involvement of the coordinators, to where they could disseminate what was going on in their content area. And then we put them on a rotating basis.

Laney stated the disadvantage of the assistant principal meeting was not being able to see all of the content coordinators in the district within a year "the drawback to that, they didn't get to see all the coordinators in one year, but I felt it was more important for them to go deeper with one coordinator."

This comment indicated that Laney allocated time for content coordinators to meet with administrators during PLCs in regard to instructional needs on their campus.

Build Relationships with Assistant Principals and Instructional Coordinators.

Laney shared that the meetings were a time for the assistant principals and the coordinators to build relationships:

It was also about that relationship piece because I wanted them to have a good working relation with that coordinator because if they felt the need to call that

coordinator to the campus to assist with the teachers and the specialists, they would have already bonded and you made progress faster that way

This comment indicates that during assistant principals meetings Laney targets instruction to see where campuses are instructional wise. She uses this a way to embed in PLCs in the monthly meeting through meaningful work.

Summary of Findings

The purpose of this study was to examine secondary teachers and administrators' perceptions of teacher leadership within the implementation of PLCs in a large district in southeast Texas. Teachers, teacher leaders, administrators, and the Director of Professional Growth in a urban district in southeast Texas with varying levels of experience in PLCs were interviewed. They were given questions that allowed them to express their views of PLCs and teacher leadership in PLCs at their campus. Qualitative analysis was completed on the interviews to determine common themes in the interviews. The qualitative data for teachers and teacher leaders showed three themes: views of collaboration in PLCs, barriers in PLCs, and shared leadership in PLCs. The qualitative data for administrators showed four themes: views of collaboration in PLCs, training in PLCs, teacher leader roles, and administrator roles in PLCs. The qualitative data for director of professional growth showed four themes: views of collaboration in PLCs, training in PLCs, teacher leaders roles in PLCs, administrators' roles in PLCs, and the director of professional growth roles in PLCs.

Quantitative analysis was performed using the PLCA-R survey (Olivier et al., 2010) to determine teachers and administrators perceptions of the five dimensions of PLCs and to determine whether teachers and administrators' perceptions match the quantitative data. Quantitative analysis showed that 86.7% of teachers strongly agreed/agreed that there has been supportive and shared leadership on their campus

where as 26.5% strongly disagreed/disagreed that their campus has supportive condition in relationships. Quantitative analysis showed that 100% of administrators strongly agreed/agreed that there has been shared leadership on their campus whereas 13.3% administrators strongly disagreed/disagreed that their campus has collective learning and application. Based on the data this shows that teacher and administrators perceptions of teacher leadership in PLCs varies depending on campus, content area, and experience.

CHAPTER V: SUMMARY, IMPLICATIONS, AND CONCLUSIONS

The purpose of this study was to examine secondary teachers and administrators' perceptions of teacher leadership within the implementation of Professional Learning Communities. Three questions were explored for this study. The first question asked: What were high school teachers perceptions of the teacher leadership role within their participation in PLCs? The second question asked: What were high school administrators' perceptions of the role of teacher leadership within their participation in PLCs? The third question asked: What qualities and attributes from the perspectives of high school teachers and high school administrators contributed to effective implementation of PLCs?

Teacher leadership has been becoming more common in schools today however; there has been a lack of understanding of the teacher leaders role in PLCs amongst teachers and administrators. The lack of understanding of the teacher leaders role in PLCs can lead to PLCs being implemented ineffectively, which can affect teachers growth and students' success. Teacher leaders and administrators had varied definitions of what the teacher leaders role has been in PLCs. There has been little research on teacher leadership in PLCs. At the secondary level, PLCs have been being implemented however, the teacher leaders in PLCs have no clear understanding of their roles in PLCs.

Research at the secondary level focuses on perceptions and implementation of PLCs however, there has not been much research on teacher leadership in PLCs. Some districts have teacher leaders who facilitate PLCs, however, there has been no clear understanding of the teacher leaders role in PLCs due to very little research. The literature states there has been lack of understanding on the definition and role of teacher leadership from both administrator and teacher perspective. This relates to Jacobs et al.,

(2016) study where a few of the participants reported that an inaccurate perception of some teachers was that part of the teacher leader's role was to monitor teachers or assist administrators with teacher evaluation, which created a lack of trust between teacher leaders and teachers. Silva et al. (2000) noted that teachers and principals' voices have been missing from much of the literature advocating for teacher leadership, leading to the conclusion that teacher leadership in PLCs has yet to be defined by those who actually practice the concept. The majority of teachers who undertake leadership roles do not view themselves as leaders. They commonly reserve the term leader for those who take on formal roles, such as principals or district supervisors; instead, they perceive that most of their work has been done informally through collaboration (Moller et al., 2001).

Summary of the Study

A large, diverse urban school district located in southeast Texas was studied to examine teachers and administrators' perceptions of teacher leadership within the implementation of the PLC professional development model. Teachers and administrators were asked to participate in the Professional Learning Communities Assessment- Revised (PLCA-R) online survey, which was created by Olivier et al., 2010. The PLCA-R survey measured teachers, and administrators' perceptions of identified variables within their implementation of the PLC professional development model. Teachers, teacher leaders, and the Director of Professional Growth participated in semi-structured interviews, and administrators participated in a focus group. The qualitative data enriched the understanding of the perceptions of the teacher leader's role in PLCs.

