Electronic Theses and Dissertations

8-2016

Teacher Leadership: A Content Analysis Assessing the Impact on District Policies and Practices

Ashley P. Carter
East Tennessee State University

Follow this and additional works at: https://dc.etsu.edu/etd

Part of the Curriculum and Instruction Commons, Educational Leadership Commons, and the Elementary and Middle and Secondary Education Administration Commons

Recommended Citation

Teacher Leadership: A Content Analysis Assessing the Impact on District Policies and Practices

_____

A dissertation

presented to

the faculty of the Department of Educational Leadership and Policy Analysis

East Tennessee State University

In partial fulfillment

of the requirements for the degree

Doctor of Education in Educational Leadership

_____

by

Ashley P. Carter

August 2016

_____

Dr. Virginia Foley, Chair

Dr. Eric Glover

Dr. John Boyd

Dr. Karin Keith

Keywords: Shared Leadership, Teacher Leadership, Teacher Leader Model Standards, Tennessee

Teacher Leader Network

ABSTRACT

Teacher Leadership: A Content Analysis Assessing the Impact on District Policies and Practices

by

Ashley P. Carter

The purpose of this qualitative study was to analyze teacher leader models developed and implemented by the Tennessee Teacher Leader Network in order to assess the impact the models have on district policies and practices. Data were collected through a content analysis to analyze for recurring themes and differences to assess how models influence teaching and learning within districts. Fourteen district teacher leader models and strategic plans were analyzed for this study.

Eleven research questions guided this study, and qualitative data were analyzed for recurring themes and differences. Findings from this study suggest teacher leader models are limiting the vision and implementation of shared leadership by focusing on the management of instruction and student achievement. Implications for practice recommend modifying models to better align with a shared leadership framework, developing a clearly defined framework for communication that actively includes teacher leaders, and developing alternative evaluative criteria beyond the use of student achievement and growth data from standardized assessments.

DEDICATION

To my husband Justin and my parents, Craig and Debbie.

Thank you for always supporting my dreams and providing a way for me to pursue them.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would first like to thank my Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. You have guided my path in all ways. Prayer and faith supported the completion of this journey

Thank you to my husband, Justin and our son Owen. Justin, I will never be able to express how grateful I am that you have supported me through this journey by encouraging and believing in me. This doctorate is as much yours as it is mine. I look forward to the next journey in our lives. Owen, thank you for being a shining light in my world.

Thank you to my parents, Craig and Debbie Chapman, for always encouraging me to pursue my dreams, believing that I could accomplish any goal, and teaching me how to appreciate education and hard work. Thank you to my sister Amber for being my cheerleader and encourager. I love you all dearly.

Dr. Virginia Foley, chairperson of my committee, thank you for your dedication, patience, professionalism, and encouragement. I appreciate all the supports, great and small, that you have given me along the way. You have inspired me through this mentorship.

Dr. Glover, thank you for teaching me how to think and question while staying true to my own beliefs. You have a wonderful way with inquiry to get me thinking and question assumptions. I have truly appreciated your teaching and feedback.

Thank you Dr. Boyd and Dr. Keith for serving on my committee and for the caring aspect you bring to teaching and learning.

Finally, I would like to thank my friend, Lucinda Bellamy. Without working alongside of you these past few years, this accomplishment may have never been possible. I appreciate your friendship, encouragement and motivation.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

History of the Issue

Restructuring schools to build capacity for teachers to serve in leadership roles has been at the forefront of educational dialogue and research for the past two decades (Danielson, 2006; Darling-Hammond & McLaughlin, 1995; DuFour, 1997; Felton & Page, 2014; Gronn, 2002; Hallinger, 2011; Knight, 2007; Little, 1990; Louis, Marks, & Kruse, 1996; Marzano, Waters, & McNulty, 2005; Ross et al., 2011; Vernon-Dotson & Floyd, 2012; York-Barr & Duke, 2004). In 2008, a group of educators convened for the purpose of examining educational research associated with leadership roles in which teachers serve, and how those roles contribute to student and school success (Teacher Leadership Exploratory Consortium, 2011). Eventually, the group of educators expanded to form the Teacher Leadership Exploratory Consortium with representation by educational organizations, state education agencies, teacher leaders, administrators, superintendents, and higher education institutions. The purpose of the Consortium was to develop a set of model standards that would inspire dialogue over what constitutes the knowledge, skills, and competencies needed to assume leadership roles.

In drafting these standards, the Consortium reviewed research, examined current teacher leadership programs, met with researchers, and conversed with teachers in leadership roles (Teacher Leadership Exploratory Consortium, 2011). Additionally, the Consortium members examined concepts related to teacher leadership such as teacher expertise; adult learning models; negotiation; collaboration; professional learning communities; facilitation skills; advocacy; and

professional development. Consortium members found a variety of formal and informal roles associated with teacher leadership, as well as multiple pathways into those roles.

Pathways into teacher leadership roles found by the Consortium include: developing leadership skills through professional experience and mentoring; receiving formal training related to specific leadership skills; pursuing advanced degrees related to leadership; obtaining additional course credits and certifications to support leadership knowledge and skills; assuming roles in professional associations to develop leadership skills; and being encouraged or selected to serve in informal and formal leadership roles by administrators (Teacher Leadership Exploratory Consortium, 2011). Additionally, Consortium members found teacher leaders to be respected by their peers; continuous learners; approachable; influential in improving educational practices; role models for effective practices; and supportive in collaborative school structures.

The model standards that define the formal and informal roles associated with teacher leadership are formatted similarly to the Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (ISLLC) State Standards for School Leaders (Teacher Leadership Exploratory Consortium, 2011). Both standards contain broad expectations, labeled *domains,* that define critical dimensions of leadership. Each domain outlines *functions* that more specifically explain actions or expectations for leaders related to that domain. By initiating the dialogue about teacher leadership through the use of model standards, the Consortium hoped to promote teacher leadership as a path to transform schools to meet the needs of 21st century learners, as well as support teachers in leadership roles.

In their vision document, the Consortium described the vision for teacher leadership by detailing five concepts (Teacher Leadership Exploratory Consortium, 2011). First, the role of a teacher leader should be viewed differently than the roles of other school leaders. Teacher

leaders can be appointed to formal or informal leadership roles, and work individually or collectively to influence colleagues, principals, and members of the school community to improve teaching and learning practices (York-Barr & Duke, 2004). Secondly, teacher leadership can enhance the capacity of the school administrator (Teacher Leadership Exploratory Consortium, 2011). Through collaboration with principals and other administrators, teacher leaders facilitate improvements in instruction and promote best practices among peers. Benefits of this shared leadership include: potential of improved student learning; encouragement of innovation among teachers; and creating a positive school culture.

The next concept is that teacher leadership supports strategies and behaviors linked to increasing student achievement (Teacher Leadership Exploratory Consortium, 2011). One role of a teacher leader is to support classroom teachers in their daily work through identifying and sharing effective, research-based teaching practices. Additionally, teacher leaders facilitate professional development that adds depth to teachers' content knowledge and understanding about how students learn specific content; provide opportunities for hands-on learning; and enable teachers to acquire new knowledge, apply that knowledge to practice, and reflect with colleagues (Darling-Hammond & Richardson, 2009).

Additionally, teacher leadership requires a shift in the culture of schools (Teacher Leadership Exploratory Consortium, 2011). Teacher leadership will be successful and effective when teachers are accepted and encouraged as leaders among peers and administrators. To create a school culture in which teacher leadership is more greatly valued, district and school goals need to be clearly articulated; administrators and teachers need to be trained to understand the role of teacher leaders; and a supportive framework must be in place for teachers and other education professionals to collaborate and work together to serve the needs of all students.

12

Lastly, teacher leadership requires new organizational structures and roles in schools to successfully meet the needs of 21st century learners (Teacher Leadership Exploratory Consortium, 2011). Through their research study, the Consortium found that schools in which collaboration and professional inquiry were embedded in the school culture, student learning improved. Therefore, to meet the needs of 21st century learners, schools need to have organizational structures that recognize the responsibilities of teacher leaders; provide time for collaboration; and support teachers in assuming leadership roles.

In 2011, the Tennessee Board of Education adopted the Teacher Leader Model Standards to increase student achievement and growth, create broader dissemination and use of effective teacher strategies, and develop a stronger and more positive school and district culture (Tennessee Department of Education [TDOE], 2014). In the fall of 2013, the Tennessee Department of Education (TDOE) created the Tennessee Teacher Leader Council to develop adaptable teacher leadership models for implementation in districts across the state. Six districts were chosen to serve on the council in 2013-2014. These districts created different teacher leader models that aligned to their district's strategic plans. Although sharing a foundational belief and design around the Tennessee Teacher Leader Standards, each model varied in specific design and roles (TDOE, 2014). A Teacher Leader Guidebook was created to share these plans with districts across the state of Tennessee. In 2014-2015, a second cohort of eight districts created additional models to be shared in a supplementary Teacher Leader Guidebook. At this time, the name of the council changed from the Tennessee Teacher Leader Council to the Tennessee Teacher Leader Network.

There are 14 districts that have submitted and approved plans for utilizing a teacher leader model in their district in order to support the goals within the district's strategic plan.

Using a qualitative methodology, a content analysis of the models submitted by the Tennessee Teacher Leader Network was conducted to analyze how teacher leaders are being utilized across the state of Tennessee.

Statement of the Problem and Research Questions

The purpose of this qualitative study was to analyze teacher leader models submitted and approved in the state of Tennessee in order to assess the impact the models have on district policies and practices. A content analysis of the models was conducted to analyze for recurring themes and differences in order to assess how the models positively and negatively influence the teaching and learning of students. Findings from this study provide support to districts in the development or refinement phase of implementing a teacher leader model to support the district's strategic plan.

The teacher leader models submitted and approved by the 14 districts are organized into the following categories: model summary; rationale; teacher leaders' beliefs and leadership capacity; roles and responsibilities; strategies for success which include identifying, selecting, and retaining teacher leaders; building capacity for teachers to lead; implementation timeline; communication strategy; best practices; and cost and sustainability. These categories were used to develop the following research questions:

1. How do the districts describe the purpose of the teacher leader model?
2. How are roles and responsibilities of teacher leaders similar among the districts?
3. How are roles and responsibilities of teacher leaders different among the districts?
4. How are teacher leaders identified, selected, and retained in each district?

5. In what ways are districts implementing the model plan: What are the functions of teacher leaders?

6. What is the framework for communication within each district?

7. How do districts support teacher leaders?

8. How do districts evaluate the teacher leader model?

9. How are districts compensating teacher leaders?

10. How are districts sustaining teacher leaders?

11. What kinds of changes is the model bringing to the district?

Significance of the Study

Teacher leaders are a resource that every school district across the state of Tennessee possesses. These teachers are highly qualified, well trained, and respected among their peers. According to the TNDOE, a strong group of teacher leaders in Tennessee can provide multiple benefits (Tennessee Department of Education website, n.d., The Teacher Leader Guidebook). These benefits include increased student achievement and growth, broader dissemination and use of effective teaching strategies through increased collaboration, and stronger and more positive school and district culture through development and retention of highly effective teachers.

Marzano (2003) noted leadership as necessary to transform organizations at the school-level, teacher-level, and student-level. When districts are developing a strategic plan, it is important to recognize the leadership needed to implement the plan at each level. Teacher leaders provide districts with a leadership platform that has the potential to reach the school-level, teacher-level, and student-level. Marzano presented past research studies that indicated leadership has a strong relationship with the benefits noted by the TNDOE including the overall

climate of the school and individual classrooms, the attitudes of teachers, the classroom practices of teachers, the organization of curriculum and instruction, the extent to which a school has a clear mission and goals, and students' opportunity to learn.

The findings of this study provide districts with information on how teacher leaders are currently utilized to support districts in reaching the goals of their strategic plan, and provide options for districts that may want to implement a plan in the future, or to refine a current plan with the goal of obtaining the benefits mentioned. This study also outlines the kinds of changes the teacher leader model brings to the districts in order to address the needs of teaching and learning in the 21st century. This study does not measure the effectiveness of the teacher leader model.

Definitions of Terms

Teacher leadership has multiple, broad definitions. It is best described in terms of roles and functions of teachers serving in leadership capacities. Concepts and terms related to teacher leadership provide insight into the role of a teacher leader. The following operational definitions were used in this study:

Instructing- Instructing is the communication and demonstration of how or what to do. Instructing leads to procedural knowledge. Learners follow a set of rules or instructions to learn how to accomplish a task.

Leading- Northouse (2013) defines leadership as "a process whereby an individual influences a group of individuals to achieve a common goal" (p. 5). Additionally, Kotter (1990) describes leadership activities as producing change and movement.

Managing- Managing is controlling the affairs of others by applying rules to maintain order and

consistency (Kotter, 1990).

Professional Learning Communities- Professional learning communities (PLCs) consist of

collaborative teams that work interdependently to achieve common goals. These goals

maintain a focus and commitment to the learning of all students (DuFour, DuFour, Eaker,

& Many, 2006).

Problem of Practice- Learning organizations identify a problem of practice by examining school

and classroom practices rather than just focusing on student outcomes. After examining

practices, members agree upon the greatest area of need for teacher learning. Goals are

set around this area of need which is termed the problem of practice. Professional

learning and collaboration is focused around the problem of practice to improve practice

throughout the organization.

Relational Trust- Social exchanges within schools allow for the development of relationships

with and among teachers, administrators, parents, students, and other stakeholders. For

these relationships to be successful and supportive, all parties need to understand and

maintain their roles and obligations. Bryk and Schneider (2003) refer to this relationship

as a dependency with mutual vulnerability. By understanding and upholding roles and

obligations, members develop relational trust.

Teaching- The process of enabling others to think and develop their own ideas and beliefs based

on experiences and discussions. Teaching allows learners to develop conceptual

understanding and construct knowledge that could lead to the creation of new knowledge.

This is an important understanding for 21st century teaching and learning.

Limitations

Limitations of this study include data sources, data collection, and researcher bias. The data sources were determined based on the number of districts that have participated in the Tennessee Teacher Leader Network to create district plans for teacher leadership models. At the time of research, there were 14 districts that had submitted and approved plans. Additionally, the data were collected through a content analysis of submitted teacher leader models and district strategic plans. District teacher leaders were not interviewed or observed as part of this study.

The initial step in guarding against bias is to recognize its potential. Researcher bias was recognized as potentially impacting the credibility and truthfulness of this study. The researcher has experience as being a teacher leader within one of the 14 districts analyzed. Therefore, the findings may be limited by researcher bias which the researcher failed to overcome and that were not recognized by the dissertation committee.

Chapter Summary

This chapter provides a history of the creation of the Teacher Leader Model Standards, the adoption of the standards by the Tennessee Board of Education, and the formation of the Tennessee Teacher Leader Network. Additionally, research questions, significance of the study, operational definitions, and limitations are presented within Chapter 1. Chapter 2 provides a review of literature that outlines leadership theory as it relates to teacher leadership, elements of teacher leadership as outlined by the domains within the Teacher Leader Model Standards, teacher leader preparation, and the impact of effective teacher leadership. Chapter 3 provides the research methodology and data collection process used within this study. Chapter 4 provides the

data analysis of the research questions and findings. Chapter 5 provides a discussion and

conclusions drawn from the findings as well as implications for practice and future research.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Leadership Theory and Teacher Leadership

Leadership Theory

Although the concept of teacher leadership has been prominently featured in school reform literature in the 21st century (Bryk & Schneider, 2003; Cohen & Hill, 2001; Danielson, 2006; Heck & Hallinger, 2010; Heck & Hallinger, 2014; Mayrowetz, 2008; Muijs & Harris, 2006; Schmoker, 2004; Supovitz, Mayer, & Kahle, 2000; York-Barr & Duke, 2004), it has a long history reaching back for more than 100 years (Danielson, 2006). Danielson attributes the concept to the work of John Dewey and his advocacy of democratic schools within the democratic society. Perhaps one of the greatest contributions that catapulted the concept into the 21st century came from Little's (1990) analysis of accumulated literature on collegial relations. The purpose of Little's analysis was to formulate a strong conception about teachers' involvements with one another, including the circumstances surrounding involvements, meaning attached to the involvements, and consequences that follow. Little noted terms used in literature such as *collegiality* or *collaboration* as being broad, with additional terms such as *story-swapping*, *sharing*, *helping*, and *teaming* as focusing on independence. She suggested increasing demands for collective autonomy and teacher-to-teacher initiative by shifting toward interdependence which she termed *joint work* (Little, 1990). Little used the term joint work to describe encounters among teachers that supported interdependence through shared responsibility, collective autonomy, culture of initiative and leadership of teachers with regard to professional practice, and groups grounded in professional work.

In order to understand the role of a teacher leader in the joint work described by Little (1990), it is important to understand different leadership theories that are aligned with roles of a teacher leader. According to Northouse (2013), there is a wide variety of different theoretical approaches to explain the complexities of the leadership process. Upon a review of literature, the theoretical approaches closely aligned with teacher leadership include transformational leadership, distributed leadership, and instructional leadership.

Transformational Leadership

Transformational leadership was first coined in 1973 by Downton, but caught greater popularity when it later emerged in the work of Burns in 1978 (Northouse, 2013). Burns (1978) distinguished between transformational and transactional leadership; noting transformational leadership is the process where the leader engages with others and creates a connection that increases motivation and morality in the leader and follower, whereas transactional leadership focuses on the exchanges that occur between leaders and followers but maintains no enduring purpose that binds the leader and follower together. Muijs (2011) referred to transformational leadership as leadership that transforms organizations and individuals within organizations through a collective commitment to values and long-term goals. Additionally, he added that transformational leadership engages with hearts and minds which makes it popular in education, and focuses on a strong moral purpose and commitment among colleagues (Muijs, 2011).

Muijs's (2011) description of transformational leadership is connected to Fullan's (2001) framework of leadership. Fullan (2001) suggested five components of leadership that support effective change including moral purpose, understanding the change process, relationship building, knowledge creation and sharing, and coherence making. Additionally, Northouse

(2013) noted transformational leaders are recognized as change agents who serve as good role models, create a commitment to the vision of the organization, empower individuals to meet higher standards, act in ways that garner trust from others, and provide meaning to the organization.

Distributed Leadership

Distributed leadership is a term that is commonly used among 21st century scholars in reference to the field of educational leadership (Gronn, 2002; Gunter, Hall, & Bragg, 2013; Heck & Hallinger, 2010; Margolis & Huggins, 2012; Mayrowetz, 2008; Muijs, 2011; Smylie, Mayrowetz, Murphy, & Louis, 2007; Spillane, 2005). The term implies that the practice of leadership is distributed or shared within or across an organization and that there are high degrees of involvement (Muijs, 2011). It has to do with the leadership practice rather than the leaders or their roles, functions, routines, and structures (Spillane, 2005). According to Muijs (2011), distributed leadership is a form of leadership where individuals collaborate in order to maximize leadership capacity within and across the organization.