The methodology for this mixed methods study included both a quantitative and a qualitative component. The quantitative portion of the study included the SPSS analysis of the PLCA-R survey, which measured teachers and administrators' perceptions of PLCs. Secondary teachers and administrators were contacted at their personal school

district emails with a request to participate in the survey. All participants were required to have a minimum of three years' experience participating in the PLC professional development model.

Teachers and teacher leaders with a wide range of experience in PLCs were individually interviewed for the qualitative portion of the study. Also, the Director of Professional Growth, who has over 10 years of experience in PLCs, was individually interviewed. A focus group was conducted for administrators who had varying years of experience facilitating the PLC professional development model. All participants were required to have a minimum of three years' experience participating in the PLC professional development model. I also ensured that the participant pool included representatives from each of the major content/subject areas. Interviews were conducted in a variety of settings selected to increase the comfort of the participants. Open-ended questions were asked during the interview process to foster dialogue between the interviewer and the interviewee (see Appendix A). Questions for the interviews and focus group were derived from the results of the quantitative survey data. The data gathered from the interviews were organized and analyzed using NVivo software. NVivo was used to code and establish any existing themes emerging from the interviews. Qualitative data from the interviews were analyzed to determine common themes in teacher leaders implementation of PLCs using constant comparative analysis (Miles & Huberman, 1984). This chapter provides a discussion of the major themes found in the study, findings as they relate to recommendations for practice and future research, and limitations of the study.

Summary of the Findings

This study was based on the theoretical framework of Distributed Leadership, which has been defined as varieties of expertise and decision-making widely distributed

across many people (Bennett et al., 2003). Distributed Leadership provides a rich conceptual framework to study PLCs (Spillane, 2006; Stoll et al., 2006). The Distributed Leadership framework can help clarify the varied roles assumed by principals, teachers, and other staff and how their actions, orientations, and leadership contribute to organizational learning. In this study, the perceptions of teachers, teacher leaders, administrators, and the Director of Professional Growth were gathered. The research questions for this study were: What have been teachers perceptions of the role of teacher leadership within the implementation of PLCs? What have been administrators' perceptions of the role of teacher leadership within the implementation of PLCs? What qualities and attributes contribute to effective implementation of PLCs from the perspectives of high school teachers, high school teacher leaders, high school administrators, and the Director of Professional Growth? This is in the intro, do I need to state it again here? This study examined Distributed Leadership in terms of teachers perceptions of their contributions to leadership within their implementation of PLCs in a secondary school in an urban multicultural district.

Teachers Perceptions of Teacher Leadership in PLCs

The data analysis indicated that the majority of teachers strongly agreed/agreed that shared and supportive leadership in PLCs has been visible on their campuses. Shared and supportive leadership has been the dimension of professional learning communities which requires the collegial and facilitative participation of the principal who shares leadership and thus, power and authority by inviting staff input and action in decision making" (Hord, 2004, p.7). The results of the analysis demonstrated that 79.6% teachers stated that leadership has been promoted and nurtured among staff members and 61.2% teachers stated stakeholders assume shared responsibility and accountability for student learning without evidence of imposed power and authority.

Shared and supportive leadership has been one of the five dimensions of PLCs as identified by Hord (1997) in order for PLCs to be implemented as a collaborative learning environment. The leaders and teachers must recognize that one cannot achieve success on one's own. The power of success requires a team of teachers and leaders working towards a common goal with frequent targeted communication and collaboration.

Teachers in this study had various perceptions of teacher leaders roles in PLCs. Their roles differed based on campus and content. These varying views indicate that teachers across the district may not have a clear understanding of the role of the teacher leader in PLCs at their campuses. York-Barr and Duke (2004) theorized teacher leadership similarly as a process by which “teachers, individually or collectively, influence their colleagues, principals, and other members of school communities to improve teaching and learning practices with the aim of increased student learning and achievement,” (p. 287).

It has been very important for the district to have clear uniform expectations of teacher leadership roles in PLCs to ensure effective implementation. Another finding by Hord (1997) has been the importance for uniformity in the implementation of PLCs, which, provides a structure that, promotes collaboration, leadership, and shared decision-making. If campuses have no structure in the implementation of PLCs, then it can negatively impact teachers and students' success. As a result, some teachers have not been receiving the instructional tools and support necessary to promote student success. Maintaining a common structure in the implementation of the PLC model can develop recurrent systems of training and procedures allowing teachers who transfer to other campuses to benefit from this consistent model. With role clarification being fundamental

in the success of the PLC model, it has been imperative that all teachers who participate in PLCs have the same clear understanding of the teacher leaders role in PLCs.

Teacher leaders View of Leadership in PLCs

During the teacher leaders interview, important and valuable data were found on their perception of their role in PLCs. Teacher leaders shared their personal experiences about their role at their campuses. Teacher leaders in the interview described their roles as the developers of the agenda and the facilitators of PLCs. The findings revealed that some teacher leaders facilitate PLCs through collaboration and discussion in various ways, while others focus on the department needs.

Teacher leaders at the different campuses had various views of their roles as teacher leaders in PLCs, which demonstrates a lack of clear role clarification as defined by Hord (1997) by the teacher leaders. Teacher leaders across campuses have been facilitating in different ways, which means that there appears to be little uniform structure in PLCs at the campus level in this district. It has been important for teacher leaders across the district to be trained on their role in PLCs because it can lead to effective implementation district wide.

Uniform implementation will allow teacher leaders across campuses and content areas to discuss PLCs effectively because they have been facilitating PLCs in the same way. The Director of Professional Growth can better assist analyzing what has been and has not been working in PLCs and provide a uniform system for the PLC structure. A uniform PLC structure will help with analyzing data at the campuses across content teams and district wise across campuses. Collaboration about data can occur so that student success has been a priority in PLCs. If the structures of PLCs have been aligned the same away across campuses, there has been a possibility of more students being successful, because the district would have a common goal, which would be students'

success. Therefore, PLCs would be more focused on student success if there were more time for collaboration and analysis of data.

The findings indicate that teacher leaders feel there has been a sense of shared leadership on their campuses. However, depending on the campus, there has been a variety of responses to the concept and views of shared leadership. The teacher leaders' views of shared leadership depend on how the campus implements PLCs and the administrators' expectations for the teacher leaders in PLCs. As literature has stated there has been inconsistency in the definition of teacher leadership, therefore teacher leaders and administrators' have no clear definition of teacher leadership at their campus. Data reveal contradictions in responses indicating that on one campus the teacher stated the teacher leader facilitates using shared responsibility, while the other teacher states the teacher leader in her PLC does not delegate and solely drives the meeting. The comments reveal a general lack of understanding of the role of the teacher leaders among the various campuses in the district. They reported this was the result of teacher leaders not being trained and not being informed of their roles in PLCs.

The lack of direction and training on how PLCs should be facilitated can cause teacher leaders to make assumptions that their roles in PLCs have been based on their experiences in PLCs as teachers. In this study, none of the teacher leaders attended the district PLC training offered ten years ago. Most of the administrators have been trained, however, there has not been a formal training or a refresher training for the leaders who have been actively involved in PLCs. This lack of training teacher leader has caused the leaders to learn about PLC leadership by their own experience, which can have an impact on the effectiveness of their roles and implementation in PLCs. PLCs have been ongoing throughout the year, therefore, training in PLCs should be ongoing for the leaders who have been implementing the PLC model to ensure students success. Without current

training in the district in PLCs, campuses have been leading PLCs based on previous with PLCS experience or the outdated PLC training from ten years ago. There seems to be no clear uniform foundation of the duties and responsibilities of teacher leaders roles in this district regarding PLCs.

It has been imperative that teacher leaders have a unified understanding of the teacher leadership role in PLCs. The role clarification will help teacher leaders to better understand the purpose of PLCs, their responsibilities in facilitating PLCs, and how to implement PLCs with fidelity. Ongoing training of teacher leaders roles in PLCs will help all stakeholders to have a mutual understanding of the teacher leadership role. Stakeholders that have been involved in PLCs will have a clear understanding of the teacher leaders roles across the campuses in the district which means that all PLCs at the campuses will function in similar ways. These findings agree with Jacobs et al., (2016) study, which found that some of the teacher leaders said their role had never been clearly defined by the district or school. The ongoing training would help with the differences in opinions about the teacher leader role in PLCs and how PLCs have been implemented. It has been important that every teacher leader across the district structure PLCs the same way, it will show alignment, which can impact the district success in PLCs.

Also, it will allow teacher leaders across campuses and content areas to have discussions and support one another in improving PLCs effectively. In addition, it will help the Director of Professional Growth analyze what has been working in PLCs and what has been not working in PLCs as well as change the structure based on district needs. Being uniform will help with analyzing data district wide and at the campuses across content teams. Collaboration can occur about data that has been being used in PLCs and its impact based on students' success. If the structures of PLCs have been

aligned as a district, there can be an increased opportunities for teachers and students' success.

Administrators' Perceptions of Leadership in PLCs

Analysis of the data indicated that the majority of administrators strongly agreed/agreed that shared and supportive leadership has been visible on their campus. The results of the analysis found that 80.0% stated that leadership has been promoted and nurtured among staff members and 80.0% of teachers stated stakeholders assume shared responsibility and accountability for student learning without evidence of imposed power and authority. This means that the administrators perceived that they share responsibility and accountability equally among teachers and teacher leaders without forcing power and authority, but rather allowing the teachers and teacher leaders to collaborate. The administrators' percentages have been much higher than the teachers percentages for the same question. The data implies there has been a variance in the understanding and perceptions between teachers and administrators regarding teacher leaders role within the implementation of PLCs.

Shared and supportive leadership involves all stakeholders in the collaboration and sharing of ideas and resources with each other during PLC, while keeping in mind what has been best for the students through data based on decision-making. Administrators do not have the power to effectively implement PLCs alone, therefore teacher leaders have been needed to facilitate and support their team through PLCs. The finding from the qualitative data revealed that administrators at each campus have different perspectives of the teacher leaders role in PLCs. However, similar to the responses of teachers and teacher leaders, some of the administrators viewed the role of the teacher leaders as creating agendas and facilitating. In this study, responses differed

when it came to discussing how teacher leaders were facilitating PLCs the administrators in this study had different views.

The literature asserts that the administrators' reason for teacher leadership has been to transform schools into professional learning communities (Katzenmeyer & Moller, 2001) and to empower teachers to become involved closely in decision-making within the school, thus contributing to the democratization of schools (Gehrke, 1991). The findings show that administrators have distributive leadership among the teacher leaders, however, the teacher leaders role in PLCs at each campus varies depending on their perception of teacher leadership.

Data from the administrators revealed that it has been 10 years since administrators in the district were trained in PLCs, and there was no explanation about teacher leaders role during the training. The school district utilized a K-12 professional development company, Solution Tree, to train selected individuals in the PLC model and implementation. Solution Tree has been global professional development for teachers and administrators that facilitate the work of Professional Learning Communities (<https://www.solutiontree.com>). Due to the financial constraints, everyone could not participate. This lack of total staff participation resulted in a lack of fundamental understandings of the PLC model as well as the roles of those involved in PLCs. This corporate training has been cost prohibitive and has not been continued as a result. Currently, it seems as if the district cannot afford the cost of the training of PLCs, by a commercial company.