In order to develop the collective responsibility that is needed within a distributed leadership model, a level of trust must first be developed. The comparative cases analyzed by Smylie et al. (2007) suggested trust matters in the design, performance, and perceptions of distributed leadership; there is a dynamic relationship between trust and distributed leadership; and an initial level of positive or provisional trust may be necessary.

A theoretical approach linked to distributed leadership is team leadership (Spillane, 2005). Northouse (2013) introduced team leadership as being one of the most popular and rapidly growing areas of leadership theory and research. A team is defined as a group whose

members are interdependent, share common goals, and who must coordinate their activities to accomplish goals. Within the team leadership approach, effective leadership processes are the most crucial factor in team success. The strength of a team leadership approach is the practical focus on real-life organizational teams, like professional learning communities, and their effectiveness.

Instructional Leadership

According to Muijs (2011), research on school effectiveness has put much stress on instructional leadership as a key component of effective schools. The focus of instructional leadership is on pedagogy, instruction, and the teaching and learning process. Instructional leaders promote approaches to factors that influence teaching and learning such as behavior management; monitor teaching; and provide professional development with a focus on teaching and learning (Muijs, 2011). A leadership theory closely aligned to instructional leadership is path-goal theory. Northouse (2013) described path-goal theory as a leadership theory that has been developed to explain how leaders motivate subordinates to be productive and satisfied by selecting an approach to leadership that fits the current need. This leadership theory informs leaders how to respond based on subordinates' characteristics and tasks. Leaders' responses can be directive, supportive, participative, or achievement oriented (Northouse, 2013). In the realm of education, instructional leaders provide guidance, nurture, challenge, and coach as needed to support their colleagues.

A role that is synonymous with instructional leadership is that of instructional coaching. Knight (2007) described instructional coaching as building relationships with teachers in order to develop a collaborative partnership. Instructional coaches support classroom teachers through

collaboration, modeling, observing, providing feedback, and encouragement. By serving in the

role of instructional coach, the teacher leader recognizes equality; respects choice; encourages

voice; engages in dialogue; encourages reflection; enacts praxis; and experiences reciprocity.

Muijs (2011) noted there is significant empirical support for instructional leadership, but

much of the research is now over a decade old. Additionally, Gallucci, Van Lare, Yoon, and

Boatright (2010) found several issues surrounding instructional leadership within their case

approach. They noted that instructional coaches, or leaders are also learners of new content and

pedagogy. Districts and schools need to provide professional learning initially to ensure

instructional leaders are truly prepared to serve as leaders. Secondly, the research showed as

coaches' conceptual development about instruction increased, their ability to coach matured.

Providing highly quality professional development to support this level of conceptual

understanding should be a high priority of leader development. Finally, they found professional

development for leaders was best aligned around a workplace pedagogy addressing all learning

needs (Gallucci et al., 2010).

Elements of Teacher Leadership

Historically, teachers' professional lives were assumed to occur exclusively within the

confines of their classroom. While the classroom remains the dominant setting, it is no longer

the only context for teachers' work (Darling-Hammond & McLaughlin, 1995; Louis et al.,

1996). Teachers need time to reflect on their practice, develop new understandings and

knowledge about content, pedagogy, and student learning (Darling-Hammond & McLaughlin,

1995). Creating professional learning communities within schools and districts can provide a

resource for teachers to collaborate with other professionals in a constructive environment

(Kruse & Louis, 1999; Little, 1990; Louis et al., 1996). Equipping these learning communities with teacher leaders can support the collaborative culture needed to make these learning communities successful and focused on student learning.

The term *teacher leader* has no universally agreed upon definition (Kelley, 2011; Margolis & Huggins, 2012; Muijs & Harris, 2006). In May 2011, the Teacher Leader Model Standards were released in Washington D.C. Rather than providing a definition or job description for teacher leaders, these standards outline the functions of a teacher leader using seven domains of leadership. The standards are intended to identify functions of teacher leaders, promote teacher leadership as an opportunity to transform schools into the 21st century, and support teachers within leadership roles (Teacher Leader Model Standards website, 2012, Standards Overview section, para. 1). A study by Shelton (2014) found developing leaders in the Teacher Leader Model Standards leads to an increased level of confidence in the teacher leaders themselves. Additional research shows that teachers participating in a preparation program in order to develop teacher leader skills felt more prepared to execute the functions of a teacher leader (Ross et al., 2011; Shelton, 2014; Taylor, Yates, Meyer, & Kinsella, 2011; Vernon-Dotson & Floyd, 2012).

The Teacher Leader Model Standards that outline highly effective leaders are organized into seven domains. Domain one of the standards includes fostering a collaborative culture to support educator development and student learning; domain two includes assessing and using research to improve practice and student learning; domain three includes promoting professional learning for continuous improvement; domain four includes facilitating improvements in instruction and student learning; domain five includes promoting the use of assessments and data for school and district improvement; domain six includes improving outreach and collaboration

25

with families and community; and domain seven includes advocating for student learning and the profession (Teacher Leader Models Standards website, 2012).

Domain One

Domain one highlights the teacher leader's ability to foster a collaborative culture that supports educator development and student learning. A study by Kilinc (2014) found fostering a collaborative school climate to be significantly related to teacher leadership. Kilinc used the following components of school climate as predictors of teacher leadership: supportiveness, directiveness, restrictiveness, and intimacy. Additionally, Muijs and Harris' (2006) research identifies five dimensions of teacher leadership which include shared decision-making, collaboration, active participation, professional learning, and activism. Ghamrawi's (2010) study found subject leaders were able to establish teacher leadership roles by focusing on crafting cultures within departments that built a sense of common purpose, generated energy, and in which relationships were respectful and trusting. Kelley's (2011) study of teachers' and teacher leaders' perceptions of the formal role of teacher leadership found that teachers felt that communication and collaboration as well as working with teacher leaders as peers was of key importance.

Five functions of the teacher leader are identified for domain one. The first function describes the teacher leader as a promoter of collective responsibility by utilizing group processes to help colleagues solve problems, make decisions, manage conflict, and promote change while maintaining a focus on student learning (Teacher Leader Models Standards website, 2012, The Standards: Domain 1 section). A study by Louis et al. (1996) found the lack of opportunity to openly discuss fundamental and troublesome issues undermined people's

willingness to work together on school matters. Teacher leaders must develop a culture where such discussions can take place in a constructive manner. The development of professional learning communities can provide the platform needed for teachers to engage in collective problem solving and decision making.

A professional learning community consists of a collaborative team that operates interdependently to achieve common goals that are directly related to the purpose of learning (DuFour et al., 2006). DuFour et al. (2006) explained the importance of building consensus within a professional learning community in order to engage teachers in a process. Teacher leaders must remember the importance of consensus building by not trying to sell colleagues on beliefs and ideas, but rather by developing a commitment and collective responsibility through open dialogue. DuFour et al. (2006) stressed the importance for understanding the purpose of collaboration by questioning what teachers are collaborating about. Collaboration should be centered on helping all students achieve at higher levels thus developing a collective responsibility for that learning.

Research shows that professional learning communities contribute to the development of shared responsibility for student learning (Darling-Hammond & McLaughlin, 1995; DuFour et al., 2006; Hirsh, 2009; Kruse & Louis, 1999; Louis et al., 1996). To promote collective responsibility, teacher leaders develop professional learning communities and establish norms for collaboration to engage colleagues in the work. Little (1990) referred to this type of collaboration as joint work. Joint work includes the shared responsibility for the work of teaching that is grounded in professionalism; collective autonomy rather than isolation; and support for initiative and leadership with regard to professional practice. Challenging traditional norms of isolation, professional learning communities create a collaborative culture in which

colleagues participate in peer reviews and coaching, examine curriculums, identify problems of

practice, and participate in the assessment of students (Darling-Hammond & McLaughlin, 1995).

The second function of the teacher leader in domain one is to model effective skills in

shared, open dialogue, and identifying needs of all participants to advance shared goals and

professional learning (Teacher Leader Models Standards website, 2012, The Standards: Domain

1 section). Kruse and Louis (1999) identified five conditions that emphasize the need for

collective responsibility within learning communities. These include shared norms and values,

reflective dialogue, de-privatization of practice, collective focus on student learning, and

collaboration. Vernon-Dotson and Floyd (2012) found that teachers participating in a

professional learning community saw value in collective efficacy. Teachers identified collective

efficacy as the belief that faculty and staff have the ability to achieve important goals,

specifically those related to instructional practices. Identifying communication structures and

processes in the form of meeting norms supports the teacher leader in establishing and modeling

dialogue that encourages professional growth and supports the five conditions of learning

communities. Additionally, relational trust grounded in social respect must be supported and

modeled by the teacher leader (Bryk & Schneider, 2003).

The third function in fostering a collaborative culture identifies the teacher leader as one

that employs facilitation skills to create trust, develop collective wisdom, build responsibility and

action that supports student learning (Teacher Leader Models Standards website, 2012, The

Standards: Domain 1 section). Teacher leaders must garner a great deal of trust from colleagues

to develop this collaborative culture and participation in joint work (Little, 1990). Bryk and

Schneider (2003) found collective decision making with strong teacher commitment occurs more

readily in schools with strong relational trust, while, in contrast, the absence of trust provokes

sustained controversy around resolving problems. Research pinpoints trust and respect as a

structural condition necessary to create a supportive learning community and for developing

commitment and a shared focus on student learning (Kruse & Louis, 1999; Muijs & Harris,

2006). Additionally, Kruse and Louis (1999) noted communication structures and processes as a

necessary condition to create a supportive learning community. Establishing professional norms

for collaboration such as meeting regularly, creating a focused agenda on teaching and learning

to guide collaboration, providing opportunities for discussion, and personal and professional

growth experiences can aid the teacher leader in developing relational trust and productive

collaboration within a group.

The fourth and fifth functions of a teacher leader within domain one include creating an

inclusive culture where diverse perspectives are welcomed, and using knowledge and

understanding of different backgrounds, ethnicities, cultures, and languages to promote effective

communication among colleagues. Senge, Roberts, Ross, & Smith (1994) offered suggestions to

assist professional learning communities in creating an inclusive culture that promotes effective

dialogue known as Protocols for Effective Advocacy and Protocols for Effective Inquiry.

Protocols for Advocacy include stating assumptions; describing reasoning; giving concrete

examples; revealing personal perspectives and considering perspectives of others;

acknowledging areas of uncertainty; and inviting others to question personal assumptions and

conclusions. Protocols for Effective Inquiry include gently probing underlying logic; using

nonaggressive language; drawing out others' thinking; checking for understanding; and

explaining personal reasoning for inquiry.

While each domain of the Teacher Leader Model Standards supports various facets of

teacher leadership, research continually refers to domain one: fostering a collaborative culture to

support educator development and student learning (Bryk & Schneider, 2003; Darling-Hammond & McLaughlin, 1995; Ghamrawi, 2010; Kelley, 2011; Kilinc, 2014; Kruse & Louis, 1999; Little, 1990; Louis et al., 1996; Muijs & Harris, 2006; Shelton, 2014; Vernon-Dotson & Floyd, 2012; York-Barr & Duke, 2004). Shelton (2014) provided an explanation for this. He also found the importance of a collaborative culture throughout all domains of the Teacher Leader Model Standards. Shelton noted that without creating and maintaining a collaborative culture, facilitating the functions outlined within the other domains would not be possible.

Domain Two

Domain two of the standards includes assessing and using research to improve practice and student learning. The role of the teacher leader within domain two is to keep abreast of current research about effective teaching and student learning, as well as implementing best practices (Teacher Leader Model Standards website, 2012, The Standards: Domain 2 section). Professional communities can support the implementation of new ideas and beliefs by studying practice and research together (Darling-Hammond & Richardson, 2009; DuFour et al., 2006). Four functions of the teacher leader are identified for domain two. First, the teacher leader must assist colleagues in accessing and using research in order to select appropriate strategies to improve student learning (Teacher Leader Model Standards website, 2012, The Standards: Domain 2 section). A review of literature on professional learning communities refers to this work as the development of study groups (Darling-Hammond & Richardson, 2009; DeFour, 1997; Maloney, Moore, & Taylor, 2011; Wei, Darling-Hammond, Andree, Richardson, & Orphanos, 2009). Within study groups, teachers collectively agree upon a topic of interest to study, research the topic, discuss its application, and share questions and concerns as they

experiment (DeFour, 1997).   The teacher leader has the role of facilitating this work by guiding

teachers through collecting and analyzing data, applying new practices and strategies, and

reflecting on the process and implications.

Drill, Miller, and Behrstock-Sherratt (2013) conducted two related studies to address the

disconnect between researchers and practitioners; namely to explore teachers' reactions to using

research to improve instructional practices and student learning. Their findings suggest that

teachers are more likely to use research when it is filtered to them by fellow educators, and when

it is presented in a way that is convenient and directly tied to teachers' personal classroom issues

(Drill et al., 2013). Teacher leaders can use the recommendations presented by the researches

when facilitating the use of research in professional learning, mentoring, and coaching activities.

For teachers to use and understand research based practices within their classrooms, teacher

leaders need to summarize the key elements of the research and provide specific examples of

how the research can be applied to real classroom situations. Drill et al. recommended that

research findings should be presented in a straightforward manner, limiting research jargon as

appropriate. Teacher leaders should emphasize how the research findings can help teachers

solve specific classroom problems or address students' particular learning needs. Positive

attributes associated with the implementation of the research should be highlighted. Finally,

teacher leaders must be clear about the context of the study and how it applies to different grade

levels, ability levels, socioeconomic levels, class sizes, behavior, and culture.

Second, the teacher leader must facilitate and support the analysis of student data,

collaborative interpretation of results, and application of findings to improve teaching and

learning (Teacher Leader Model Standards website, 2012, The Standards: Domain 2 section).

DuFour et al. (2006) note data alone will not inform a teacher's professional practice. For data

to become a catalyst for improvement, data need to be put in context to provide a basis for comparison. Barriers teachers face in using and collaborating about data include lack of proper training (DuFour et al., 2006; Holcomb, 2004), lack of time (DuFour et al., 2006; Holcomb, 2004), limited amount of data (Holcomb, 2004) or data overload (DuFour et al., 2006; Holcomb, 2004), fear of evaluation, fear or exposure, and confusing a technical problem with a cultural problem (Holcomb, 2004). Teacher leaders face the challenge of addressing these barriers to support the collaborative process and improve teaching and learning. One way to combat these barriers is to maximize existing resources and coordinate purposeful professional learning activities (Holcomb, 2004) that support teacher training and understanding about using and analyzing data. Additionally, teacher leaders can address the fears of evaluation and exposure by approaching the collaboration with a partnership philosophy where they work together to discover answers to challenges present within the data (Knight, 2007).

Third, the teacher leader supports colleagues in collaborating with higher education institutions and other organizations engaged in researching critical educational issues (Teacher Leader Model Standards website, 2012, The Standards: Domain 2 section). Teacher leaders may do this by enrolling in university coursework that gives exposure to contemporary research (Wiggins & McTighe, 2007), or participating in grant funded professional development activities sponsored by higher education institutions and other organizations.

Domain Three

Domain three of the standards includes promoting professional learning for continuous improvement. Research shows that the quality of professional learning will influence its results (Darling-Hammond & McLaughlin, 1995; Darling-Hammond & Richardson, 2009; Killion,

2014b). According to this domain, the teacher leader understands teaching and learning is an evolving process, and designs and facilitates professional development opportunities aligned to school improvement goals. A consensus among researchers shows professional development can have a significant impact on teaching practices and student learning if it is intensive; sustained over time; embedded in teachers' day-to-day work in schools; directly related to teachers' work with students; able to engage teachers in active learning of the content and how to teach that content; coherent with district policies related to curriculum, instruction, and assessment; and structured to regularly engage teachers in local professional learning communities where problems of practice are solved through collaboration (Wei, Darling-Hammond, & Adamson, 2010).

There are eight functions of the teacher leader outlined in domain three. These functions are thoroughly supported through literature.   The first function of the teacher leader is to collaborate with school administrators and colleagues to design differentiated professional learning experiences that are linked to improvement goals (Teacher Leader Model Standards website, 2012, The Standards: Domain 3 section). Professional development has been found more effective when integrated with school improvement rather than approached in isolation (Darling-Hammond & Richardson, 2009). High quality professional development rejects passive "sit and get" workshops with little or no follow-up (Vernon-Dotson & Floyd, 2012).

The second function of the teacher leader in domain three is to facilitate varied and differentiated professional learning among colleagues while using information about adult learning to meet diverse needs (Teacher Leader Model Standards website, 2012, The Standards: Domain 3 section). Teachers, like students, learn content in a variety of ways. Guskey and Yoon's (2009) research synthesis corroborates the National Staff Development Council, noting

the most effective professional development is the adaptation of varied practices to specific content, processes, and contexts. In other words, structural features of professional development activities should be determined by content and context.

The third function of the teacher leader in domain three is to facilitate professional learning among colleagues (Teacher Leader Model Standards website, 2012, The Standards: Domain 3 section). A study by Hickey and Harris (2005) suggested that teachers have positive feelings from professional development led by peers. Darling-Hammond and McLaughlin (1995) described effective professional development as providing teachers the opportunity to participate in development that involves them as both teachers and learners, as well as allow for productive struggles that accompany each role. With this in mind, teacher leaders facilitate learning for colleagues by engaging teachers in concrete tasks of teaching, assessment, observation, and reflection; grounding learning in inquiry, reflection, and experimentation; collaborating, involving a sharing of knowledge, and focusing on communities of practice rather than individuals; directly connecting professional learning to impacting student learning; sustaining ongoing intensive development and support through modeling, coaching, and collectively solving problems of practice; and connecting learning to the school's strategic plan (Darling-Hammond & McLaughlin, 1995). Using these characteristics of effective professional development can aid the teacher leader in facilitating professional learning among colleagues.

The fourth function of the teacher leader is to identify and use appropriate technologies to promote collaborative and differentiated professional learning (Teacher Leader Model Standards website, 2012, The Standards: Domain 3 section). Technological advances in the 21st century have provided many new opportunities for teachers to collaborate. Teacher leaders must stay abreast of these technologies and consider their use for facilitating professional development.