The lack of training has negatively impacted the manner in which teachers and administrators have facilitated PLCs. If administrators have not been trained on how to support teacher leadership in PLCs, this could be the reason why teacher leaders do not know their roles and have not been as effective as they could be in facilitating PLCs.

Principals can have meaningful insights to share about how teacher leadership helps the campus as a whole. They also can have their own methods of facilitating and sustaining this leadership, which can differ across campuses (Boyd, 2005). However, if administrators have not been trained on how to guide teacher leaders in PLCs, it can lead to misconceptions of teacher leaders role in PLCs. Administrators across campuses should all have the same roles for their teacher leaders. If administrators all have the same roles for their teacher leaders, then during the administrator meetings they can effectively collaborate with other administrators about PLCs and their student achievement.

All administrators need to be trained in PLCs and the role of teacher leadership in PLCs for the district to be aligned and effective in implementing the PLC model. Silva and Associates (2000) noted that teachers and principals' voices have been missing from much of the literature advocating for teacher leadership, leading to the conclusion that teacher leadership has yet to be defined by those who actually practice the concept. In this study teachers and administrators voices have been being heard about teacher leadership, however, the missing component has been the teachers and administrators' common meaning of teacher leadership and the common knowledge of the role of teacher leadership in PLCs.

Effective Implementation of PLCs

Qualitative data collected through teachers, teacher leaders, administrators', and the Director of Professional Growths' interviews provided a deeper understanding of the perceived qualities, and attributes that contribute to the effective implementation of PLCs. There were four themes that emerged from the qualitative data related to effective implementation of PLCs: views of collaboration, barriers in PLCs, administrator roles in

PLCs, and training in PLCs. A summary of each theme has been necessary to understand the teacher perceptions.

Views of Collaboration.

Teachers, teacher leaders, and administrators expressed that during PLCs they have been given time to collaborate about planning, data, and students success. Teachers also stated that they gain new learning, share ideas and resources, plan with their team and analyze student data during PLC time. In Stewart's (2017) study, the findings revealed that the current PLCs were beneficial, but needed refinement related to relevance, intent, and planning. Teachers and teacher leaders expressed that they like PLCs however at times they felt like the structure of PLCs was irrelevant to their instructional needs. The majority of the participants viewed PLCs as beneficial and a mechanism for acquiring knowledge and instructional strategies geared towards school improvement and student achievement. The Director of Professional Growth, who supervises PLCs in the district, made it clear that a PLC has been a collective learning environment where teachers and teacher leaders have been collaborating towards students' success. These views align with DuFour (2004) who called for the creation of structures that promote a collaborative culture, and who recognized that the powerful collaboration of PLCs occurs when teachers work together to analyze and improve their classroom practice. In addition, Peppers' (2015) findings revealed that in high school PLCs: (a) teachers professional development have been successful; (b) that collaboration, sharing, planning, and effective transformational leadership was vital to professional development; (c) and teachers perception and implementation of PLCs did influence the schools' learning environment. The Director of Professional Growth also shared that PLCs have been facilitated through guided questions presented by the teacher leader, which leads to a deeper discussion about student data and success.

DuFour (2004) stated that PLC collaboration between teachers and teacher leaders fosters an ongoing cycle of questions designed to promote deep team learning, thus allowing the collaborative cycle or process to lead to higher levels of student achievement. Some teachers and teacher leaders stated that the teacher leader brings data and facilitates PLCs based on formative and summative data. Administrators also shared that the PLC has been a time to communicate about students' data and success, which leads to teams sharing resources and ideas as well as gaining new learning strategies to implement in the classroom.

Hord (1997) expressed that collective learning must occur among the staff and that the end results must address each of the students' needs. She recommended peer feedback and assistance for PLC members as part of the plan to support both the individual and community as a means for systematic improvement. Teachers and teacher leaders did not mention being able to give peer feedback and assistance during PLCs, however, teachers and teacher leaders discussed the use of analyzing data in PLCs and finding ways to make sure all students have been successful. Professional Learning Communities use data such as district common assessments, campus common assessments, and state assessments to make informed decisions about how to best serve students (DuFour, DuFour, Eaker, & Many, 2006). Most of the administrators shared that data has been a crucial component in PLCs.

Teachers, teacher leaders, administrators, and the Director of Professional Growth all stated that PLCs have been held weekly on their campuses. The district has observed Wednesday as a PLC day for all secondary schools. Students have been released early so that each campus can have time for PLCs. During PLC time teachers have been meeting as a department to analyze data and instructional practices.

Barriers in PLCs

Barriers in PLCs were discussed as they impact the effectiveness of PLCs. Teachers stated that the lack of structure in PLCs and using PLCs for other meeting objectives unrelated to PLCs were barriers. PLCs have been designed and structured around teachers collaboration, student success and increased achievement. Therefore, if PLCs do not have systematic structure, the implementation will not have a positive impact on teachers and students' success. When PLCs have been used for unrelated meetings, teachers have not been receiving the feedback and reflection necessary to make improvements in their instructional delivery. Teachers expressed when PLCs were implemented with the focus on student achievement they found the time and effort involved in the PLC model positive and beneficial.