While online professional learning research continues to develop, a recent study examining two modalities of professional development, face-to-face and online learning, demonstrated no significant differences between the two modalities for teacher learning necessary for early-stage adoption of a defined curriculum program (Killion, 2014a).   Although this study provides insight into using both face-to-face and online professional development for curriculum adoption, the study does not provide evidence that professional learning for all purposes is equally effective with both modalities. It is important therefore that teacher leaders consider the appropriate platform for collaboration and professional development.

The fifth function of the teacher leader is to utilize data related to the quality of professional learning and its effect on teacher and student learning (Teacher Leader Model Standards website, 2012, The Standards: Domain 3 section). Desimone's (2009; 2011) analysis of empirical research, as supported by Kang, Cha, and Ha (2013), suggested a consensus on the main features of professional development associated with changes in knowledge, practice, and student achievement. To assess the effectiveness of professional development, Desimone suggested we measure for these common features that research shows are related to desired outcomes. These features of effective professional development include: content focus on subject matter and how students learn that content; active learning where teachers have opportunities to observe and receive feedback, conduct analysis of student work, and participate through presentations as opposed to lecture formats; coherence with knowledge and beliefs, and school, district, and state policies; scheduled over a period of time and include a minimum of 20 hours of contact time; and collective participation where groups of teachers build an interactive learning community (Desimone, 2011).

It is important to remember the presence of these five core features of professional development will not measure effectiveness of the professional development. Desimone (2009; 2011) also found a consensus among researchers on the core features of a conceptual framework that could be used to assess the quality and effect of professional development on teacher and student learning. The conceptual framework for successful professional development is a four step process. First, the teachers experience professional development. Second, the professional development increases teachers' knowledge and skills, and changes their attitudes and beliefs. Third, teachers use their new knowledge, skills, attitudes, and beliefs to improve the content of their instruction or approach to pedagogy. Finally, the instructional changes that teachers introduce to the classroom boost their students' learning. In order to use this framework to assess effectiveness, teacher leaders would need to choose the evaluation tool most appropriate. Killion's (2014b) study demonstrated change in teacher knowledge and practice can be observed and measured using the appropriate instrumentation. Observations, interviews, and surveys can serve as instruments for measuring the quality of professional development.

The sixth function of the teacher leader is to advocate for sufficient time and support for colleagues to engage in professional learning (Teacher Leader Model Standards website, 2012, The Standards: Domain 3 section). Research supports professional development that is intensive, coherent, and sustained over time (Cohen & Hill, 2001; Desimone, 2009; Garet, Desimone, Birman, & Yoon, 2001; Guskey & Yoon, 2009; Supovitz et al., 2000; Weiss & Pasley, 2007). Guskey and Yoon (2009) found professional learning consisting of 30 or more contact hours yielded positive effects. Their analysis suggested effective professional development requires considerable time that is well organized, carefully structured, purposefully directed, and focused on content or pedagogy. Hirsh (2009) noted the length and focus on

professional development serve as a factor on impacting teaching quality and student achievement.

The seventh function of the teacher leader is to provide constructive feedback to colleagues to strengthen teaching practices and improve student learning (Teacher Leader Model Standards website, 2012, The Standards: Domain 3 section). Feedback to colleagues should be focused, specific, and constructive (Westerberg, 2013). Guskey and Yoon (2009) found positive improvements in student learning included significant amounts of structured and sustained follow-up after professional learning took place. This supports the research of Marzano (2003), who found two specific characteristics of feedback that support learning to be timeliness and focused on content. Focused feedback includes feedback that is centered on a limited number of specific aspects or indicators of teacher performance, and connects specific teacher and student evidence from classroom observations to words and phrases in the evaluation rubric (Westerberg, 2013). Specific feedback emphasizes how strategies are used, focuses on evidence rather than interpretation, and includes both teacher and student evidence. Westerberg provided the following research-based characteristics of constructive feedback that contributes to sustained and significant teacher improvement: it is a professional dialogue and sharing of views and perspectives; encourages self-assessment, data collection, and reflection; helps the teacher construct options for using feedback to adjust or improve practice; provides a formative assessment by providing the teacher with a sense of where his or her practice falls on the continuum; provides small-step action recommendations that give teachers clear direction; promotes a focused and deliberate practice; and accommodates tracking of progress and recognizing growth.

The eighth function of the teacher leader is to use information about emerging education, economic, and social trends in planning and facilitating professional learning (Teacher Leader Model Standards website, 2012, The Standards: Domain 3 section). The teacher leader does this by keeping abreast of current research on teaching and learning; enhancing professional skills; and engaging in action research (Wiggins & McTighe, 2007). Wiggins and McTighe suggested that teachers have many resources to help them keep current with relevant research and best practices on teaching. Some include enrolling in university courses that expose teachers to contemporary research literature; membership in professional organizations; and attending regional, state, and national conferences. By staying connected to current research, teacher leaders are able to bridge that connection with their colleagues and into classrooms.

Domain Four

Domain four of the standards includes facilitating improvements in instruction and student learning. This domain describes the teacher leader as having a deep understanding of teaching and learning that demonstrates a continued, reflective practice (Teacher Leader Model Standards website, 2012, The Standards: Domain 4). Six functions are identified within this domain. The first function of the teacher leader within this domain is to facilitate the collection, analysis, and use of data to identify opportunities for improving curriculum, instruction, assessment, school organization, and school culture (Teacher Leader Model Standards website, 2012, The Standards: Domain 4). This work must begin by building a partnership mindset which is built around principles of equality, choice, voice, dialogue, reflection, praxis, and reciprocity (Knight, 2007). Additionally, Wiggins & McTighe (2007) suggested effective assessment involves a synthesis of valid information from a variety of sources. The collection and analysis

of data should be viewed as a photo album rather than a snapshot. Thus multiple measures should be analyzed to view a photo album of student learning. By approaching the collection and analysis of data from a partnership mindset (Knight, 2007) and considering multiple measures of student learning (Wiggins & McTighe, 2007), teacher leaders can develop a collaborative culture that is focused on improving curriculum, instruction, assessment, and organizational structures and culture that impact student learning (DuFour et al., 2006).

The second function of the teacher leader is to engage in reflective dialogue with colleagues based on observations, student work, and assessment data. The teacher leader connects this dialogue to research-based effective practices (Teacher Leader Model Standards website, 2012, The Standards: Domain 4). Observing and providing feedback are important ways teacher leaders enable teachers to teach with a high degree of fidelity to the research-validated practices (Knight, 2007). Knight referred to reflective dialogue as collaborative explorations of data. During these collaborations, teacher leaders should not assume the role of professional expert, but rather a mutual partner in a learning conversation where both colleagues use data as a point of departure for dialogue.

The third function of the teacher leader is to serve as a mentor, coach, and content facilitator by supporting colleagues' with their reflective practice and professional growth (Teacher Leader Model Standards website, 2012, The Standards: Domain 4). Teacher leaders assume a wide range of roles to support various aspects of education, with the goal of ultimately supporting student learning (Harrison & Killion, 2007). Harrison and Killion provided a sampling of leadership roles teacher leaders assume in order to contribute to school and student success. The roles include, but are not limited to: resource provider, instructional specialist, curriculum specialist, classroom supporter, learning facilitator, mentor, catalyst for change,

school leader, data coach, and learner. The role of mentor for new teachers is a common role for teacher leaders. Within this role, teacher leaders serve as role models and advisors about instruction, curriculum, procedure, practices, and politics.

In addition to serving as mentors to colleagues, teacher leaders also take on the role of coaches. Knight described three types of coaches that can be found in education. Cognitive coaching is a three-phase process in which the teacher leader will partner with a colleague to conduct a preconference, observation, and post conference with the purpose of helping the teacher improve instructional effectiveness (Garmston, 1993).   The ultimate goal of cognitive coaching is to build teacher autonomy, or the ability to self-monitor, self-analyze, and self-evaluate. Another type of coaching that is more specialized is that of literacy or reading coach. Knight (2007) described this form of coaching as having a wide range of responsibilities which includes working mostly with teachers, and sometimes with students, to increase students' literacy skills. The third type of coaching is instructional coaching. Knight referred to instructional coaches as full time professional developers that are located within a school or schools. Instructional coaches work directly with teachers, administrators, and students to ensure research-based instructional practices are being utilized. While literacy or reading coaches specialize in a specific content, instructional coaches focus on a broader range of instructional issues by sharing a variety of effective practices, and through collaboration with teachers to implement research-based interventions.   The broad repertoire needed to fill the responsibilities of an instructional coach should be considered. Gallucci et al. (2010) noted reports that found coaches are viewing their roles as ambiguous, ill defined, and lacking in support. They suggest future research on the professional development of instructional coaches.

As a content or learning facilitator, teacher leaders facilitate professional learning opportunities among colleagues. Through learning with and from one another, teachers are able to focus on what most directly improves student learning (Harrison & Killion, 2007). Professional learning led by a peer could lead to more relevant discussions, focused attention on teachers' classroom work, and break the traditional norm of isolation among teachers. The Kansas University Center for Research on Learning has identified and validated instructional practices that teachers can use to help students learn (Knight, 2007). Their research suggests that instruction is improved when teachers provide an advance organizer for learners; model the thinking involved in the content and processes being learned; ask a variety of high-level questions; and ensure that students are experiencing engaging, meaningful activities Knight, 2007). This research is supported by other researchers and authors in the field (Danielson, 2006; Dougherty, 2012; Marzano, 2003; Marzano, Pickering, & Pollock, 2001; Schlechty, 2011). By providing teachers with professional learning focused on research-based instructional practices, teacher leaders help their colleagues become better prepared to teach their students how to master content.

The fourth function of the teacher leader is to serve as a team leader by harnessing skills, expertise, and knowledge of colleagues to address curricular expectations for student learning (Teacher Leader Model Standards website, 2012, The Standards: Domain 4). Teacher leaders must help the team develop a professional relationship that supports classroom success. This may require the teacher leader to push past their own comfort zone in the interest of strengthening relationships and moving forward (Burgess & Bates, 2009). Additionally, teacher leaders should keep the school's vision and the team's goals at the center of their work and collaboration. As the team leader, teacher leaders must help create a focus on learning.

Professional learning communities do this by clarifying exactly what students are to learn and by monitoring each student's learning on a timely basis (DuFour et al., 2006).

The fifth function of the teacher leader is to use knowledge of existing and emerging technologies to guide colleagues in helping students navigate the Internet, social media, and connect with people and resources around the globe (Teacher Leader Model Standards website, 2012, The Standards: Domain 4). Unfortunately, a study from the National Staff Development Council found a sharp decline in the intensity of professional development on uses of technology for instruction which is due to states and districts reducing overall resources on this type of professional development in order to preserve content-focused learning opportunities (Wei et al., 2010). Sherry and Gibson (2002) suggested a community of support is needed to nurture teacher leaders in staying connected in continuous evolution and growth with technology.

Finally, the teacher leader promotes instructional strategies that address issues of diversity and equity in the classroom to ensure individual student learning needs remain the central focus of instruction (Teacher Leader Model Standards website, 2012, The Standards: Domain 4). Teaching for equity is more than providing students with an equal opportunity to learn. Attention to culture and language is an important part of planning, teaching, and assessing students from diverse backgrounds (Van de Walle, Karp, Lovin, & Bay-Williams, 2014). One obstacle that threatens equity in the classroom is the belief that not all students can learn (Gutierrez, 2002). Guiterrez noted teachers' beliefs seem to be related to the kinds of teaching practices adopted in the classroom. Therefore, if teachers develop the belief that a student cannot learn, teaching practices will support that belief. Teacher leaders can address this obstacle by promoting a belief that all students can and will learn when provided the necessary learning environment and instructional strategies needed to be successful.

<u>Domain Five</u>

Domain five of the standards includes promoting the use of assessments and data for school and district improvement. Within this domain, the role of teacher leader is to be knowledgeable about the design of assessments, both formative and summative; and work with colleagues to analyze data and interpret results to inform goals and to improve student learning (Teacher Leader Model Standards website, 2012, The Standards: Domain 5 section). DuFour (2015) noted the biggest difference in traditional schools and current high performing professional learning communities is their approach to data.

Four functions of the teacher leader within this domain are outlined. The first function is increasing the capacity of colleagues to identify and use multiple assessment tools aligned to standards (Teacher Leader Model Standards website, 2012, The Standards: Domain 5 section). Popham, (2008) noted that many educators and specialists are moving from the traditional term *test* and adopting the term *assessment*. He provided the following working definition for the term *assessment* in an educational context: "Educational assessment is a formal attempt to determine students' status with respect to educational variables of interest" (Popham, 2008, p. 6). Such variables could be students' knowledge, skills, or attitude. Popham (2008) used the term formal in this working definition to emphasize the deliberate effort used to assess a student's status regarding variables.

Teachers must decide what they want to assess and how they want to assess student learning by selecting the appropriate measurement tool (Popham, 2008; Stiggins, Arter, Chappuis, & Chappuis, 2007). Decisions need to be made about norm-referenced or criterion-referenced approaches; selected-response or constructed-response schemes; and item type must be considered (Popham, 2008). Popham suggested classroom teachers mostly use criterion-

reference assessments to show what the student can or cannot do.   Item types consist of binary-choice items, multiple binary-choice items, multiple-choice items, matching items, short-answer items, essay items, observational approaches, performance tests, portfolios, and affective assessment procedures.

The second function of the teacher leader is collaborating with colleagues in the design, implementation, scoring, and interpretation of student data to improve educational practice and student learning (Teacher Leader Model Standards website, 2012, The Standards: Domain 5 section). Assessments should enhance students' learning while also serving as a valuable tool for making instructional decisions (Van de Walle et al., 2014). The analysis of student work and student data are at the center of professional learning communities' joint work (Darling-Hammond & Richardson, 2009). When teacher leaders support joint work that includes formative assessments and analyzing student work, the learning community learns how to find evidence of student learning while also valuing and respecting children as learners (Brookhart & Moss, 2013). While professional learning communities support collaboration, Wiliam and Leahy (2014) cautioned putting process before content. The process in which teacher leaders support colleagues in collaborating about student data should come after deciding what kinds of changes in teaching will make the largest impact on student outcomes. Then professional learning communities can work through the process of securing the changes.

The third function of the teacher leader is creating a climate of trust and critical reflection in order to engage colleagues in challenging conversations about student learning data (Teacher Leader Model Standards website, 2012, The Standards: Domain 5 section). School and district structures, leadership, and policy norms are associated with teachers' use of data practices with students (Marsh, Farrell, & Bertrand, 2016). Teachers will be exposed to state and federal

accountability messages, and district policies that shape data-use practices and beliefs (Farrell, Marsh, & Bertrand, 2015), so it is vital for teacher leaders to clarify how data can truly support student learning and instructional practices. Farrell et al. (2015) found a potential disconnect between policy-level discourse and practice around data use, and practitioner-level discourse and practice around teaching, learning, and student motivation. Based on their research, Farrell et al (2015) offered suggestions for leaders to consider when engaging teachers and students about data. First, consider how school or district policies are framing messages around data for teachers and if that message translates to a mastery or performance orientation. Secondly, consider whether policies and programs emphasize the value of performance or the value of growth. The teacher leader has the unique role of clarifying mixed messages teachers receive about using data to support student learning. To engage teachers in discourse about data, teacher leaders need to create a climate of trust (Bryk & Schneider, 2003), as well as educating colleagues on how to use data to support student learning.

The fourth function of the teacher leader is working with colleagues to use assessment and data results to promote changes in instructional practices or organizational structures to improve student learning (Teacher Leader Model Standards website, 2012, The Standards: Domain 5 section). A continual evaluation of practices and data produces actions that lead to sustained improvement rather than incremental or no improvement (Hirsh, 2009). This continual evaluation can only take place by analyzing evidence of student learning. Formative and summative assessments can serve as evidence of student learning. Summative assessments are used as cumulative evaluations while formative assessments are used to determine where students are in their learning and where they are going. Formative assessments provide ongoing data about teaching practices and student learning. Information from formative assessments are

used to provide feedback and make decisions about instructional steps and practices (Van de Walle et al., 2014), and organizational structures.

Domain Six

Domain six of the standards includes improving outreach and collaboration with families and community. Within this domain, the teacher leader understands the impact that families, cultures, and communities have on student learning, and they work with colleagues to promote collaboration for improvement and to expand opportunities for student learning (Teacher Leader Model Standards website, 2012, The Standards: Domain 6 section). Holcomb's (1995) research found that participation by community members seems to drop off after the mission is written and goals are set (as cited in Holcomb, 2004). Therefore the role of the teacher leader to improve this outreach is vitally important. Improvement and change in schools can take place when stakeholders are committed and involved. Families, community members, business and community leaders, and other stakeholders need to be connected to schools and be aware of what is happening in classrooms (Reagle, 2006).

Functions of the teacher leader within this domain are to use knowledge and understanding of diverse ethnicities, cultures, and backgrounds to promote effective interactions; model and teach effective communication and collaboration skills with families and other stakeholders; facilitate colleagues' self-examination and development of culturally responsive strategies; develop a shared understanding among colleagues of the diverse educational needs of families and the community; and collaborate with all stakeholders to develop comprehensive strategies to address the diverse needs of families and the community (Teacher Leader Models Standards website, 2012, The Standards: Domain 6 section).

Domain Seven

Domain seven of the standards includes advocating for student learning and the profession. Within this domain, the teacher leader understands the landscape of education policy and can identify key players at the local, state, and national levels. Additionally, the teacher leader advocates for student needs and for practices that support effective teaching that increases student learning (Teacher Leader Model Standards website, 2012, The Standards: Domain 7 section). Hirsh (2010) described frustrations teachers often feel about educational policies and issues. These include lack of funding from districts and legislatures, and lack of support from parents, administrators, directors of schools, and state and local boards (Hirsh, 2010). Teacher leaders can offer support and encouragement by helping teachers' find their voice and power. Hirsh (2010) recommended being visible at events where policy makers speak; inviting policy makers from all levels into the classroom, school, and district; working with other professionals that influence policy makers and share views on education; being respectful and appreciative; being knowledgeable about issues through research; and offering solutions.

Functions of the teacher leader within this domain include: sharing information with colleagues about educational policies and trends that impact classroom practices and expectations for student learning; working with colleagues to identify and use research to advocate for the teaching and learning processes; collaborating with colleagues to select appropriate opportunities to advocate for the rights and needs of students, secure additional resources that supports student learning, and communicate effectively with targeted audiences; advocating for access to professional resources; and representing and advocating for the profession in contexts outside the classroom (Teacher Leader Models Standards website, 2012).

Teacher Leader Preparation

The roles and functions of teacher leaders as outlined by the Teacher Leader Model Standards are not meant to serve as a comprehensive job description for teacher leaders, but rather a guiding framework of functions that a teacher leader might perform within his or her area of expertise (Teacher Leader Models Standards website, 2012, Standards Overview section). While model standards have been established, the question of preparing and maintaining teachers to serve in these leadership capacities arises (Muijs & Harris, 2006). The Teacher Leader Exploratory Consortium (2011) provided supporting strategies to prepare and encourage teachers to assume leadership roles. These strategies include developing teacher leaders' skills during their preparation and clinical practice phase; preparing teachers who wish to serve as teacher leaders in adult learning theory; providing ongoing professional development to experienced teachers in how to access research about effective teaching practice; providing supportive environments in schools that encourages teachers to serve in informal leadership roles; creating teacher leadership academies that support formal teacher leadership roles; providing teacher leaders with training, supervision, and support; developing and support teacher leadership networks to provide support, collaboration, and continuous professional development across schools and districts; encouraging higher education institutions to prepare teachers to assume differentiated roles as part of a shared leadership structure; redesigning principal preparation programs to support the establishment of a school culture in which the development of shared leadership and potential of teacher leadership is fostered; and providing professional development to administrators and school board members in how to create and support teacher leadership in schools (Teacher Leadership Exploratory Consortium, 2011).

Upon review of the Teacher Leadership Exploratory Consortium's outline of supporting strategies, the question then surrounds the use of these supporting strategies in preparing teacher leaders. As research on the phenomenon of teacher leadership continues to develop, a few studies can give insight into the preparation of teacher leaders to support the application of functions outlined in the Teacher Leader Model Standards and supporting suggestions provided by the Teacher Leadership Exploratory Consortium (2011).

Kingsly (2012) described the efforts of California's Palmdale School District in strengthening professional learning communities by strengthening teacher leadership through use of a teacher leadership academy. The vision of the teacher leadership academy was to invest in training teachers to be leaders, specifically instructional leaders for their grade level or subject area. Through the leadership academy, Palmdale found leadership to be contagious and the results to be powerful. In addition to the teacher leadership academy, Palmdale provided follow-up support to teacher leaders, referred to as follow-up coaching. In response to the teacher leadership academy and follow-up coaching, professional learning communities in Palmdale underwent some structural changes. Professional learning community collaborations were happening more regularly with agendas and meeting norms, and they focused their work on reviewing data from common assessments and sharing ideas about how to improve instructional practices.

Similarly, Hickey and Harris (2005) explored the idea of teachers as leaders by studying a rural district as they implemented teachers as presenters during a district professional development. Results of the study showed using teachers as leaders provided benefits for the rural district, although the impact of the professional development itself was not explored. Based on the results, Hickey and Harris proposed considering the following recommendations to

encourage the growth of teachers as leaders: identify teacher strengths; match teacher strengths to professional development needs; develop professional development programs with these strengths and needs in mind; provide teachers with time to prepare for their presentation; provide opportunities for informal presentations to reduce anxiety and stress of presenting; and provide time throughout the year to take advantage of collaborative opportunities.

While professional development is a recurring theme in research associated with teacher leadership, the focus should first be on the culture of the school and district. A fundamental change to support the development of teachers as leaders needs to take place before professional development on leadership is implemented. Muijs and Harris (2007) presented three case studies that highlight the varying degrees of teacher leadership in action. Their findings provide key conditions or requirements for supporting teacher leadership and the development of implementing teachers as leaders into practice. Muijs and Harris found teacher leadership was most effective when the structure and culture of the school changed in a strategic way. Their data suggested in order for teacher leadership to be successful, a fundamental cultural shift in the vision and values of the organization need to take place, and teacher leadership needs to be deeply embedded in the culture of the school. Ringler, O'Neal, Rawls, and Cumiskey (2013) also found the school leader to be an important factor in the development of teacher leadership. The lack of a structural and cultural shifts serves as a main barrier for teacher leadership (Muijs & Harris, 2007; Ross et al., 2011). Additional barriers to the development of teacher leadership include poor leadership from the head teacher or school leader, lack of professional development, attitudes of teachers, and lack of time for development and collaboration (Muijs & Harris, 2007).

Teacher leadership can include formal and informal roles, so it is no surprise that teacher leaders are developed in formal and informal ways. The research of Ross et al. (2011) supports the formal development of teacher leadership within graduate programs. In this study, data supported the shift teachers made in their frames of reference relating to teaching and the view of themselves as autonomous professionals, as well as the frames of reference related to leadership. Through the formal preparation program, teachers learned how to question and make judgements about the value of data which led to more confidence in making instructional decisions. Additionally, Ross et al. found within the formal preparation program, principals indicated teachers developed confidence in locating information to improve practice, as well as demonstrated a professional autonomy to take and justify a professional stance about teaching and learning. In the formal leadership programs, teachers took on formal leadership roles in their schools. They felt equipped to take on these roles because they adopted a leadership stance and viewed student learning as a communal responsibility. While this is a study of one program designed to develop current practicing teachers into teacher leaders, Ross et al. suggested the results strengthen the rationale for structure in the transformation of teachers as leaders.

A more recent study of the Arizona Master Teachers of Mathematics (AZ-MTM) program found several important themes that can inform efforts in developing teacher leaders (Felton & Page, 2014). The goal of AZ-MTM was to support the development of a single cohort of fourteen teacher leaders over a sustained period of time. AZ-MTM recruited expert teachers that were ready to transition into leadership roles in their schools and districts to participate in the extensive four year program. The fourteen teachers were comprised of elementary and early middle school mathematics teachers. The two strands of the program included the professional development apprenticeship (PDA) and the teacher study group (TSG). The PDA was designed

to develop expertise in designing and implementing professional development, taking on leadership roles, and working with adult learners. The TSG was designed to strengthen pedagogical knowledge, deepen content knowledge for teaching, study research on mathematics education, and support teachers in learning about issues of equity and social justice. Themes emerging through this program to support future development programs include professional development that focuses on transitioning teachers from learners to leaders; practicums to support collaboration and experience; engagement in leadership activities; keeping programs connected to issues of practice in the classroom and in leadership activities; and selecting highly motivated, experience teachers to participate (Felton & Page, 2014).

An empirical study of teacher leadership in the UK provides evidence that points toward positive outcomes associated with different forms of teacher leadership. The main factors that enhanced the development of teacher leadership in this case study include a supportive culture, supportive structures, strong leadership (from school leader or headteacher), commitment to action inquiry and data richness, innovative forms of professional development, coordinated improvement efforts, high levels of teacher participation and involvement, collective creativity, shared professional practice, recognition and reward (Muijs & Harris, 2006). Researchers caution claiming the data support a relationship between teacher leadership and school and student level outcomes, as not enough is known.

<u>Impact of Effective Teacher Leadership</u>

What impact does teacher leadership have on teaching and learning? York-Barr and Duke (2004) completed an extensive empirical study of 2 decades worth of research and literature on teacher leadership. They found most of the research to be descriptive instead of

explanatory, and argument and rationale based rather than evidence based when it comes to analyzing how teacher leadership might influence improvement. What they did find was that developing trusting and collaborative relationships is the primary means by which teacher leaders influence colleagues; teacher leadership focused on classroom level practice is likely to show student effects more readily than work focused at the organizational level; and the most consistent documented positive effects of teacher leadership are on the teacher leaders themselves with less empirical evidence supporting student, collegial, and school-level effects (York-Barr & Duke, 2004). Therefore, the impact of teacher leadership has not been supported with direct evidence, but does show indirect impacts it can have on student learning.

More recent research has identified the positive, indirect impact teacher leadership can have on teaching and learning (Darling-Hammond & Richardson, 2009; Heck & Hallinger, 2009; Heck & Hallinger, 2010; Muijs, 2011). Teacher leaders indirectly impact student learning by facilitating professional development and promoting increased use of effective teaching strategies (Darling-Hammond & Richardson, 2009; Desimone, 2009; Desimone, 2011; Guskey & Yoon, 2009; Hickey & Harris, 2005; Supovitz et al., 2000); and through the development of positive school and district culture through promotion of distributed leadership (Hallinger, 2011; Heck & Hallinger, 2009; Kilinc, 2014; Vernon-Dotson & Floyd, 2012). While these indirect impacts can provide suggestive frameworks for school improvement, additional, more current research is needed to assess the impact teacher leadership has on teaching and learning.

Chapter Summary

There are three theoretical approaches to leadership that are closely aligned to the concept of teacher leadership. Transformational leadership is the process by which the leader

engages followers, develops relationships that increase motivation and morality, transforms the organization, and is also transformed in the process. Distributed leadership is a form of leadership in which individuals collaborate to maximize leadership capacity within and across the organization. An example of distributed leadership is team leadership. Team leadership includes an interdependent group that shares common goals, and coordinates their activities to accomplish goals. Finally, instructional leadership focuses on pedagogy, instruction, and the teaching and learning process by promoting approaches to factors that influence teaching and learning; monitoring teaching; and providing professional development with a focus on teaching and learning. Teacher leaders use a variety of leadership approaches to carry out the functions outlined by the Teacher Leader Model Standards.

The Teacher Leader Model Standards organize teacher leadership into seven domains. The domains describe the teacher leaders as: fostering a collaborative culture to support educator development and student learning; accessing and using research to improve practice and student learning; promoting professional learning; facilitating improvement in instruction and student learning; promoting the use of assessments and data for school and district improvement; and improving outreach and collaboration with families and community. Each domain outlines functions of the teacher leader that are embedded in supportive research (Teacher Leader Models Standards website, 2012).

When reviewing literature associated with the preparation of teacher leaders, a number of barriers were identified such as lack of professional learning and on-going support for teacher leaders; time; cultural and structural barriers from the school or district leaders; and defined roles and expectations. Research suggests formal teacher leader preparation programs could combat some, but not all, of these barriers. Furthermore, research on the impact of teacher leadership on

teaching and learning is outdated, theoretical, and suggestive. Additional research on the use and

development of teachers as leaders and the impact teacher leaders have on teaching and learning

is needed.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to analyze the teacher leader model plans submitted by districts within the Tennessee Teacher Leader Network in order to assess the impact the model has on district practices and policies. Is the model positively or negatively influencing the teaching and learning of students? To address this question, the study included a content analysis of the model plans and district strategic plans for participating districts in Tennessee. A grounded theory qualitative methodology was utilized to compare models through inductive and deductive analysis. This chapter provides detailed information about the research methodology, including research questions that guided the analysis, data sources, analysis methods, and credibility, truthfulness, and ethical considerations.

Research Questions

The outline and organization of the teacher leader models provided by Tennessee districts guided the development of the following research questions:

RQ1. How do the districts describe the purpose of the teacher leader model?

RQ2. How are roles and responsibilities of teacher leaders similar among the districts?

RQ3. How are roles and responsibilities of teacher leaders different among the districts?

RQ4. How are teacher leaders identified, selected, and retained in each district?

RQ5. In what ways are districts implementing the model plan: What are the functions of
        teacher leaders?

RQ6. What is the framework for communication?

RQ7. How do districts support teacher leaders?

RQ8. How do districts evaluate the teacher leader model?

RQ9. How are districts compensating teacher leaders?

RQ10. How are districts sustaining teacher leaders?

RQ11. What kinds of changes is the model bringing to the district?

Researcher's Role

The researcher serves as the instrument in qualitative inquiry (Patton, 2015). The
researcher of this study has served as a teacher leader within a district that has participated in the
Tennessee Teacher Leader Network. Consequently, the years of experience in serving in this
capacity provided a personal perspective on the role of a teacher leader. Additionally, the
researcher attempted to collect, present, and analyze data in ways that truthfully assess the
impact the models have on district policies and practices. Patton described a principle to follow
to remain truthful and establish credibility when serving as the researcher and instrument. The
researcher has the responsibility to "report any personal and professional information that may
have affected data collection, analysis, and interpretation—either positively or negatively—in the
minds of users of the findings" (p. 700).   The researcher maintained a focus on data to avoid
researcher bias.

Data Sources

There are currently 14 teacher leader models that have been approved and published by
the Tennessee Teacher Leader Network. These models and the districts they represent serve as

the data sources for this study. The districts vary in the number of operating schools, students

served, teachers employed, and demographics of student population. The size of the data sources

includes all districts that have approved models published through the Tennessee Teacher Leader

Network. Districts are referred to as District A through District N throughout the study.

Using a grounded theory qualitative methodology, a content analysis was conducted of

the teacher leader models that have been approved and published by the Tennessee Teacher

Leader Network and district strategic plans. The documents themselves served as the data

sources for this study. The teacher leader model plans have been published in the Teacher Leader

Guidebook and are available for public access. District strategic plans were gathered from

district websites and the Teachers and Leaders Division of the TDOE.

Data Analysis

Data collected from the Tennessee Teacher Leader Network and district strategic plans

were used to develop a qualitative description of findings. An open coding approach was used to

determine themes and similarities as they relate to the Teacher Leader Model Standards adopted

by the Tennessee Board of Education as well as other repeated regularities beyond the standards.

Using an open coding method allowed the researcher to sort and process the raw data to answer

the research questions (Hahn, 2008).

In the initial level of coding, the researcher read through the models and district plans

while creating notes and headings throughout the text using inductive analysis (Elo & Kyngas,

2007). Open coding was the preferred method due to the initial inquiry about the impact the

teacher leader models have on teaching and learning.

The researcher developed initial categories for analysis by rereading the strategic plans. Headings were transferred onto coding sheets and categories were generated (Elo & Kyngas, 2007). After the open coding and category development, thematic coding was used to group categories into themes (Hahn, 2008). The last step in the data analysis was the abstraction process. Abstraction is the process by which categories are refined in order to develop a general description of the research topic. Each category was named and subcategories with similar themes were grouped together as generic categories. Generic categories were then formulated into main categories. This process continued as it was possible and reasonable for the researcher (Elo & Kyngas, 2007). The levels of coding utilized by the researcher provided documented and well organized answers to the research questions (Hahn, 2008).

<center>Credibility, Truthfulness, and Consistency</center>

In qualitative research, validity is viewed as the extent in which data are represented in a credible and truthful manner. Patton (2015) suggested analytical techniques to enhance the credibility of findings. First, he suggested generating and assessing alternative conclusions and explanations. Using an opening coding method allowed the researcher to consider alternative conclusions and explanations by constantly going back into the data using multiple levels of coding. Secondly, Patton suggested using an advocacy-adversary analysis to test the credibility of the conclusions. The researcher considered evidence that positively impacted district practices and policies, as well as evidence that negatively impacted district practices and policies. The dissertation committee served as advocacy and adversary analysts to support the credibility of the findings.

Thirdly, Patton (2015) suggested constantly and consistently comparing the data to look for ways they fit into categories, patterns, and themes as well as data that do not fit. The open coding method utilized supported the process of constant comparative analysis. The data analysis strategy of triangulation also allowed the researcher to analyze data in diverse ways. According to Patton, triangulating multiple data sources allows qualitative analysts to overcome skepticism of using singular methods, lone analysts, and single-perspectives. Analyzing how each district interpreted the state's teacher leader model provided a 14 point cross check to support the truthfulness of the findings.

In qualitative research, reliability is viewed as the extent in which data are consistent. Patton (2015) suggested a way to keep data consistent is to keep connected to the purpose of the inquiry. The researcher used multiple data sources to increase confidence and confirm patterns and themes. The researcher's dissertation committee served as a support in keeping the analysis in context and purpose driven.

Ethical Considerations

Using a content analysis research method, this research study did not involve human subjects. Therefore human safety concerns were eliminated and an IRB approval was not required. Other ethical responsibilities related to the researcher were present. Having been a teacher within one of the 14 districts for seven years, and a teacher leader for 4 years, the researcher had ethical responsibilities to consider during this analysis. The researcher has developed beliefs about teaching, instructing, leading and managing that provide a personalized perspective on leadership. The researcher believes the purpose of leadership is to improve outcomes for all of the participants and future participants of the organization. This study

examines policies and practices designed to support teachers and learners through a teacher leader model. Consequently, it is the researcher's goal to identify and challenge policy elements that may support or interfere with improved outcomes. The findings were developed and analyzed based upon this perspective. They may or may not reflect perceptions shared by others.

Chapter Summary

This chapter describes the roles of the researcher in the research design process, the data sources, and the data analysis methods used in this qualitative study. The purpose of this study was to analyze teacher leader model plans and district strategic plans in order to assess the impact on district practices and policies. Data were collected from approved teacher leader model plans from the Tennessee Teacher Leader Network and from the Teachers and Leaders Division of the TDOE.

CHAPTER 4

ANALYSIS OF DATA

<u>Introduction</u>

The purpose of this study was to assess the impact teacher leader model plans submitted

by districts within the Tennessee Teacher Leader Network have on district practices and policies.

The content analysis of the model plans and district strategic plans of participating districts was

guided by 11 research questions utilizing a grounded theory qualitative methodology. This

chapter provides a detailed analysis of the findings from each research question.

A system of numbers was used to code information found within district teacher leader

models and district strategic plans. These codes were used to sort information into categories

based on the 10 research questions. These categories involved 12 areas which included purpose,

roles and responsibilities, identification, selection, retention, implementation, communication,

support, evaluation, compensation, sustaining, and district changes. Subcategories evolved

within categories. The information reported in this chapter gives a summary of teacher leader

models and supporting district strategic plans from each district in the Teacher Leader Network.

To maintain confidentiality, districts were referred to as District A through District N.

<u>Research Question 1</u>

When analyzing Teacher leader models from each district, four themes emerged when

describing the purpose of the model. These themes included shared leadership, student

achievement, instructional practices, and building capacity.

Research Question 1

How do the districts describe the purpose of the teacher leader model?

Shared Leadership: Districts A, B, C, D, E, I, K, L, M, and N each mentioned shared leadership as one rationale for implementing the teacher leader model in their districts. Districts A and K noted the importance of shared leadership in building a norm that can improve the overall culture of the school. Districts C and D noted the purpose of the teacher leader model for their district was to support the vision of shared leadership. District B noted that opportunities are given through the model for effective teachers to share knowledge and expertise with other educators as well as supporting a shared vision for the district. District E noted one purpose of the model was to provide shared decision making within the district, while District M noted that the model provides opportunities for leadership and an alternate means for leadership without requiring teachers to leave the regular classroom. District I noted that shared leadership is embraced by consistently high performing schools thus providing a purpose for the teacher leader model to be implemented with a vision of shared leadership. Finally, District N refers to teacher leaders as liaisons that share leadership responsibilities.