Administrators' Role in PLCs

The perceptions of administrators' roles were based on teacher leaders, administrators' and the Director of Professional Growth's experiences in PLCs. Teacher leaders shared that administrators set clear expectations for PLCs. Therefore, administrators have been communicating with their teacher leaders in regards to PLCs. Teacher leaders expressed that the administrators give little to no support in their role as a teacher leader. This has been consistent with Jacobs et al., (2016) study, where teacher leaders reported that administrative support was a critical need. Therefore, the teacher leaders have direction on how to lead PLCs. This shows that administrators either do not know how to or unaware of how to support their leader leaders in PLCs.

Administrators' perceptions of their roles varied from campus to campus. The administrators determine their roles at their campuses PLCs. Usually, they determine their role from their experiences in PLCs as a former teacher and/or teacher leader. The district did not provide administrators with guidelines on their role in PLCs, which leads

to administrators' not understanding what their role has been in PLCs. Administrators described themselves as supportive and active in PLCs and agreed with teacher leaders in the area of supporting PLCs. Administrators wanted to make sure the structure of PLCs were being implemented effectively. Some administrators attended PLCs to be actively involved and engaged in the collaboration during PLCs. However, there was inconsistency in the administrators' role in PLCs.

Research indicates that the principal has been a primary agent in the success and effectiveness of implementing conditions for a learning community culture (Fullan, 2001; Harris, 2002; Lambert, 1998; Mitchell & Sackney, 2000; Speck, 1999). In this study, PLCs were implemented based on how the administrators viewed PLCs. The administrators were in control of how PLCs have been structured and implemented at their campuses. Based on the differences in administrator responses, there seemed to be no district guidelines or communication about the administrators' role in PLCs. This has been consistent with Well's and Feun's (2007) study, in which administrators talked about the need for both a conceptual understanding of the professional learning communities and the understanding of how to lead the change while dealing with the cultural aspects of the school.

Training in PLCs

Teacher leaders stated they were trained informally in PLCs, learned through experience, or attended the district training. In this study, most of the teacher leaders were trained in PLCs at their campuses by a former teacher leader or through their own experience as a teacher in PLCs. The administrator not trained said he learned about PLCs through his experience as a teacher in PLCs. Based on the responses, there has been a concern in regards to training in PLCs for teachers, teacher leaders, and administrators. The lack of formal training has restructured the implementation of PLCs.

Currently, the implementation of PLCs has been not as structured, some PLCs have been used for other meetings or meeting unrelated to data and success. The teacher leaders said they needed professional development to develop general leadership skills such as communication, problem solving, and conflict resolution skills, as well as skills for dealing with the resistant teacher in relation. The teacher leaders responses relates to Jacobs et al., (2016) study, where many of the teacher leaders also reported that they needed professional development relevant to their roles and responsibilities as teacher leaders.

Data in this study revealed that teacher leaders want to attend a formal training in PLCs so that they can be more effective in their leading role in PLCs. Based on the information gained from the current study, school districts need to implement ongoing formal trainings in PLCs for teachers, teacher leaders, and administrators. Everyone has his/her own perceptions about PLCs at the various campuses, which means there has been no alignment about how PLCs have been facilitated across the district. Administrators and teacher leaders have a different perception of the teacher leader role in PLCs not only have teacher leaders and administrators not had any training in PLCs in ten years. There was no follow-up after the training. The lack of following may be because of the Director of Professional Growths' and administrators' different perceptions of the teacher leaders role in PLCs. The lack of communication on the expectations on the teacher leader role can affect PLCs from being meaningful, relevant to teachers needs and students' success.

Implications

The findings from the current study show that teachers, teacher leaders, administrators' and the Director of Professional Growth's perceptions of the teacher leaders role and implementation in PLCs have been different from campus to campus. Professional learning communities have created a structure that has enhanced the quality

of teacher professional development, coordinated adult learning with student needs, adopted research-based strategies, increased teacher leadership, and brought about a sense of community focused on a common vision that aligned with school and district goals (Mullen, 2008). However, in this study, there have been discrepancies between what all stakeholders perceive to be the effective roles and functions of teacher leadership in PLCs. This study revealed how the participants viewed the teacher leaders role in PLCs and prevalent concerns, which also have been addressed in existing literature.

The findings in the study offer clarity on the term teacher leader and what it means to be a teacher leader in PLCs. Teacher leaders have been developing leaders that can lead other teachers through mentorship and support. Teacher leaders in PLCs have been the ones who have been leading PLCs so that they have been effective and relevant to the teachers and students growth.

Implications for the District

Thessin's (2105) findings affirm the research-based practices on which Drake ISD PLC implementation plan was based, while suggesting that additional school-based conditions also needed to be in place: (1) the provision of school-based professional development in PLCs; (2) a school culture focused on collaboration; and (3) a readiness by school leaders to engage in and communicate expectations for PLC work

Professional development in PLCs for teachers, teacher leaders, administrators, and the central office instructional departments should be a primary goal for the district. The district needs to ensure that they have been providing a high quality formal training for all stakeholders that participate in PLCs. The PLC training should not be a one-time training, but rather the school district will need to provide ongoing training for PLCs every year as people come and go in the district. In addition, the creation of a PLC means an end to teacher isolation, provides teachers autonomy over professional development

needs, and promotes shared professional development learning environments (Hellner, 2008).