Student Achievement: Thirteen of the 14 districts mentioned increasing or improving student achievement through implementation of the teacher leader model within their rationale for implementation. Districts A, B, D, E, H, M, and N noted that fostering leadership and supporting initiatives that grow active leaders improve or increase student achievement. District B noted that the model supports individual ownership of student outcomes, and District E similarly noted that the model develops ownership and accountability for student achievement. District F noted that the model provides a focus on improving student learning. Additionally, District G noted the model provides opportunities for teachers to collaboratively plan to improve

student achievement in core content areas, and bridges the gap between teachers and administrators in order to improve student achievement. District I noted the model supports a growth mindset and focus on student achievement and growth, while the influence of teacher leaders creates collaboration, trust, encouragement, and systemic change that ultimately drives student achievement. District J noted the increase in parental involvement activities supported through roles within their district model will support student learning and achievement. Finally, District L noted improving school performance through use of the teacher leader model will build capacity for continuous student growth.

Instructional Practices: Eleven of the 14 districts emphasized the improvement in instructional practices as a purpose for implementing the teacher leader model within their district. Reducing variability in instruction was noted by several districts. The assumption of reducing variability is to have teachers follow a prescriptive instructional plan to improve teaching quality. District A noted the model will serve as a catalyst for change in improving instructional practices by reducing variability in the quality teaching. District B noted the model would develop and retain highly effective staff by improving the skill level of all staff through peer driven professional development. Districts C and D described promoting school culture by inspiring peers to improve instructional practices. District E described the purpose of the model as promoting quality teaching, as well as ensuring continued growth in teaching and the attainment of excellence at all levels. District F noted the focus of teacher effectiveness as an extension of the instructional leadership provided by administrators and a concentrated effort on providing resources to support quality instruction. District H noted the purpose of School Support Teams as providing support to increase teacher effectiveness, as well as ensuring every student is nurtured and challenged by a highly effective teacher in every classroom. District I

noted one purpose of the model was to implement peer-driven professional learning to improve the skill level of all staff members, improve teacher effectiveness, and increase teachers' knowledge and skills to meet the unique and pressing needs of the school and district. District J noted a purpose of implementation was for improved instructional rigor through the use of highly effective teachers sharing proven teaching strategies with peers.

District K described one need for the model to be implemented within the district was that highly effective teachers need professional support and growth opportunities. The district described the model as being strategically utilized to reinforce and refine best practices in order to expand capabilities of all staff members and provide students with high quality teachers. Additionally, District K noted the improvement of the overall culture of the school will increase staff investment. District M noted the model will be evolved with the goal of increasing effectiveness in the district by fostering leadership that increases educator effectiveness.

Building Capacity: Eleven districts mentioned building capacity as a purpose for implementing a teacher leader model within their district. District A noted a purpose of the model was to identify and cultivate teacher leaders to build capacity in others. Districts D, I, L, and N all mentioned building leadership capacity. District F noted the model will foster collaboration, community, and build teacher capacity. District G noted the increase in instructional capacity through implementation of the model, while District H emphasized the support provided for all teachers to build capacity. Districts J, K, L, and M described the model as supporting student achievement and growth, and improving school culture and performance through increased teacher capacity.

Research Question 2

Four themes were uncovered during the analysis of the similarities in roles and responsibilities among teacher leaders. These themes included full-time teachers, curriculum, instruction, and professional learning.

Research Question 2

How are roles and responsibilities of teacher leaders similar among the districts?

Full-Time Teachers: Every district identified a role designated within the teacher leader model that included full-time classroom teaching positions with additional responsibilities. Districts A, B, C, D, F, G, H, I, J, L, M, and N utilized roles within their model plan for only classroom teachers. Districts E and K identified additional roles that include non-classroom teachers.

Curriculum: A focus on curriculum was another theme that emerged during analysis. Seven districts noted roles and responsibilities related to curriculum in some capacity. District A identified the roles of a Curriculum Specialist and Resource Provider. The Curriculum Specialist deconstructs standards at various levels, paces the standards, identifies gaps in learning, and articulates curricular connections within and across content areas. The Resource Provider vets resources for teachers to use with students and professional resources for teacher growth, as well as pilots new curriculum for adoption consideration.

District C described the role of Curriculum and Assessment Building Member as being responsible for developing curriculum and curriculum goals. Similarly, Districts D and G use content leaders to design and create curriculum resources and pacing guides. District F described the role of the Curriculum and Instruction Support Coach as facilitating the alignment of written, taught, and tested curriculum. Districts H and K identified Curriculum Support

Teacher roles and Curriculum Lead Teacher roles, respectively. Within these roles, teachers

redeliver training, support curriculum planning and plan for collaboratives. Additionally,

District K utilized a Curriculum Coordinator to coordinate curriculum and scheduling as well as

facilitate collaboratives, serve as an official observer by providing scores and feedback on the

TEAM model, and coordinate testing.

Instruction: Twelve districts described roles that incorporate responsibilities related to

instructional practices.   District A identified the role of the Instructional Specialist.

Responsibilities of this role include demonstrating effective teaching strategies; communicating

alignment of strategies to standards, assessments, and daily lesson planning; researching current

best practices for classroom instruction; and differentiating practices for the needs of diverse

learners.

Several districts described an instructional coaching or mentoring role. District F

described a Classroom Support Coach position that collaborates planning and teaching to ensure

rigorous instruction of key strategies and techniques. District F also described the Curriculum

and Instruction Support Coach as providing needs-based professional development and subject-

specific instructional strategies, as well as assisting teachers in the selection and implementation

of appropriate instructional practices with the aim of increased student learning and achievement.

District H described two coaching positions that support instructional practices. Instructional

Coaches provide resources and research-based strategies, model effective teaching, implement

reflective practices, analyze data to determine teacher and student needs, and assist with peer-to-

peer observations. The role of the Curriculum Support Teacher also supports instructional

practices by modeling and sharing best practices with colleagues, providing a model classroom

for teacher visits, and serving as a liaison for the respective grade and/or subject regarding state standards, assessments, and instructional resources.

Additionally, Districts I, J, and K described coaching positions to support instructional practices. District I described Instructional Coaches that have responsibilities to improve student achievement by building teachers capacity and understanding of instructional practices through co-planning, modeling, and providing feedback to teachers. Instructional Coaches also support the instructional development of all teachers by focusing on improving instructional quality across a variety of subject areas rather than focusing on content knowledge. District J utilized Subject Area Coaches to provide expertise on subject-area teaching strategies and development of common assessments. District K utilized Instructional Coaching positions to provide classroom and instructional support through informal observations, data collection and distribution, and collaborative data conferencing. Additionally, District K utilized Instructional Mentors that support new or struggling teachers with classroom and instruction by observing informally, providing supportive feedback, models instructional best practices, and conducts after school support sessions.

Districts B, C, and L described roles related to Instructional Leadership. District B described the role of the Instructional Leadership Team Member as aiding in school wide decision making, communicating school vision and expectations, enhancing communication between staff and administration, and assisting in school wide data dissemination. District C described a similar role termed Instructional Leadership Member. Responsibilities of this role include participating in site-based decision making, leading professional development, advocating for collaborative working environments, and influencing positive school change. District C also utilized the role of the Teacher Mentor to advise apprentice and improving

68

teachers, make available instructional resources and assessment practices, and contribute to constructive feedback. District L described the role of the Instructional Leader as a support for school administration; an aide in school-wide decision making; a communicator of school vision and expectations; and an aide in school-wide data dissemination.

Districts D, L, and M described roles related to subject-area instructional specialists. District D utilized math and literacy teacher leaders to research best practices and model instructional best practices. District L utilized Subject Area Coaches to provide support for academics, model best practices, and provide expertise on subject area teaching strategies. District M utilized teacher leaders to facilitate improvements in instruction and student learning through use of instructional specialists and instructional teacher leaders.

District N described a teacher leader role termed Core Instruction. Responsibilities of this role include supporting Tier I core curriculum best practices, supporting and providing guidance regarding scopes of work, supporting academic initiatives, and increasing student outcomes through best practices and data-driven instruction and assessment.

Professional Learning: Twelve districts described a responsibility of teacher leaders within the district include facilitation of professional learning. Some districts designated roles focused directly on this facilitation while other districts embedded the responsibility within other roles. Districts A, B, E, H, and J described roles related specifically to the development of professional learning. District A described the role of the Learning Facilitator as analyzing performance trends to develop a professional learning improvement plan; facilitating professional learning opportunities, and coaching individuals through learning plans. Districts B and J described Lead In-House Professional Developer roles. Responsibilities of this role include developing and designing effective professional development sessions, presenting chosen

69

topics to enhance staff effectiveness, and evaluating professional development sessions to determine ongoing support. District E noted the role of Professional Development Instructor, but did not outline responsibilities. District H described the responsibilities of the PLC Lead Teacher as creating and maintaining PLC norms, agendas, and minutes; and facilitating professional learning sessions.

Other districts embedded the responsibility of facilitating professional learning within in other roles. Districts C and L designated this responsibility to Instructional Leadership Members and Grade Level Department Chairs. Districts D, G, I, and L designated this responsibility to content area teacher leaders. Districts F and K designated this responsibility to Curriculum and Instruction Support Coaches, and Curriculum Lead Teachers, respectively.

<div align="center">Research Question 3</div>

Differences among the roles and responsibilities among teacher leaders within various districts were noted during analysis. These differences included the number of teacher leader roles within districts and the designation of roles and responsibilities within the districts.

Research Question 3

How are roles and responsibilities of teacher leaders different among the districts?

Number of Teacher Leader Roles: The number of teacher leader roles within districts ranged from two to seven designated roles. District D was the only district that had two different teacher leader roles identified within the district's teacher leader model. These roles focused on the content areas of math and literacy. Districts F, H, J, and L designated three different teacher leader roles. The roles focused on curriculum and instructional coaching, academic mentoring, and professional learning. Districts B, C, I, K, M, and N designated four different teacher leader

roles. Districts A and G designated six different roles, while District E designated seven

different teacher leader roles.

Designation of Teacher Leader Roles and Responsibilities: While many of the teacher

leader roles focused on curriculum, instruction, coaching, mentoring, and professional learning,

there were additional roles that were designated by few districts. District A described two

unique positions. First was the Site-Based Induction Specialist. The responsibilities of this role

include acclimating new teachers to the school facilities, processes, and culture; facilitating

induction seminars to bridge gaps in foundational knowledge; monitoring new teacher

interactions for fidelity to district protocols and procedures; and modeling professionalism and

best practices. While other roles in various districts included the responsibility of supporting

new teachers, this role was the only position that solely focused and supported new teachers with

this level of depth. Additionally, District A identified a role termed Catalyst for Change.

Responsibilities of this role include challenging the status quo; leading innovation and change

initiatives; discovering possibilities and inspiring others to attain new goals; and applying

appropriate frameworks, models, and tools to lead, sustain, and monitor change. While these

may be unidentified responsibilities of all teacher leaders, District A was the only district that

focused a role specifically on supporting change.

District E identified seven roles; some being unique to the district. These unique roles

include Multi-Classroom Leader, Community Liaison, All-Star Facilitators, and Demonstration

School Teacher. Unfortunately, the teacher leader model did not outline specific responsibilities

for these roles which limited analysis. District M utilized a role titled Collaborating with

Families and Communities. The responsibilities of this role include reading parent involvement

coordinator and other parent involvement coordinators. This position may or may not have been comparable to District E's Community Liaison position.

District G was the only district to have a position dedicated to technology. The role of the Technology Teacher Leader described the responsibilities to include assisting teachers in adding content online; developing master courses with other teachers in a content area or grade level; creating tests, quizzes, and other assessments; and assisting in developing classroom procedures for blended learning, modeling lessons online, and troubleshooting online platforms. Similarly, District I was the only district to have a position dedicated to culture. The role of the Culture Broker is to support the school leader in assessing, creating, and refining school culture; and "selling" the vision to their schools and the network.

Districts I and K were the only districts that included roles that were full-time, non-classroom teacher roles. District I utilized the role of the Instructional Coach as a full-time coaching position to improve student achievement by building teachers capacity and understanding of instructional practices through co-planning, modeling, and providing feedback to teachers. District K similarly utilized the Instructional Coach position as a full-time, non-classroom teacher role. Additionally, District K utilized a Curriculum Coordinator role that included a full-time administrator in K-8 schools to serve as an official observer by providing scores and feedback on the TEAM model, coordinate curriculum and scheduling, facilitate collaboratives, and coordinate testing.

Research Question 4

Teacher leader models were analyzed for identification, selection, and retention of teacher leaders. Themes emerged within each category during analysis.

How are teacher leaders identified, selected, and retained in each district?

Identified: Because some of the teacher leader model plans were written for future use, not all districts had identified teacher leaders prior to implementation. Many of these districts were still in the distribution stage in which information about the teacher leader model and how to become a district teacher leader were planned for distribution after the publication of the model. Districts F, G, H, M, and N each fell into this category. When describing how teacher leaders would be identified, these districts detailed their distribution plan which included: eliciting support from all stakeholders; distributing information and recruitment posters to all teachers framing the teacher leader model; designating a page on the district website for links and documents; hosting informational meetings for interested teachers; and budgeting for the appropriate number of teacher leaders for the district and schools.

Other districts outlined a list of criteria that would be used to identify teacher leaders. Some districts within the distribution stage also outlined similar criteria. Districts A, B, C, D, G J, L, M and N noted evaluation or TVAAS scores as criteria for identification. Districts A, J, and N noted an overall level of effectiveness score of a four of five, while Districts C, D, L, and M noted a TEAM overall level of effectiveness score of 3, 4, or 5. Districts B and G did not provide a minimum score, but did note TVAAS data and effective TEAM evaluation results would be strongly considered.

Other criteria considered for identification included effective teaching strategies, skilled in content knowledge, and respected among peers. Districts C, D, G, and J noted criteria for identification included teachers who implement effective teaching strategies. Districts A, G, K, and M noted identifying teachers skilled in content knowledge. Districts A, E, I, and K noted

identifying teachers who are respected by peers and administrators. Additional criteria were

considered for each district, such as skillful with communication, data analysis, leadership

qualities, and facilitation of professional learning; however, these themes did not emerge among

the majority of the districts.

Selected: The district models were somewhat vague in detailing the selection process.

District A noted developing a selection screening tool, but did not elaborate on what this

screening tool might entail. Some districts did mention using an application or interview process

as part of the selection process. These districts include Districts B, E, H, I, K, L, and N.

Districts L and N provided the most information about the framework for applications and

interviews. District L described the process as follows: the principal reviews applications and

recommends teachers for positions based on specific characteristics. A supervisory team reviews

applications and chooses candidates based on principal recommendations and district needs.

District N provided a more detailed process. The district would conduct a two-phase interview

process including a school-level interview and a district-level interview. District administrators

interview using the school administrators' list of recommended applicants. During the district-

level interview, a performance-based task would be given to candidates in which they must

examine real school data, present a school improvement plan, and answer questions about school

data provided at the time of the interview. District administrators would collaborate with

principals on the selection of each teacher leader and place teacher leaders strategically in strong

content areas based on individual school needs.

Retained: Four themes emerged when analyzing districts' plans for retaining teacher

leaders. These themes included recognition, compensation, ongoing professional development,

and feedback and evaluation. Districts A, D, E, G, H, I, and K noted recognizing contributions

and successes of teacher leaders. While all districts provided compensation for additional

responsibilities of teacher leadership roles, Districts B, C, D, E, F, G, H, I, J, K, L, and M noted

this compensation as a means for retaining teacher leaders. Ongoing professional learning

opportunities as a means for retaining teacher leaders were noted by Districts B, E, F, G, I, K, M,

and N. Providing useful and continuous feedback and evaluation was noted by Districts A, C, D,

E, I, J, and N.

<center>Research Question 5</center>

All districts noted implementation of the teacher leader model required preparation for

teacher leaders, school staff, and school and district leaders. Next, each district provided a

narrative of suggested best practices for effective implementation to be used. Finally, districts

provided a timeline for implementation.

During analysis of districts' implementation plan, four themes emerged as common

suggested best practices for effective implementation. These themes included professional

learning, development of roles and responsibilities, communication of the purpose of the teacher

leader model, and collaboration and support provided by districts to teacher leaders. Evaluating

the model for effectiveness was also noted in some districts.

Research Question 5

In what ways are districts implementing the model plan: What are the functions of

teacher leaders?

Professional Learning: Providing professional learning for teacher leaders arose as an

emerging theme among all districts. Districts described this best practice differently. Districts

A, C, D, E, F, I, M, and N simply noted implementation would include the development of

<center>75</center>

professional learning activities or training would be provided for formal and informal teacher leader roles. District B noted implementation should include dedicated time for initial professional development for teacher leaders. Districts G, H, and L noted training teacher leaders in state initiatives as part of implementation. Districts J and K noted use of professional learning communities and collaborative sessions to understand roles and support teacher leaders.

Development of Roles and Responsibilities: Developing clearly defined roles and responsibilities were noted by each district as a best practice for implementation. The teacher leader models did not describe who would be developing the roles and responsibilities, and if teacher leaders would be part of that process. District H did note administrators would meet with teacher leaders to establish goals and expectations for the upcoming year for the areas in which they serve, but this would be after a year of service as a teacher leader in which roles and responsibilities were already communicated.

Communicating Purpose: Seven of the 14 districts noted the development of a communication plan to detail the purpose of the teacher leader model as a best practice for implementation. These districts include Districts A, D, H, J, K, L, and N. Districts B, C, and F noted ways in which the district would communicate in the timeline for implementation, but did not note this communication as a best practice for implementation.

Collaboration and Support: Districts B, C, D, F, G, H, I, K, L, M, and N each mentioned collaboration and support provided to teacher leaders from the district as a best practice for implementation. Districts B, C, F, H, I, M, and N noted the importance of building regularly scheduled time for collaboration and support into schedules to ensure a strong framework. Districts did not detail this ongoing collaboration and support framework; only noted the

framework as a best practice for implementation. District H was the only district to note collaboratives would be monthly.

Research Question 6

In analyzing the framework for communication, the researcher was looking for ways in which districts communicate with teacher leaders and in ways teacher leaders communicate with district leaders, peers, and stakeholders. The communication plans outlined in the teacher leader models varied greatly as the focus was not always on a communication plan.

Research Question 6

What is the framework for communication?

District A: District A provided a three phase action plan for communication and implementation. In phase one, the district will communicate what it is doing with regards to building teacher leader capacity. In phase two, the district will identify ways in which teachers can be selected to expand their leadership capacity within their schools. In phase three, the district plans to monitor implementation and communicate results to principals regarding broader expansion throughout the district. The district also described using the following communication mechanisms: district website, focus videos, question and answer sessions within schools, the Chief Academic Officer's weekly communication to principals, twice-monthly employee newsletter, monthly principal meetings, monthly teacher communication group meetings, and mid-year and end-of-year reviews.

District B: District B noted communication should first encourage support of the teacher leader model by explaining the rationale for implementation. School administrative teams have the responsibility of ensuring the culture of collaboration continues and extends to all members.

Success of the teacher leader model was noted as requiring direct communication with the entire staff with clearly written steps in the process; individualized conversations and adequate time given for conversations to be meaningful; and ongoing updates about implementation and changes should be communicated in writing and orally.

District C: District C noted the use of distributed leadership as a support for a positive school culture where teacher leaders can thrive. The district also noted teacher leaders as playing a significant role in school improvement by communicating the district's plan for student mastery and growth to their peers and community. Building level principals are noted as being responsible for communicating teacher leadership positions and making the final decision for filling teacher leadership roles. Additionally, effective teacher leader practices and successes will be communicated to all stakeholders, and teacher leaders will be recognized by the school board, on the district web page, at parent meetings, and in teacher and school newsletters.

District D: District D noted supporting teacher leaders through frequent communications for the district and schools. The district strategic plan will be communicated and available to all stakeholders which will support the connection between leadership development and the district's vision and goals. The school administrators are responsible for seeking opportunities to communicate to teachers, parents, and community members the importance of teacher leaders. The district noted recognizing teacher leaders in school and district communications and at school board meetings. The district will invite teacher leaders to at least on administrative leadership meeting, and the building level administrators will support the work of the teacher leaders by attending and participating in teacher led professional growth activities. Finally, the district noted the beginning support of the strategic plan will foster a positive environment where teacher leadership can be cultivated and sustained over time.

District E: District E noted the importance of having a communication strategy outlining roles and responsibilities, the selection process, the rationale for the teacher leader model, and how it must align with the district strategic plan, mission, and vision. The district plans to use current teacher leaders to help craft the message that will be delivered to stakeholders in support for implementation of the teacher leader model. The district also noted the need for clear expectations for productive and collaborative relationships to foster an enhanced positive culture among teacher leader groups, and teacher leaders and fellow teachers.

District F: District F described providing teacher leaders will scheduled collaborative time to meet with teachers, principals, and district leaders. The district will give schools autonomy to direct the teacher leader model at the building level.

District G: District G provided a four phase plan for implementing the teacher leader model. In phase one, administrators and district level staff will identify district-level and school-level needs to be addressed through the teacher leader model. In phase two, principals will communicate with teachers about the structure of the program and what to expect from the district and Teacher Leader Network. In phase three, part one, teacher leaders will meet monthly to discuss district initiatives, program implementation, and school and district needs. The district noted these monthly meetings will support system level alignment and serve as a support for the new teacher leaders. District supervisors will conduct the district-level meetings. Teacher leaders will also meet regularly at their schools to address district and school initiatives. These meetings will be facilitated by the principal. In phase three, part two, teacher leaders will communicate regularly with school administration to discuss school-level implementation of state and district initiatives. In phase four, school-based leadership teams will meet and discuss the benefits of the teacher leader program and determine success and opportunities. Teacher

leaders will regularly communicate with district and school administrators to share success and opportunities of the program. The leadership team will evaluate the program and determine next steps.

District H: District H described existing shared leadership structures including leadership teams and a structure for professional learning communities. Implementation of the teacher leader model is described as implementing a new School Support Team leadership model. Communication throughout the development will include input from stakeholders. The final model will be presented at administrator meetings, teacher informational sessions, and presented to the school board. Ongoing communication will take place through School Support Team training, leadership meetings, administrator feedback and peer surveys.

District I: District I noted support for future teacher leaders will be included in frequent communications from teacher talent, academic team, and human resources. Current teacher leaders will also be highlighted throughout the school year and be available for questions. School administrators have the responsibility of communicating the importance of the teacher leader model to teachers, parents, and the community. The district noted recognizing teacher leaders in school and district communications and at school board meetings. The district will invite teacher leaders to at least on administrative leadership meeting, and the building level administrators will support the work of the teacher leaders by attending and participating in teacher led professional growth activities.

District J: District J's communication plan focused on communicating available teacher leader positions within the district. Building level principals are noted as being responsible for this communication and for making the final decision for filling teacher leader roles. The Teacher Leader Supervisor will conduct the first meeting to set guidelines, roles, and

responsibilities, and will monitor teacher leader logs and provide written feedback regarding monthly activities.

District K: Instructional supervisors and school principals will establish job descriptions for teacher leaders by clearly establishing roles, responsibilities, desired outcomes, and accountability factors. Teacher leaders will be provided professional learning prior to beginning the school year and will be part of a monthly teacher leader council where they will discuss current issues and plan for next steps. Ongoing support will be provided by the principal and district office. Additionally, district and school administrators will support the work of the teacher leaders by allowing teacher leaders to participate in relevant administrative meetings.

District L: District L noted communication to all stakeholders and professional learning for teachers as being crucial components of implementation of the teacher leader model. Lead teachers will be utilized to communicate and advance the vision of the district and schools. The district noted positive attitudes and communication from teacher leaders as having the opportunity to influence collegiality and cooperation among all staff. The communication plan noted success of the teacher leader model will require ongoing communication among district personnel, school administration, teacher leaders and all teaching staff. Communication mechanisms to be utilized by the district include: district website's teacher resource link, school newsletters, monthly supervisor and principal meetings, teacher surveys, and formal end-of-the-year reviews.

District M: District M noted the involvement of teachers and stakeholders in the vision and direction of the school system in order to achieve a level of ownership. The Teacher Leader Network is noted as presenting the leadership model to the director and board. The district will communicate the intent of the model and each principal will hold a faculty meeting to clearly

communicate the intent of the model and roles. After the teacher leader model is implemented, ongoing communication will be required to share the results of the model with stakeholders.

District N: District N briefly described receiving the TNLEAD grant and how the grant was utilized to support the need for teacher leaders. The district noted being very intentional in communicating what it was doing and why in regard to increasing teacher leader capacity. The teacher leader model's effectiveness was noted as being discussed at every principal meeting and at every teacher leader meeting. The district website is updated to accommodate the collection of best practices and resources accumulated by teacher leaders, and the district continuously recognized student growth and achievement as a result from teacher leader impact.

Research Question 7

Districts described building level supports and pre-existing capacity in the district when outlining support for teacher leaders. Themes emerged under each category. Themes emerging in district and building level supports were professional learning, flexible scheduling for collaborative and release times, and use of the TEAM evaluation model. Themes emerging in pre-existing capacity in the district were budget allocations for professional learning, flexible scheduling, teacher directed professional development, and instructional support teams.

Research Question 7

How do districts support teacher leaders?

District and Building Supports: All districts except for District I, noted professional learning as a district and building support. Districts B, G, H, J, K, L, and M noted providing professional development for teacher leaders. Districts C, D, E, F, and N described this support

as prescriptive professional development. District A described the support as designing, developing, and delivering professional learning activities for teacher leaders.

Districts B, C, D, E, F, G, H, I, K, L, M, and N each noted flexible scheduling as a district and building support. Districts C, D, E, F, H, I, M, and N detailed this support as being creative, flexible scheduling along with planned release time, while Districts B, G, H, K, and L detailed the support as collaborative time built into the master schedule.

Eight districts noted the use of the TEAM evaluation model as a district and building support. These districts include Districts C, D, E, F, G, I, L, and M. Additionally, District K noted providing periodic feedback from building and district administrators as supports.

Pre-Existing Capacity in District: Districts C, D, E, F, I, L, and N each noted budgeting allocation for professional learning as a pre-existing support within the district. Districts C, D, E, F, H, and I noted site-based management of flexible scheduling as a pre-existing support. Teacher directed professional development was noted by Districts C, D, E, F, G, I, L, M, and N; and instructional supports such as instructional leadership teams, academic teams, instructional and academic coaches, mentors, and administrators were noted as pre-existing supports in Districts C, D, E, F, G, H, I, J, L, and M.

Research Question 8

District teacher leader model plans and strategic plans did not provide evaluative measures in depth, but rather provided a list of data evidence that would be collected for evaluation of individual teacher leader model effectiveness. A theme that emerged from the analysis of these evaluative criteria included the use of several sources including TEAM, TVAAS, and testing data; teacher leader questionnaires; peer and administrative feedback

surveys; and teacher retention rate. District A was the only district that did not explicitly state

evaluative criteria for teacher leader model effectiveness. While still in the implementation

phase, District A noted the need to determine measureable benchmarks, and the need to establish

appropriate monitoring and evaluation of newly implemented teacher leader roles.

Research Question 8

How do districts evaluate the teacher leader model?

TEAM, TVAAS, and Testing Data: Thirteen of the 14 districts noted TEAM analysis,

TVAAS scores, achievement data, and other testing data as evaluative criteria for evaluating the

teacher leader model. District A was the only district not to explicitly note this data as evaluative

criteria.

Teacher Leader Questionnaires: Districts C, D, E, F, H, I, J, and L each noted the use of

teacher leader questionnaires as a form of evaluation, while Districts G and K referred to this

evaluative measure as a self-reflection inventory and perception survey, respectively.

Peer and Administrative Feedback Surveys: Districts C, D, E, F, G, H, I, J, L, and N

each noted the use of peer and administrative feedback surveys as forms of evaluation.

Teacher Retention Rate: Districts B, H, K, and L noted teacher retention rate as

evaluative criterion for model effectiveness.

Research Question 9

In 2013, the State Board of Education passed a revised set of guidelines requiring

districts to create and implement differentiated pay plans (Tennessee Department of Education,

n.d.). The purpose of the differentiated pay plans was to give districts control regarding salary

schedule, and to create an additional means of attracting and retaining teachers. Some districts

used the differentiated pay plan to compensate teacher leaders, while other districts used general purpose funds, grants, or both. Every district's teacher leader model outlined a plan for compensation for additional teacher leader roles by providing teacher leaders with stipends.

<u>Research Question 9</u>

How are districts compensating teacher leaders?

<u>Differentiated Pay Plan:</u> Districts A, B, E, F, G, H, J, and L developed and incorporated a differentiated pay plan to allocate monies each year to supplement teacher leader roles and development.

<u>Other Funding Sources for Compensation:</u> Districts C, I, K, M, and N utilized general purpose funds to support compensation for teacher leader roles and responsibilities. Districts D, I, and L noted supplementing with grant funds.

<u>Stipends:</u> Each district provides a stipend for additional roles and responsibilities. Some districts compensate each teacher leader role with the same compensation amount, while other districts vary the amount based on the positon. District A was still in the implementation phase when the teacher leader model was developed. Therefore the only role that is currently being utilized and compensated is the Site-Based Induction Specialist. There were a total of 65 positions allocated to receive a stipend of $1,830. District B compensated teacher leader roles differently. Mentor Coaches had a total of 10 positions allocated to receive $1,500. Similarly, Instructional Leadership Team Members had a total of 16 positions also allocated to receive $1,500. The role of In-House Professional Development Partner had 10 positions allocated to receive $1,000.

District C noted three positions allocated to receive a stipend of $1,500. These positions include Grade and Cluster Level Leader and Department Chair with 30 positions, Instructional

Leadership Team Member with 30 positions, and Assessment Building Team Member with 45

positions. Mentors were noted as receiving a stipend, but annual amount and number of positons

was noted as varying. District D compensated both math and literacy teacher leaders with a

stipend of $1,000 with 18 positions for each content area.

District E provided a stipend for each teacher leader position, but the number of positions

and the stipend amount was to be determined in some cases. The Multi-Classroom Leader was

allocated to receive $1,500 and the All-Star Facilitators were allocated to receive $1,000 or

higher. Other positions were to be determined. District F noted 101 positions for Support Coach

receiving a stipend of $1,500, and 22 positions for Community Support Coach receiving a

stipend of $1,000. District G allocated $1,500 stipend for the 28 Teacher Leader positions within

the district, as did District J for 60 Teacher Leader positions.

District H noted allocating $3,500 for the 16 Instructional Coach positions; $2,000 for the

30 Curriculum Support Teacher positions; and $3,500 for the eight PLC Lead Teacher positions.

District I allocated $3,000 for the nine Master Teacher positions; $2,000 for the 14 Content

Leader positons; and $1,500 for the 14 Culture Broker positions. District K noted the 22

Curriculum Lead Teacher positions would receive a stipend and release time, but did not provide

the amount of the stipend or release time. The district did note allocating $500 per quarter for

each of the 22 Instructional Mentor positions. District L allocated $4,000 for the 30 Teacher

Leader positions within the district, while District N allocated $2,000 for the 94 Teacher Leader

positions within the district.

District M allocated various amounts based on the teacher leader role. Content leaders,

data leaders, instructional teacher leaders, and the Reading Parent Involvement Coordinator

received $1,000 stipends, while After School Instructional Specialists and the Parent Involvement Coordinator received $1,260 stipends. Data miners received $540.

Research Question 10

Eight districts briefly mentioned sustainability in the teacher leader model plans. All sustainability efforts were directly related to budgeting allocations.

Research Question 10

How are districts sustaining teacher leaders?

Sustainability: District A noted sustainability for transitioning to differential pay will be built into the operating budget in phases. District B noted funding for teacher leadership positions will be sustained through general purpose funds. Similarly Districts C and J noted sustained planning through general purpose funds. The Director of Schools and school board have dedicated budgeted funds for teacher leader positions for both districts.

District I noted planned sustainability through general purpose funds set aside for stipends, grants, and fundraising efforts. Grants were noted to last through 2018. Sustainability beyond 2018 was not mentioned. Similarly, Districts L and M were noted as providing sustainability through a variety of funding. District L developed a model for differentiated pay plan which included funding allocated each year to supplement teacher leader roles. Additionally, a grant provided sustainability for three years. District M noted sustainability through funding sources including local extended contracts, general purpose funds, and Title I funds. Funding is noted as being available as roles continue to be relevant and purposeful.

District K noted having curriculum coordinators in all five K-8 schools and instructional coaches in three of the schools. These positions were previously funded and budgeted for

sustainability. Sustainability of curriculum lead teachers and instructional mentors was not evident as these roles were noted as being subject to change annually based on the application approval process and contingent on available funding.

Research Question 11

Analysis of districts' strategic plans uncovered a summary of district accomplishments and what is working for students. Districts briefly noted district policies and practices attributing to accomplishments. Some districts explicitly attributed success to components of the teacher leader model while other districts attributed success to components indirectly related to the teacher leader model. Districts E and I were the only districts that did not produce evidence of accomplishments within district plans.

Research Question 11

What kind of changes is the model bringing to the district?

District A: In 2014-15, the district met 10 of 11 AMO achievement targets and improved in 12 of the 14 AMO gap targets. Graduation rate was 96.5% and the district received 12 level five's for evaluation composite growth. The district had 11 reward schools, a regional ranking for overall TCAP and EOC of 1st out of 16, and a state ranking of 1st out of 145. The district noted the following strategies leading to accomplishments: focus on reducing variability in classrooms through strategic administrator professional learning opportunities; providing supports such as academic coaches and collaborative planning for teachers to meet the needs of diverse learners; work with McREL on the Next Generation of Balanced Leadership which included work such as district-wide training on principles of High Reliability Organizations, use of 90 day improvement cycles, coaching of coaches, and priming the leadership pipeline; and

collaboration of resources with additional focus on identifying and working on obtaining

resources and alternate funding to support strategic work.

District B: District B noted evidence in which students made more progress than the

Growth Standard in the following grades and subjects: 4th grade math, 5th grade math and

reading/language arts, 6th grade math and reading/language arts, 7th grade math and science, 8th

grade math, Algebra II, and English II. District B attributed accomplishments to teachers

possessing a deep content knowledge, teachers' ability to differentiate instruction to engage

students, Curriculum Coordinators planning for vertical collaboration, and teachers taking

ownership of student success by initiating instructional improvements.

District C: A summary of the district's work based on accountability data noted a

decrease in the number of students scoring below basic; continuous improvements in grades 3-8

math, third and seventh grade math, Algebra I, and graduation rate; decrease in gap closures in

some schools; improved technology infrastructure allowing the district to utilize devices more

effectively; and moving from a system wide composite score of a 1 to a 3 for Teacher

Evaluation. The district's strategic plan attributed these accomplishments to individual schools

following the district initiatives and goals including providing every student the opportunity to

meet the rigorous literacy and math standards demand required for college and career readiness

through appropriate, engaging instruction. The district also noted PLC's and TEAM Evaluation

conferencing as a driving force of collaborative learning that will support growth in goals and

initiatives.

District D: District D noted all EOC proficiency percentages increased in 2015 with the

exception of Algebra II. Other notable highlights included a 14 percentage point increase in

Chemistry as well as a 7th in the state ranking; English II ranked 8th in the state in proficiency;

Biology ranked 10th in the state in proficiency; students with disabilities subgroup ranked first in the state for the second year in a row in proficiency in Algebra I; students with disabilities subgroup ranked 5th in the state in proficiency in English II and 7th in English III; and the Black, Hispanic, and Native American subgroup ranked 7th in the state in proficiency in English II. In addition to these accomplishments, the district was also named the 2014-15 SCORE recipient; awarded an Achievement Level Award by TNCPE; met all achievement targets except graduation rate; and was named a District of Distinction. With this summary of accomplishments, the district did not provide a list of strategies attributing to the success of these accomplishments.

District F: The district noted system-wide scores surpassing the state average, a continual increase in Algebra 2, English I, and English II scores. Accomplishments were attributed to the district's efforts on building schedules so that tested areas are taught by the most effective teachers. Additionally, professional development offerings have been designed to be more prescriptive by subject.

District G: District G noted receiving a level 5 District TVAAS Evaluation Composite Score in Numeracy, Literacy, Literacy and Numeracy combined, and Overall for the 2014-15 school year. Additionally, the district met each accountability achievement benchmark in grades 3-8. Accomplishments were attributed to common benchmark assessments being utilized across the system; using explicit teaching strategies and working with an outside math consultant; and aligning instruction to be very content standards specific.

District H: The district's strategic plan noted the district as continually ranking as one of the highest performing districts within Tennessee. The district attributed its success to collaborative efforts among teachers within each school; collaborative efforts across schools;

embedded components of PLCs; and allocated funds for a PLC coach within schools which served as a direct line of support to help guide the collaborative structures in each school. Additionally, the district attributed success to supporting teachers such as use of Learning Coaches and Master Teachers to provide professional development for schools and for individualized learning. New teachers were automatically assigned a Learning Coach as a support.