In this study, every administrator had his/her own perceptions of the teacher leader role in PLCs and there has been currently no support from administrators in coaching teacher leader in the implementation of PLCs. Administrators need to be trained on how to coach teacher leaders in facilitating PLCs to better understand the role of the teacher leader in PLCs. This training will require support from the instructional department in the central office. This PLC training will help administrators understand their teacher leaders role at the campus level. Also, the training will help administrators to provide ongoing support to their teacher leaders as they participate in PLCs and give them feedback. According to Duling (2012), the following leadership dimensions were perceived to be important in the support of professional learning communities: the principal's knowledge and involvement in curriculum and instruction, the principal's knowledge and involvement in the assessment program, and the principal's influence on organizational culture

Teacher leaders also need to be trained on how to facilitate PLCs. In this study, majority of the teacher leaders were informally trained or had been trained formally ten years ago. Teacher leaders perceptions of their roles varied depending on their campus, which demonstrates there has been lack of a unified teacher leader role in PLCs in the district. The training would inform teacher leaders about their roles and how to facilitate PLCs so that there has been an alignment in the district in their implementation of PLCs. The district needs to invest some time into their monthly administrator meeting to collaborate about PLCs at their campus. This discussion time would be an opportunity for the central office administrators to hear how each campus has been conducting their PLCs. During this time suggestions can be given as well as questions can be asked.

Administrators need to be assigned a mentor for their campus. The mentor could be a trained person from the central office. The mentor would visit campuses at least once a month to meet with the administrators and observe the implementation of PLCs. This mentor visit would help the campus stay on track with the implementation process as well as hold all stakeholders accountable for the effectiveness of PLCs in support of the teacher leaders who have been leading PLCs.

Implications for Campuses

Professional learning communities facilitate teacher leadership by allowing teachers to collaborate on their professional work, analyze student data, and assess student learning (Wilson, 2016). After completion of their training in the PLC model, teacher leaders should lead the trainings in efforts to train their campus faculty and staff on the implementation of PLC model. The training should consist of campus information on expectations of PLCs, teacher expectations of PLCs, teacher leader role in PLCs and the structure of PLCs. Everyone that has been involved in PLCs needs to have a common language to ensure the effectiveness of PLCs.

Teacher leaders need to communicate with their teachers prior to PLC each week. Teacher leaders can communicate by meeting with their team beforehand to discuss the agenda, adjust the agenda as needed, and get input from teachers. PLCs have been more effective when they have been teacher directed, because it has been what the teachers need. Teachers know what they need based on their classrooms, therefore coming to PLCs to collaborate with other teachers will give them the support they need to be successful in their classroom. Also, the teacher leaders should share responsibility with other teachers through collaboration and planning as Jacobs et al. (2016) revealed in their study that it helped them to be more successful leaders. Teachers learn when professional development in the school has been structured to help them learn from one another as

part of their routine teaching practice (DuFour, 2011). There has been more involvement in PLCs when teachers have been involved in the process and have a responsibility such as bringing resources, manipulative, outlines and other such items.

The literature also asserts that the principal reason for teacher leadership has been to transform schools into professional learning communities (Katzenmeyer & Moller, 2001) and to empower teachers to become involved closely in decision-making within the school, thus contributing to the democratization of schools (Gehrke, 1991).

Administrators should conduct PLCs meetings with their teacher leaders. During the PLC meetings, the administrators and teacher leaders should communicate about the implementation of PLCs, their roles in PLCs, giving feedback and supporting the teacher leaders. This should be a face-to-face meeting where an effective conversation can be had about PLCs. It has been imperative that the administrators and teacher leader have been evaluating PLCs to ensure effectiveness; otherwise, PLCs can become a waste of time for teachers.

Hargreaves and Fullan (2012) argued that principals should join with teachers to cultivate three forms of capital essential for improving teaching in all schools: (a) human capital (the knowledge and skills of teaching and learning); (b) social capital (the processes and structures that enable relationships built on trust and respect to form bonds among teachers that support the hard work of learning to improve teaching); (c) and decision-making capital (the ability to make wise and informed decisions that reflect the level of professionalism required as a teacher). The administrator role in PLC has been to support their teacher leader through a coaching model of teaching and learning to ensure students' success, building relationships to enable trust amongst the team, and collaborating through decision-making based on student's needs.

Recommendations for Future Research

A recommendation for future research would be to conduct a study at the elementary and middle grade levels to determine teacher leaders and administrators' perceptions of teacher leadership in PLCs. It would be beneficial to see how the research aligns or does not align across different grade levels in education. Also, education starts at the elementary level. Therefore, if a strong foundation of PLCs at the elementary level was established, then it should impact middle school and high school. Future research could also examine district leaders training in PLCs and training on teacher leadership to determine the effectiveness in PLCs district wide.

Conclusion

Silva et al., (2000) noted that teachers and principals' voices have been missing from much of the literature advocating for teacher leadership, leading to the conclusion that teacher leadership in PLCs has yet to be defined by those who actually practice the concept. If school district implemented training on teacher leadership in PLCs, then there would be an increase in the effectiveness of PLCs and an alignment across the district in regards to the teacher leader role in PLCs. PLCs target student success through collaboration, it would be beneficial to ensure that all stakeholders involved in PLCs have been trained to ensure a more productive collaborative learning environment.

The purpose of this study was to determine teachers and administrators' perceptions of teacher leader in PLCs. This mixed methods study included a quantitative portion that asked teachers and administrators to participate in the Professional Learning Communities Assessment-Revised (PLCA-R) (Olivier and et al., 2010). The PLCA-R measured teachers and administrators' perception of PLCs based on the five dimensions of PLCs. This was followed by a qualitative phase that included face-to face interviews with teachers, teacher leaders, administrators and the Director of Professional Growth

varying grade levels, and years of experience purposely selected. Survey responses from teachers, teacher leaders, administrators and the Director of Professional Growth revealed that each of them had their own perceptions of teacher leadership in PLCs with a lack of training on the teacher leaders' role in PLCs.