District J: District J noted growth in high school EOC courses; growth in math for grades 3, 5, and 7; growth in reading/language arts for grades 6, 7, and 8; meeting the majority of AMO targets; and receiving a system composite score of a level 5. The district attributes these accomplishments to having a structured plan around benchmark and common assessments; allowing opportunities for individual data conferencing with students.

District K: The district's strategic plan noted meeting 10 of 11 identified achievement targets; achieving the highest possible value-added growth measure rating of a level 5; and was among the top districts in the state for meeting achievement and academic growth targets. The district attributes success as the direct result of the combined efforts of administrators, teachers, support staff, and students.

District L: The district noted the following accomplishments in the 2014-15 school year: meeting all AMO targets; system wide composite value-added score of 5; three schools selected as reward schools; and a school being removed from the focus list after just one year. The district attributes these successes to the hard work of professional teams, an increased emphasis on curriculum specific professional development, county-wide PLCs, Lead Teachers, and mentor programs.

District M: The district's strategic plan noted improvement in math for Economically Disadvantaged students, students with disabilities and White students in grades 3-8; and in reading/language arts for White, Black, and Economically Disadvantaged students in grades 3-8. The district attributes these accomplishments to the focused use of data to inform instruction, outstanding teachers who strive to build relationships and keep expectations high for students, and focus upon the standards to be assessed.

District N: The district presented a long list of accomplishments including: top state rankings for growth in reading/language arts and math; increase in ACT scores; improvement in college readiness benchmarks; meeting all annual measurable achievement targets; meeting gap closure targets for Black, Hispanic, and Native Americans, and Economically Disadvantaged students in grades 3-8 reading and math; meeting gap closure targets for Limited English Proficiency students in grades 3-8 reading; all elementary and middle schools meeting achievement targets; all high schools meeting their English III and Algebra II AMO; two high schools meeting all of their achievement targets; and earning a level 5 TVAAS Growth Score. The district attributes these accomplishments to common formative assessments, data use and progress monitoring of school and district SMART goals, district implementation of Scopes of Work, aligned resources, standards, and rigor.

<u>Chapter Summary</u>

Summary data from teacher leader models and district strategic plans were presented with accompanying analyses in this chapter. Data were collected from teacher leader models from 14 districts in the Tennessee Teacher Leader Network, and from each district's current strategic plan. The application of the teacher leader model in each of the 14 districts was analyzed based

on 11 research questions. Those questions were designed to address how each district applied the teacher leader model in their individual policies and intentionally stated practices.

Chapter 5 presents an analysis of the results presented in this chapter in the form of discussion and conclusions drawn from the findings of each research question. Additionally, Chapter 5 provides implications for practice and further research.

CHAPTER 5

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduction

This chapter contains the findings, conclusions, and recommendations for readers interested in understanding how teacher leader models have been implemented in Tennessee districts, and how teacher leaders are currently utilized to support districts in reaching goals of their strategic plan. The study was conducted using a content analysis of teacher leader models from 14 districts in Tennessee and their corresponding strategic plans. Results were summarized to report the rationale for implementation of the teacher leader model, and to report how districts utilize teacher leaders to address the needs of 21st century teaching and learning. Recommendations for practice and further research have been included in this chapter to support districts in the development or refinement phase of implementing a teacher leader model.

Summary

The Tennessee Board of Education adopted the Teacher Leader Model Standards in 2011. The goal of this adoption was to increase student achievement and growth, create broader dissemination and use of effective teaching strategies, and develop a stronger and more positive school and district culture (TDOE, 2014). The TDOE created the Tennessee Teacher Leader Council in 2013 to develop teacher leadership models for implementation in districts across the state. Six districts served on the council in the inaugural year. A Teacher Leader Guidebook was created to share the six districts' teacher leader models with other districts across the state. The following year, a second cohort of eight districts created additional models which were

published in a supplementary Teacher Leader Guidebook and the name of the council changed to

the Tennessee Teacher Leader Network. A content analysis of the teacher leader models and

district plans was conducted to analyze how the models are impacting district policies and

practices.

Conclusions

An inquiry about how districts view teacher leadership and how teacher leaders are being

utilized across the state of Tennessee guided this qualitative content analysis. Eleven research

questions were the focus of this study to address the initial inquiry. Analysis of district's teacher

leader models and strategic plans provided insight into districts' perception of teacher leadership.

Research Question 1

How do districts describe the purpose of the teacher leader model?

Shared leadership, improving student achievement and instructional practices, and

building capacity within districts were fundamental reasons for implementation of teacher leader

models within districts. Districts viewed the role of the teacher leader as a means for

communicating the district's vision, mission, and goals as well as supporting student

achievement by reducing variability in the quality of teaching. Shared leadership was viewed as

an opportunity for high quality teachers to share knowledge and expertise with other educators

which would support an overall growth culture within the district. Through a shared leadership

model, districts were hopeful to increase or improve student achievement. Districts noted

building capacity as a purpose for implementation which means they want to improve the

abilities, skills, and expertise of educators within the district. They plan to do this by implementing a teacher leader model to support a vision of shared leadership.

Research Question 2

How are the roles and responsibilities of teacher leaders similar among the districts?

Each teacher leader model analyzed within the study included leadership roles for full-time classroom teachers with additional responsibilities. Other similarities included a focus on curriculum, instruction, and professional learning. All districts dedicated teacher leader roles to curriculum and instruction in some capacity. Curriculum supports included roles for Curriculum Specialists, Resource Providers, Curriculum and Assessment Building Members, Content Leaders, Curriculum and Instruction Support Coaches, Curriculum Support Teachers, Curriculum Lead Teachers, and Curriculum Coordinators. Responsibilities of these roles included developing, designing, and creating curriculum resources and pacing guides to address standards, as well as provide training and support for teachers with curriculum planning and working in collaboratives.

Instructional supports included roles for Instructional Specialists, Instructional Coaching and Mentoring, Classroom Support Coaches, Subject Area Coaches, Instructional Leadership Team Members, Instructional Leadership Members, and Core Instruction. Responsibilities of these roles included providing and facilitating needs-based professional development, providing resources and research-based best teaching practices, modeling effective teaching, implementing reflective practice utilizing peer observations and feedback, collaborative data conferencing, developing common assessments, and supporting new or struggling teachers.

Additionally, districts had a similar focus on the responsibility of teacher leaders to facilitate professional learning within the district. Some districts designated specific roles dedicated to this work while other districts embedded this responsibility within other teacher leader roles. Responsibilities for facilitation of professional learning included developing and designing effective professional development, coaching individuals through learning plans, evaluating professional development session to determine ongoing support, and creating and mainlining PLC norms, agenda, and minutes for collaborative work.

Research Question 3

How are roles and responsibilities of teacher leaders different among the districts?

Differences among roles and responsibilities included the number of teacher leader roles provided in districts and the designation of roles and responsibilities. The number of teacher leader roles within districts varied between two to seven different positions relative to district size and need. Many of the teacher leader positions available within districts included roles focused on curriculum, instruction, coaching, mentoring, and professional learning. District A described two unique positions termed Site-Based Induction Specialist and Catalyst for Change. Responsibilities of the Site-Based Induction Specialist included acclimating new teachers, facilitating induction seminars to bridge gaps in foundational knowledge, monitoring new teacher interactions for fidelity, and modeling professionalism and best practices. Responsibilities of the Catalyst for Change position included challenging the status quo, leading innovation and change initiatives, discovering possibilities and inspiring others, and leading, sustaining, and monitoring change.

District M's teacher leader model also included a unique position titled Collaborating with Families and Communities. Responsibilities of this position included reading parent involvement coordinator and coordinating other parent involvement. District G was the only district to describe a Technology Teacher Leader position, while District I was the only district to describe the use of a Culture Broker. Districts I and K were the only two districts to include full-time, non-classroom teacher roles. District I utilized the role of the Instructional Coach as a full-time coaching position. Similarly, District K utilized the Instructional Coach position and Curriculum Coordinator role as full-time, non-classroom teacher positions.

Research Question 4

How are teacher leaders identified, selected, and retained in each district?

Districts in the distribution phase planned to identify teacher leaders by eliciting support from all stakeholders, distributing information and recruitment information to frame the teacher leader model, hosting informational meetings, and budgeting for the appropriate number of teacher leaders. Other districts outlined specific criteria for identifying teacher leaders. Criteria included TVAAS scores and effective TEAM evaluation results, use of effective teaching strategies, skilled in content knowledge, and respected among peers.

Districts noted the use of screening tools, applications, and interview processes to select teacher leaders, but did not elaborate of the selection process. Two districts described the process beyond tools to be used. District L's process included the principal reviewing applications and recommending teachers for positions based on specific criteria. A supervisory team then reviewed applications and chose candidates based on principal recommendations and district needs. District N provided the most detailed information about the selection process.

98

The district described a two-phase interview process including school-level and district-level interviews. A performance-based task was utilized in which candidates had to examine data, presented improvement plan, and answer questions about school data. District administrators would collaborate with principals on the selection.

District teacher leader models included a plan for retaining teacher leader positions. Recognition of contributions and successes, compensation for additional responsibilities, providing ongoing professional learning to support leadership, and providing continuous feedback and evaluation of the teacher leader model were noted as components for retention of teacher leader positions.

Research Question 5

In what ways are districts implementing the model plan: What are the functions of teacher leaders?

District teacher leader model plans provided narratives of suggested best practices for effective implementation and a timeline of implementation specific to each district. Common suggested best practices for effective implementation included professional learning, development of roles and responsibilities, communication of the purpose of the teacher leader model, and collaboration and support provided by districts to teacher leaders. Districts suggested implementation of professional learning should be provided for formal and informal teacher leader roles; include dedicated time for initial development of teacher leaders; include training in state initiatives; and use professional learning communities and collaborative sessions to understand roles and support teacher leaders. Suggestions for developing roles and responsibilities included clearly defining and communicating key roles and responsibilities.

Districts did not describe who would be developing these roles and responsibilities or how they would be communicated.

Developing a communication plan to detail the purpose of the teacher leader model and collaborating and supporting teacher leaders were noted as best practices for implementation. Districts did not describe the communication plan; only noted developing a plan was a best practice. A suggested practice for collaboration and support included building regularly scheduled time into schedules to support an ongoing collaborative and supportive framework

Research Question 6

What is the framework for communication within each district?

The communication plans outlined in the teacher leader models varied greatly between districts. The researcher looked for ways in which districts communicated with teacher leaders and in ways in which teacher leaders communicated with district leaders, peers, and stakeholders. Several districts noted the importance of communicating the purpose of the teacher leader model to stakeholders, but did not provide much information about the process of establishing goals for the model. The researcher was left wondering if teacher leaders were included in this process or if goals were established at an administrative level and then passed down to the teacher leaders themselves. Principals and district level administrators were noted as being responsible for leading communication efforts to the teacher leaders, and teacher leaders were noted as being responsible for communicating with teachers, under the supervision of administrators and principals. A framework for open communication was not apparent during this analysis.

Research Question 7

How do districts support teacher leaders?

Teacher leader models described building level supports and pre-existing capacity to outline support for teacher leaders. Building level supports included prescriptive professional learning; flexible scheduling including planned release time and time for collaboration and support; and use of the TEAM evaluation model to provide feedback from building and district administrators. Pre-existing capacity to provide support included budget allocations for professional learning, flexible scheduling, teacher directed professional development, and instructional support teams.

Research Question 8

How do districts evaluate the teacher leader model?

Teacher leader models provided a list of evaluative criteria that would be collected for evaluation of individual teacher leader model effectiveness. The criteria included analysis of TEAM, TVAAS, and testing data; teacher leader questionnaires; peer and administrative feedback surveys; and teacher retention rate. District A also noted the need to evaluate newly implemented teacher leader roles with measurable benchmarks.

Research Question 9

How are districts compensating teacher leaders?

Districts are compensating teacher leaders with stipends for additional responsibilities. These stipends vary from $1,000 up to $4,000 depending on the district and teacher leader role.

Stipends are funded through district's differentiated pay plan or other funding sources including general purpose funds and grants.

Research Question 10

How are districts sustaining teacher leaders?

Eight districts briefly mentioned sustainability of teacher leaders, and all sustainability efforts were directly related to budgeting allocations. Transitioning to a differentiated pay plan, budgeting for stipends within the general purpose fund, and using grants were noted as the plan for sustainability of the teacher leader model.

Research Question 11

What kinds of changes is the model bringing to the district?

Changes within the district were analyzed through districts' strategic plans. Narratives about the district's accomplishments and what is working for students were analyzed for evidence of change in relation to the implementation of the teacher leader model. Within these narratives, districts briefly noted policies and practices attributing to accomplishments. Some districts explicitly contributed these accomplishments to components of the teacher leader model while other districts attributed success to components indirectly related to the teacher leader model. All accomplishments were tied to the achievement of annual measurable objectives (AMO) in reference to student achievement and growth testing data. Districts noted meeting AMO targets in student achievement and growth measures as assessed on state standardized tests and end of course (EOC) tests. Some districts noted increases in graduation rates. Components of the teacher leader model attributing to accomplishments included: focus on reducing

variability in classrooms through professional learning opportunities; providing supports such as academic coaches, lead teachers, mentors, and collaborative planning; Curriculum Coordinators planning for vertical collaboration; utilizing common benchmark assessments across the system; and embedded components of PLCs. While the roles of teacher leaders were not explicitly noted by each district, components of their work were attributed to the success of the district.

<div align="center">Recommendations for Practice</div>

The findings and conclusions of this study have enabled the researcher to identify recommendations for practice in regards to the view of leadership, communication, and evaluation.

Leadership

Districts noted shared leadership as a primary purpose for implementation of the teacher leader models within their districts. Shared leadership is the practice of distributing or sharing leadership responsibilities across an organization with high degrees of involvement (Muijs, 2011). A collective responsibility must be developed within a shared leadership model with a high level of trust. Analysis of the teacher leader models and district strategic plans revealed confusion between leadership and management. Leadership is a process in which an individual influences a group of individuals to achieve a common goal (Northouse, 2013), and in which produces change and movement (Kotter, 1990). Managing is the process of controlling the affairs of others by applying rules to maintain order and consistency. Much of the responsibilities of teacher leaders described within the teacher leader models were associated with managing instruction in order to produce student achievement. Collectively, districts plan

to use the role of the teacher leader to sell the district's vision, mission, and goals in order to produce order and consistency in teaching and instruction.

A recommendation for districts is to revise teacher leader models to support a true shared leadership framework. The conceptual framework developed by Glover (2013) could serve as a support for districts in understanding the difference between leadership and management, and evolving teacher leader models to a shared leadership framework. The *Developmental Empowerment* framework describes five teacher developmental levels. *Silenced* teachers demonstrate little confidence in their ability to teach and students' ability to learn. They have very little communication with other teachers and are focused on controlling students. *Received knowers* are accepters of the status quo and do not question mandates or practices. They view teaching as a means to train to students. *Subjective knowers* accept personal responsibility, seek clarity for understanding curriculum, and focus teaching on counseling characteristics by focusing on individual students. These teachers outwardly comply with mandates, but may challenge them in secret. *Procedural knowers* learn and use established procedures for teaching students to solve problems. Their classrooms are well organized and managed as they apply research-based and validated practices. *Constructed knowers* are individuals that collaborate and co-construct with peers, students, the learning organization, and the environment. These teachers view teaching and learning as a collective responsibility, and serve as the true leaders of the learning organization.

Districts appear to support procedural knowers through the implementation of the teacher leader models presented in the Tennessee Teacher Leader Guidebooks. Districts are attempting to construct well organized and managed organizations in which educators follow a set of procedures to improve instruction and student achievement. True leadership is developed among

104

constructed knowers. Districts should seek ways to develop and modify teacher leader models to support teacher leaders in leading individuals to develop their own ideas and beliefs in order to construct knowledge and develop newly constructed knowledge. Modifying the models in this way will better enable teacher leaders to model teaching as the engagement of active learners.

Additionally, districts should consider ways of acquiring teacher leaders' expertise in order to help improve the entire organization. Ways in which districts can support this vision of shared leadership include:

- Modifying practices to include teacher leaders in shared decision making at the district level, including the development of the district's vision, mission, and goals, as well as guiding district wide improvements.

- Developing a communication framework that allows teacher leaders to provide feedback and question district goals to make improvements.

- Allowing teachers to incorporate innovative teaching strategies that can be evaluated in more ways than standardized assessments. Districts can use teacher leaders to support this innovation.

- Continuing to promote and utilize PLCs to promote collective responsibility and a shared leadership framework. Research has shown PLCs contribute to the development of shared responsibility for student learning (Darling-Hammond & McLaughlin, 1995; DuFour et al., 2006; Hirsh, 2009; Kruse & Louis, 1999; Louis et al., 1996).

Communication

The communication framework described in the teacher leader models was varying among districts and did not provide a true path for open communication. Recommendations for

developing and implementing an effective framework for communication are presented in the form of questions for districts to consider.

- In what ways are district administrators communicating directly with teacher leaders?

- In what ways are district administrators receiving communication directly from teacher leaders?

- In what ways are districts promoting a safe and collaborative culture in which teacher leaders and teachers can question district goals and practices so that they may better contribute to improved policy and practice?

- In what ways are districts involving teacher leaders in the development of the district's vision, mission, and goals?

- In what ways does the district support teacher leaders in communicating with peers and stakeholders?

- In what ways do teacher leaders communicate with peers and stakeholders?

- In what ways do the district and teacher leaders receive feedback from teachers?

Evaluation

Evaluative criteria of the teacher leader model rely heavily on student achievement and growth data. This is evident in districts' strategic plans when describing accomplishments and what is working for students. Accomplishments are exclusively related to TVAAS and achievement data. Recommendations for improvement include:

- Developing other ways to assess the model's success that include more long-term results and qualitative measures. Leadership is a process and not all implemented changes can be evaluated using short-term and content focused results such as one year student test

data. Additionally, the process of leadership is directly related to a collective

responsibility that cannot be quantified.

- Developing processes for modifying and improving the teacher leader models based on

  outcomes of evaluations.

- Developing a process for providing continual feedback with teacher leaders from

  administrators and peers. Feedback should not always be a summative measure in the

  form of end-of-the-year questionnaires and surveys. Teacher leaders should be actively

  engaged in continuously acquiring, analyzing, and giving feedback.

Recommendations for Further Research

Results of this study indicate the need for districts to modify teacher leader model plans

to incorporate a true framework of shared leadership. This framework should include an open

communication plan in which teacher leaders receive and provide feedback in a constructive

way. This study could be expanded in the following ways:

- This content analysis reviewed teacher leader model plans that were newly implemented

  or planned for implementation. Surveying districts after the implementation phase to

  determine program success and modifications would further support districts desiring to

  implement or modify a teacher leader model.

- This study did not incorporate the use of human subjects. Further studies could include

  interviewing teacher leaders and district leaders on perceptions of the teacher leader

  model, implementation of the model, model success, and suggestions for model

  modification.

- The Tennessee Teacher Leader Network was created to support districts in designing and implementing teacher leader models. Further studies examining the work of the Teacher Leader Network as supported by the TNDOE would support understanding the process districts go through to develop a model plan for their district.

<div align="center">Chapter Summary</div>

Developing and cultivating a vision of shared leadership was the purpose of implementing teacher leader models into districts in Tennessee. This study was designed to analyze teacher leader models that are being utilized in Tennessee to determine their impact on district policies and practices. This chapter summarizes findings from the content analysis, and provides recommendations for practice and further research. Implementing a teacher leader model has the potential to transform districts into learning organizations that support 21st century innovation and learning. In a truly shared leadership model, everyone leads and everyone follows. Districts must support a framework for shared leadership when implementing a teacher leader model to cultivate true leadership and teaching where everyone is a leader and follower.

REFERENCES

Brookhart, S. M., & Moss, C. M. (2013, May 1). Leading by learning. *Phi Delta Kappan*, *94*(8), 13-17. http://dx.doi.org/10.1177/003172171309400804

Bryk, A. S., & Schneider, B. (2003, March 1). Trust in schools: A core resource for school reform. *Educational Leadership*, *60*(6), 40-44. Retrieved from http://www.ascd.org/publications/educational-leadership/mar03/vol60/num06/Trust-in-Schools@-A-Core-Resource-for-School-Reform.aspx

Burgess, J., & Bates, D. (2009). *Other duties as assigned: Tips, tools, and techniques for expert teacher leadership*. Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.

Burns, J. M. (1978). *Leadership*. New York, NY: Harper & Row.

Cohen, D. K., & Hill, H. C. (2001). *Learning policy: When state education reform works*. Retrieved from http://www.jstor.org.iris.etsu.edu:2048/stable/j.ctt1nq0dz

Danielson, C. (2006). *Teacher leadership that strengthens professional practice*. Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.

Darling-Hammond, L., & McLaughlin, M. (1995, April). Policies that support professional development in an era of reform. *Phi Delta Kappan*, *76*(8), 597-604.

Darling-Hammond, L., & Richardson, N. (2009, February). Teacher learning: What matters? *Educational Leadership*, *66*, no. 5: 46-53.

Desimone, L. (2009). Improving impact studies of teachers' professional development: Toward better conceptualizations and measures. *Educational Researcher*, *38*(3), 181-199. http://dx.doi.org/10.3102/0013189X08331140

Desimone, L. M. (2011, March). A primer on effective professional development. *Phi Delta Kappan*, *92*(6), 68-71.

Dougherty, E. (2012). *Assignments matter: Making the connections that help students meet standards*. Alexandria, VA: ASCD.

Drill, K., Miller, S., & Behrstock-Sherratt, E. (2013). Teachers' perspective on educational research. *Brock Education*, *23*(1), 16-33. Retrieved from https://brock.scholarsportal.info/journals/brocked/home/article/viewFile/348/237

DuFour, R. (1997, April). The school as a learning organization: Recommendations for school improvement. *National Association of Secondary School Principals*, *81*(588), 81-87.

DuFour, R. (2015, November). How plcs do data right. *Educational Leadership*, *73*(3), 22-26.

DuFour, R., DuFour, R., Eaker, R., & Many, T. (2006). *Learning by doing: A handbook for professional learning communities at work*. Bloomington, IN: Solution Tree Press.

Elo, S., & Kyngas, H. (2007, November 22). The qualitative content analysis process. *Journal of Advanced Nursing*, *62*(1), 107-115. http://dx.doi.org/http://dx.doi.org.iris.etsu.edu:2048/10.1111/j.1365-2648.2007.04569.x

Farrell, C. C., Marsh, J. A., & Bertrand, M. (2015, November). Are we motivating students with data? *Educational Leadership*, *73*(3), 16-21. Retrieved from http://www.ascd.org/publications/educational-leadership/nov15/vol73/num03/Are-We-Motivating-Students-with-Data%C2%A2.aspx

Felton, M. D., & Page, M. (2014, September). Preparing teacher leaders. *Teaching Children Mathematics*, *21*(2), 92-99. http://dx.doi.org/10.5951/teacchilmath.21.2.0092

Fullan, M. (2001). *Leading in a culture of change*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Gallucci, C., Van Lare, M. D., Yoon, I. H., & Boatright, B. (2010, December). Instructional

    coaching: Building theory about the role and organizational support for professional

    learning. *American Educational Research Journal*, *47*(4), 919-963.

    http://dx.doi.org/10.3102/0002831210371497

Garet, M. S., Desimone, A. C., Birman, B. F., & Yoon, K. S. (2001). What makes professional

    development effective? Results from a national sample of teachers. *American*

    Educational Research Journal, *38*(4), 915-945.

Garmston, R. (1993, Oct). Reflections on cognitive coaching. *Educational Leadership*, *21*(2), 57-

    61.

Ghamrawi, N. (2010, May). No teacher left behind: Subject leadership that promotes teacher

    leadership. *Educational Management, Administration, and Leadership*, *38*(3), 304-320.

    http://dx.doi.org/10.1177/1741143209359713

Glover, E. S. (2013). *They myth of accountability: What don't we know?* Lanham, MD: Rowman

    & Littlefield Education.

Gronn, P. (2002, August). Distributed leadership as a unit of analysis. *The Leadership Quarterly*,

    13(4), 423-451. http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/S1048-9843(02)00120-0

Gunter, H., Hall, D., & Bragg, J. (2013, September). Distributed leadership: A study in

    knowledge production. *Educational Management Administration and Leadership*, *41*(5),

    555-580. http://dx.doi.org/10.1177/1741143213488586

Guskey, T. R., & Yoon, K. S. (2009, March 1). What works in professional development? *Phi*

    Delta Kappan, *90*(7), 495-500. http://dx.doi.org/10.1177/003172170909000709

Gutierrez, R. (2002). Enabling the practice of mathematics teachers in context: Toward a new

    equity research agenda. *Mathematical Thinking and Learning*, *42*(2 & 3), 145-187.

Retrieved from

http://www.unidev.info/Portals/0/Resources/Maths%20Gutierrez_MTL2002.pdf

Hahn, C. (2008). Coding qualitative data from doing qualitative research using your computer.

Retrieved from http://qrtips.com/coding.htm

Hallinger, P. (2011). Leadership for learning: Lessons from 40 years of empirical research.
Journal of Educational Administration, *49*(2), 125-142.

Harrison, C., & Killion, J. (2007, September 1). Ten roles for teacher leaders. *Educational
Leadership*, *65*(1), 74-77.

Heck, R. H., & Hallinger, P. (2009, September). Assessing the contribution of distributed
leadership to school improvement and growth in math achievement. *American
Educational Research Journal*, *46*(3), 659-689.

Heck, R. H., & Hallinger, P. (2010). Testing a longitudinal model of distributed leadership
effects on school improvement. *The Leadership Quarterly*, *21*(5), 867-885.
http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.leaqua.2010.07.013

Heck, R., & Hallinger, P. (2014). Modeling the longitudinal effects of school leadership on
teaching and learning. *Journal of Educational Administration*, *52*(5), 653-681.

Hickey, W. D., & Harris, S. (2005). Improved professional development through teacher
leadership. *The Rural Educator*, *26*(2), 12-16.

Hirsh, S. (2009). A New Definition. *Journal of Staff Development*, *30*(4), 10-14, 16, 70.

Hirsh, S. (2010, December). The power of one, revisited. *Journal of Staff Development*, *31*(6),
40-42, 44-45.

Holcomb, E. L. (2004). *Getting excited about data: Combining people, passion, and proof to
maximize student achievement* (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.

Kang, H. S., Cha, J., & Ha, B. (2013, April). What should we consider in teachers' professional development impact studies? Based on the conceptual framework of desimone. *Scientific Research*, *4*(4A), 11-18. http://dx.doi.org/DOI:10.4236/ce.2013.44A003

Kelley, J. R. (2011). *Teachers' and Teacher Leaders' Perceptions of the formal role of teacher leadership* (Doctoral dissertation). Retrieved from http://scholarworks.gsu.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1070&context=eps_diss

Kilinc, A. C. (2014). Examining the relationship between teacher leadership and school climate. *Educational Science: Theory & Practice*, *14*(5), 1729-1742. http://dx.doi.org/10.12738/estp.2014.5.2159

Killion, J. (2014, April 1). Study shows no difference in impact between online and face-to-face professional learning. *Journal of Staff Development*, *35*(2), 63-65.

Killion, J. (2014, August). The quality of professional learning will influence its results [Lessons from research]. *Journal of Staff Development*, *35*(4), 60-62.

Kingsly, J. (2012, January/February). Investing in teacher leaders. *Leadership*, *41*(3), 24-26.

Knight, J. (2007). *Instructional coaching: A partnership approach to improving instruction*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.

Kotter, J. P. (1990). A force for change: How leadership differs from management. *New York: Free Press*.

Kruse, S. D., & Louis, K. S. (1999). Professional communities and learning communities: What school leaders need to know. *Orbit*, *30*, 9-11.

Little, J. W. (1990). The persistence of privacy: Autonomy and initiative in teachers' professional relations. *Teachers College Record*, *91*(4), 509-536.

Louis, K. S., Marks, H. M., & Kruse, S. (1996). Teachers' professional community in

      restructuring schools. *American Educational Research Journal*, *33*(4), 757-798.

Maloney, D., Moore, T., & Taylor, M. (2011, October). Grassroots growth: The evolution of a

      teacher study group. *Journal of Staff Development*, *32*(5), 46-49, 54.

Margolis, J., & Huggins, K. S. (2012, September 1). Distributed but undefined: New teacher

      leader roles to change schools. *Journal of School Leadership*, *22*(5), 953-981.

Marsh, J. A., Farrell, C. C., & Bertrand, M. (2016, March). Trickle-down accountability: How

      middle school teachers engage students in data use. *Educational Policy*, *30*(2), 243-280.

      http://dx.doi.org/10.1177/0895904814531653

Marzano, R. J. (2003). *What works in schools: Translating research into action*. Alexandria,

      VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.

Marzano, R. J., Pickering, D. J., & Pollock, J. E. (2001). *Classroom instruction that works:*

      Research-based strategies for increasing student achievement. Alexandria, VA:

      Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.

Marzano, R. J., Waters, T., & McNulty, B. A. (2005). *School leadership that works: From*

      research to results. Denver, CO: Mid-continent Research for Education and Learning.

Mayrowetz, D. (2008, August). Making sense of distributed leadership: Exploring the multiple

      usages of the concept in the field. *Educational Administration Quarterly*, *44*(3), 424-435.

      http://dx.doi.org/10.1177/0013161X07309480

Muijs, D. (2011). Leadership and organisational performance: From research to prescription?

      The International Journal of Educational Management, *25*(1), 45-60.

      http://dx.doi.org/10.1108/09513541111100116

Muijs, D., & Harris, A. (2006, November). Teacher led school improvement: Teacher leadership
in the UK. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, *22*(8), 961-972.
http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2006.04.010

Muijs, D., & Harris, A. (2007, January). Teacher leadership in (In)action: Three case studies of
contrasting schools. *Educational Management Administration & Leadership*, *35*(1), 111-
134. http://dx.doi.org/10.1177/1741143207071387

Northouse, P. G. (2013). *Leadership: Theory and practice* (6th ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage
Publications.

Patton, M. Q. (2015). *Qualitative research and evaluation methods: Integrating theory and
practice* (4th ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Popham, W. J. (2008). *Classroom assessment: What teachers need to know* (5th ed.). Boston,
MA: Pearson Education.

Reagle, C. (2006). Creating effective schools where all students can learn. *The Rural Educator*,
27(3), 24-33.

Ringler, M., O'Neal, D., Rawls, J., & Cumiskey, S. (2013). The role of school leaders in teacher
leadership development. *The Rural Educator*, *35*(1), 34-43.

Ross, D., Adams, A., Bondy, E., Dana, N., Dodman, S., & Swain, C. (2011, November).
Preparing teacher leaders: Perceptions of the impact of a cohort-based, job embedded,
blended teacher leadership program. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, *27*(8), 1213-1222.
http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2011.06.005

Schlechty, P. C. (2011). *Engaging students: The next level of working on the work*. San
Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Schmoker, M. (2004, February). Tipping point: From feckless reform to substantive instructional improvement. *Phi Delta Kappan*, *85*(6), 424, 426-432.

Senge, P., Roberts, A., Ross, R., & Smith, B. (1994). *The fifth discipline fieldbook: Strategies and tools for building a learning organization*. New York: Doubleday/Currency.

Shelton, M. P. (2014). *Teacher leadership: Development and research based on teacher leader model standards* (Doctoral dissertation). Retrieved from http://search.proquest.com.iris.etsu.edu:2048/docview/1560248147/

Sherry, L., & Gibson, D. (2002). The path to teacher leadership in educational technology. *Contemporary Issues in Technology and Teacher Education*, *2*(2). Retrieved from http://www.citejournal.org/volume-2/issue-2-02/general/the-path-to-teacher-leadership-in-educational-technology

Smylie, M. A., Mayrowetz, D., Murphy, J., & Louis, K. S. (2007, July 1). Trust and the development of distributed leadership. *Journal of School Leadership*, *17*(4), 469-503.

Spillane, J. P. (2005). Distributed Leadership. *The Educational Forum*, *69*(2), 143-150.

Stiggins, R., Arter, J., Chappuis, J., & Chappuis, S. (2007). *Classroom assessment for student learning: Doing it right--using it well*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Education.

Supovitz, J. A., Mayer, D. P., & Kahle, J. B. (2000, July). Promoting inquiry-based instructional practice: The longitudinal impact of professional development in the context of systemic reform. *Educational Policy*, *14*(3), 331-356. http://dx.doi.org/10.1177/0895904800014003001

Taylor, M., Yates, A., Meyer, L., & Kinsella, P. (2011, January). Teacher professional leadership in support of teacher professional development. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, *27*(1), 85-94. http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2010.07.005

Teacher Leader Model Standards website. (2012).

    http://www.teacherleaderstandards.org/standards_overview

Teacher Leadership Exploratory Consortium. (2011). *Teacher leader model standards*.

Tennessee Department of Education. (2014). *Worth beyond measure: Tennessee teacher leader*

    guidebook. Retrieved from http://team-tn.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/08/Tennessee-

    Teacher-Leader-Guidebook.pdf

Tennessee Department of Education. (2015). *Teacher leader guidebook: 2014-15 Tennessee*

    teacher leader network. Retrieved from

    https://www.tn.gov/assets/entities/education/attachments/331047_tchr_leader_guidebook

    _web.pdf

Tennessee Department of Education. (n.d.).

    http://www.tennessee.gov/education/topic/differentiated-pay

Tennessee Department of Education website. (n.d.). https://www.tn.gov/education/topic/teacher-

    leader-guidebook

Van de Walle, J. A., Karp, K. S., Lovin, L. H., & Bay-Williams, J. M. (2014). *Teaching student*

    centered mathematics: Developmentally appropriate instruction for grades 3-5 (2nd ed.).

    Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Education.

Vernon-Dotson, L. J., & Floyd, L. O. (2012, January 1). Building leadership capacity via school

    partnerships and teacher teams. *The Clearing House*, *85*(1), 38-49.

    http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/00098655.2011.607477

Wei, R. C., Darling-Hammond, L., & Adamson, F. (2010). *Professional development in the*

    United States: Trends and challenges. Retrieved from Learning Forward website:

    http://learningforward.org/docs/pdf/nsdcstudytechnicalreport2010.pdf?sfvrsn=0

Wei, R. C., Darling-Hammond, L., Andree, A., Richardson, N., & Orphanos, S. (2009).

    Professional learning in the learning profession: A status report on teacher development

    in the US and abroad. Retrieved from Learning Forward website:

    http://learningforward.org/docs/pdf/nsdcstudytechnicalreport2009.pdf?sfvrsn=0

Weiss, I. R., & Pasley, J. D. (2007, May). Teaching math and science: Improving instruction

    through local systemic change initiatives. *Phi Delta Kappan*, *88*(9), 669-675.

Westerberg, T. R. (2013, March). Feedback for teachers: Focused, specific, and constructive.

    Principal Leadership, *13*(7), 30-33.

Wiggins, G., & McTighe, J. (2007). *Schooling by design: Mission, action, and achievement*.

    Alexandria, VA: ASCD.

Wiliam, D., & Leahy, S. (2014). Sustaining formative assessment with teacher learning

    communities. Retrieved from http://www.dylanwiliamcenter.com/files/pdf/Sustaining-

    TLCs-20140829.pdf?aliId=89372614

York-Barr, J., & Duke, K. (2004). What do we know about teacher leadership? Findings from

    two decades of scholarship. *Review of Educational Research*, *74*(3), 255-316.

VITA

ASHLEY P. CARTER

Education:	Ed. D. Educational Leadership, East Tennessee State University, Johnson City, Tennessee 2016 M.A. Teaching, East Tennessee State University, Johnson City, Tennessee 2009 B.A. Business Administration and Economics, King College, Bristol, Tennessee, 2006 Gate City High School, Gate City, Virginia 2003
Professional Experience:	Tennessee's Teacher Advisory Council, Tennessee Department of Education, Nashville, Tennessee 2014-2016 Teacher Leader, Kingsport City Schools, Kingsport, Tennessee, 2012-2016 Teacher, John Adams Elementary School, Kingsport, Tennessee, 2009-2016 Graduate Assistant, East Tennessee State University, School of Continuing Studies, 2007-2009
Publications:	Carter, Ashley (2014). Surviving and Thriving the First Five Years. *Tennessee Classroom Chronicles*. Retrieved from http://tnclassroomchronicles.org/surviving-first-five-years/ Carter, Ashley (2011). An Out of Eden Experience. *UETCTM News, vol. 12 (3).* Retrieved from www.uetctm.org
Honors and Awards:	John Adams Elementary School Teacher of the Year; Kingsport City Schools Elementary Teacher of the Year; First Tennessee CORE Regional Teacher of the Year; East Tennessee Grade Division Teacher of the Year 2015 Eastman Putting Children First Grant for Mathematics 2013