Research by Crowther et al., (2000) has revealed that teacher leadership has been an important factor in improving the life chances of students in disadvantaged high schools. Teacher leaders must understand their roles in PLCs, as they have been the ones who have been facilitating and leading the meetings. This study shows that in the same district at different campuses, each teacher leaders described their roles differently. Most of the teacher leaders were informally trained in PLCs. If a teacher leader has not been formally trained in PLCs then it will be difficult for them to facilitate PLCs effectively. This has been where the teachers and teacher leaders barriers began in PLCs.

The results of this study offer insight on teacher leaders role in PLCs from teachers, teacher leaders, administrators and the Director of Professional Growth perspectives. Research in the field of education shows that there has been a lack of meaning in teacher leadership. According to Lieberman (2015), for teacher leadership to become more widely recognized, researchers need to explore and understand practices that nurture teacher leadership skills. In this study, it revealed that there did not seem to be any coaching in the district for teacher leadership to increase their leadership skills. There has been no research on how to coach teacher leaders in PLCs. Coaching teacher leaders in PLCs should be implemented as part of the plan in PLCs. Teacher leaders shared that they communicated with administrators about PLCs but there was no guidance. Administrators made it clear that they have been supportive and involved in PLCs however, they did not mention anything about coaching and mentoring teacher leaders. The Director of Professional Growth interview did not emphasize administrators

as coaching and mentoring teacher leaders, but insisted that administrators let teacher lead teachers, build capacity and observe structure.

The findings identified in this study can impact teacher leaders and administrators' perceptions of the teacher leader role in PLCs. The qualitative responses showed that there were contrasting meanings among teacher leaders and administrators' when asked about the teacher leaders role. Teacher leaders expressed their need for training in PLCs so that they could implement the model effectively. This information from this study should be used as a guide for districts and campuses who do not have a clear view of the teacher leaders role in PLCs. In addition, this study may help districts and campuses better understand the teacher leaders role in PLCs to ensure effective implementation in the PLC professional development model. This study can be a continued effort and further researched as part of the high school reform in PLCs.

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APPENDIX A:
PERMISSION OF SURVEY



Department of Educational Foundations
and Leadership
P.O. Box 43091
Lafayette, LA 70504-3091

February 3, 2017

Dear Ms. George:

This correspondence is to grant permission for the utilization of the Professional Learning Community Assessment-Revised (PLCA-R) as your instrument for data collection for your doctoral study through the University of Houston-Clear Lake. I believe your research examining elementary teachers and principals' perceptions of the five dimensions of professional learning communities will contribute to the PLC literature and provide valuable information related to elementary school improvement. I am pleased you are interested in continuing to use the PLCA-R measure in your research.

This permission letter allows use of the PLCA-R through paper/pencil administration, as well as permission for online administration, as detailed in your PLCA-R Request Form.

While this letter provides permission to use the measure in your study, authorship of the measure will remain as Olivier, Hipp, and Huffman (exact citation on the following page). This permission does not allow renaming the measure or claiming authorship.

Upon completion of your study, I would be interested in learning about your entire study and would welcome the opportunity to receive an electronic version of your completed dissertation research.

Thank you for your interest in our research and measure for assessing professional learning community attributes within schools. Should you require any additional information, please feel free to contact me.

Sincerely,

Dianne F. Olivier, Ph. D.

APPENDIX B:
SURVEY COVER LETTER

November 2017

Dear Educator,

Greetings! You are being solicited to complete the *Professional Learning Community Assessment Revised* (PLCA-R) survey. The purpose of this survey is to examine the effectiveness of Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) five dimensions as it relates to teacher leadership in PLCs. The data from this study will allow me to understand the miscommunication between secondary administrators and secondary teachers on the role of teacher leadership in PLCs.

Please try to answer all the questions. Filling out the attached survey is entirely voluntary, but answering each response will make the survey most useful. This survey will take approximately 10-20 minutes to complete and all of your responses will be kept completely confidential. No obvious undue risks will be endured and you may stop your participation at any time. In addition, you will also not benefit directly from your participation in the study.

Your cooperation is greatly appreciated and your willingness to participate in this study is implied if you proceed with completing the survey. Your completion of the *Professional Learning Community Assessment Revised* (PLCA-R) survey is not only greatly appreciated, but invaluable. By proceeding with this survey, it will be implied you consent to take part in the study. If you have any further questions, please feel free to contact me. Thank you!

I appreciate you taking time to complete the survey!

Sincerely,

Devette George

APPENDIX C:
INFORMED CONSENT FORM

Informed Consent to Participate in Research

You are being asked to participate in the research project described below. Your participation in this study is entirely voluntary and you may refuse to participate, or you may decide to stop your participation at any time. Should you refuse to participate in the study or should you withdraw your consent and stop participation in the study, your decision will involve no penalty or loss of benefits to which you may be otherwise entitled. You are being asked to read the information below carefully, and ask questions about anything you don't understand before deciding whether or not to participate.

Title: Secondary Teachers and Administrators' Perceptions of Teacher Leadership in the Implementation of Professional Learning Communities.

Principal Investigator(s): Devette George. M.Ed.

Student Investigator(s): Devette George. M.Ed.

Faculty Sponsor: Becky Huss-Keeler, Ph.D.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The purpose of this research is to examine secondary teachers and administrators' perceptions of teacher leadership in the implementation of professional learning communities.

PROCEDURES

The research procedures are as follows:

The researcher will ask secondary general education teachers and administrators with at least two year of experience of PLCs to volunteer to participate in a focus group interview session. Prior to the interview, each participant will be informed of the purpose of the study, the approximate time for the interview, and that participation is voluntary. Each interview will last between 40-50 minutes and will be semi-structured in format. Based on review of the literature and findings from the Professional Learning Community Assessment Revised (PLCA-R) survey, a set of foundational questions will be developed for use during the interviews. Sessions will be audiotaped and transcribed.

EXPECTED DURATION

The total anticipated time commitment would be approximately 45 minutes to one hour.

RISKS OF PARTICIPATION

There are no anticipated risks associated with participation in this project.

BENEFITS TO THE SUBJECT

There is no direct benefit received from your participation in this study, but your participation will help the investigator(s) better understand the expected roles of teacher leadership in PLCs.

CONFIDENTIALITY OF RECORDS

Every effort will be made to maintain the confidentiality of your study records. The data collected from the study will be used for educational and publication purposes, however, you will not be identified by name. For federal audit purposes, the participant's documentation for this research project will be maintained and safeguarded by the Principal Investigator for a minimum of three years after completion of the study. After that time, the participant's documentation may be destroyed.

FINANCIAL COMPENSATION

There is no financial compensation to be offered for participation in the study.

INVESTIGATOR'S RIGHT TO WITHDRAW PARTICIPANT

The investigator has the right to withdraw you from this study at any time.

CONTACT INFORMATION FOR QUESTIONS OR PROBLEMS

The investigator has offered to answer all your questions.

If you have additional questions during the course of this study about the research or any related problem, you may contact the Student Researcher, Devette George, M.Ed., at phone number 832-321-5851 or by email at georged4499@uhcl.edu. The Faculty Sponsor Becky Huss-Keeler, Ph.D., may be contacted by email at huss@uhcl.edu.

SIGNATURES:

Your signature below acknowledges your voluntary participation in this research project. Such participation does not release the investigator(s), institution(s), sponsor(s) or granting agency(ies) from their professional and ethical responsibility to you. By signing the form, you are not waiving any of your legal rights.

The purpose of this study, procedures to be followed, and explanation of risks or benefits have been explained to you. You have been allowed to ask questions and your questions have been answered to your satisfaction. You have been told who to contact if you have additional questions. You have read this consent form and voluntarily agree to participate as a subject in this study. You are free to withdraw your consent at any time by contacting the Principal Investigator or Student Researcher/Faculty Sponsor. You will be given a copy of the consent form you have signed.

Subject's printed

name: _____

Signature of Subject: _____

Date: _____

Using language that is understandable and appropriate, I have discussed this project and the items listed above with the subject.

Printed name and title _____

Signature of Person Obtaining

Consent: _____

Date: _____

*THE UNIVERSITY OF HOUSTON-CLEAR LAKE (UHCL) COMMITTEE
FOR PROTECTION OF HUMAN SUBJECTS HAS REVIEWED AND
APPROVED THIS PROJECT. ANY QUESTIONS REGARDING YOUR
RIGHTS AS A RESEARCH SUBJECT MAY BE ADDRESSED TO THE
UHCL COMMITTEE FOR THE PROTECTION OF HUMAN SUBJECTS
(281-283-3015). ALL RESEARCH PROJECTS THAT ARE CARRIED
OUT BY INVESTIGATORS AT UHCL ARE GOVERNED BY
REQUIREMENTS OF THE UNIVERSITY AND THE FEDERAL
GOVERNMENT. (FEDERALWIDE ASSURANCE # FWA00004068)*

APPENDIX D:
TEACHER INTERVIEW

1. Describe the role of teacher leader within PLCs at your campus.
2. Explain any current or past barriers you have experienced in your professional development as teacher leader within your school.
3. Describe the types of activities you have engaged in professionally as a result of being a member of a Professional Learning Community.
4. Describe how you have connected with other teachers within your school as a result of being a member of a Professional Learning Community.

APPENDIX E:
TEACHER LEADER INTERVIEW

1. Describe your role as a teacher leader on your campus within PLCs?
2. Have you been trained as teacher leader in PLCs? If so, what kind of training have you had. If not, what kind of training would you like?
3. Describe administrator support to teacher leaders in PLCs?
4. Do you see an impact in PLCs as a teacher leader? Please explain.
3. Do the teacher leaders have particular goals that they are focusing on this year?
4. How has PLCs changed overtime at your campus?

APPENDIX F:
ADMINISTRATORS FOCUS GROUP

1. Describe the of role teacher leaders on your campus within PLCs?
2. Describe your role as an administrator to support teacher leaders in PLCs?
3. Do the teacher leaders have particular goals that they are focusing on this year?
4. Have you been trained in PLCs?
5. Have you trained your teacher leaders on how to facilitate PLCs? If yes, please explain the training that was offered.
6. What has been the impact of the teacher leaders in the school?

APPENDIX G:
DIRECTOR OF PROFESSIONAL GROWTH INTERVIEW

1. Describe your role in PLCs on campuses in your district.
2. Describe your expectations on the of role teacher leaders within PLCs in your district.
2. Describe your expectations on the of role administrators within PLCs in your district.
3. Have you been trained in PLCs? Please explain.
4. Has teacher leader on campuses been trained in PLCs? Please explain.
5. Has administrators on campuses been trained in PLCs? Please explain
6. How has PLCs in your district changed overtime?
7. What impact has teacher leaders had on the implementation of PLCs?