Professional Learning Communities and School Culture: A Case of Study in District-Wide Implementation of a PLC

Jaime Lopez

The University of Texas Rio Grande Valley

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Professional Learning Communities and School Culture: A Case Study in District-Wide Implementation of a PLC

By

Jaime Lopez

A Dissertation Presented to the Graduate Faculty of the College of Education in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Education

In Curriculum and Instruction

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(June, 2015)
PROFESSIONAL LEARNING COMMUNITIES AND SCHOOL CULTURE: A CASE STUDY IN DISTRICT-WIDE PLC IMPLEMENTATION

A dissertation Presented to the
Faculty of the College of Education
The University of Texas at Brownsville

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree of
Doctorate of Education in Curriculum and Instruction

by

Jaime Lopez

June 2015
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ABSTRACT

PROFESSIONAL LEARNING COMMUNITIES AND SCHOOL CULTURE: A CASE STUDY ON DISTRICT WIDE PLC IMPLEMENTATION

Jaime Lopez

The University of Texas at Brownsville, 2015

The purpose of this study is to explore what influence a school district’s transformation to a PLC had on culture. In particular, the study examined what dimensions of a PLC are evident, how the district approached the change process, and its influence on student achievement. The methodology employed in this study is a Type 2 single-case study. Data regarding this district’s implementation of a PLC, and its influence on school culture was gathered via sources of evidence common in case study research; survey, documents, archival records, direct observations, and interviews.

In summary, the findings suggest the following; (1) PLC work influenced the development of Hord’s 5 dimensions of a PLC to varying degrees; (2) the district is at the implementation phase of the change process; (3) the superintendent played a key role in PLC implementation through his understanding and use of a change model; and (4) archival data noted changes in student achievement scores throughout PLC implementation. Overall, the findings suggest that the implementation of structural changes influenced the development of a culture of learning and collaboration in the district.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to extend my sincerest gratitude to my chair, Dr. Jesus “Chuey” Abrego for his commitment and passion, and for recognizing my potential as a scholar. I wish to thank my committee members; Dr. Alma Rodriguez and Dr. Lionel Javier Cavazos for their contribution to my research. I would also like to thank Dr. Anita Pankake for her contribution to this project.

To Dr. Noe Sauceda, I want to acknowledge that without your support accomplishing this goal would have been nearly impossible. You provided me the most important element I needed to complete this project, time. Working with you gave me the time that I needed to gather data and write the dissertation, and for that I am grateful.

To my parents, Daniel and Dalia Lopez, I am forever grateful for inculcating in me the work ethic, morals, and values that have guided me in my profession, education, and life. Without those valuable lessons I would not have been able to accomplish this project. This project is a testament of your dedication and devotion as parents.

Finally, I would like to dedicate this dissertation study to my family, Jessica, Jaime Daniel, Alicia, and little Antonio. First and foremost, all of you are my inspiration. Jessica, my loving wife, thank you for your unequivocal support. There were many changes and sacrifices we encountered as a family, but your devotion has been the bonding glue that holds us together.

To my eldest son, Jaime Daniel, thank you for being my study buddy. I hope that this achievement serves as an example that you can accomplish any goal you set for yourself. To my daughter, Alicia, thank you for being the force that makes me view life through a different lens. Finally, little Antonio, thank you for being the reason to stay home and study. Without the support of my family I would have never been able to complete this project, and most of all, thank you for learning with me.
CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Across the country the pressures of accountability and the continuing challenge to educate all students have forced school leaders to search for strategies that lead to sustainable school improvement (Huffman & Hipp, 2003, 2010). Improving schools has been in the lexicon of school reform in the past decades. The 1960s welcomed school reform efforts aimed at improving schooling outcomes; the 1970s saw the introduction of efforts aimed at increasing accountability for funds spent on education; and the 1980s introduced the American public to a multitude of federal and state commission reports (Weller & Weller, 1997).

In the 1980s public education reform efforts began to focus on the influence of work settings on workers (Hord, 1997). Rosenholtz (1989) brought the teacher workplace to the forefront on the discussion of teaching quality, and argued that teachers who felt supported in their learning and classroom practice were more effective. Further, Rosenholtz found that teachers with a high sense of their own efficacy were more likely to adopt new classroom practices and stay in the profession. McLaughlin and Talbert (1993) confirmed Rosenholtz's findings, suggesting that when teachers had opportunities for collaborative inquiry and the learning related to it, they were able to develop and implement classroom practices that supported school improvement.

In the 1990s reform efforts shifted from standards to organizational learning, and sociocultural theories (Hipp & Huffman, 2010c; Knapp, 2008). Drawing from the work of Astuto, Clark, Read, McGree, and Fernandez (1993) on professional community of learners, and Senge’s (2006) work on learning organizations, Hord (1997) conceptualized a professional learning community (PLC) as a school organization model designed to foster collaboration and continuous learning among educators to facilitate school improvement. Her research outlines
five dimensions that include: (1) Supportive and Shared Leadership; (2) Shared Values and Vision; (3) Collective Learning and Application; (4) Shared Personal Practice; and (5) Supportive Conditions (Hord, 1997, 2004a). Researchers and practitioners agree that PLCs are a promising educational reform and school improvement strategy (DuFour, DuFour, & Eaker, 2008; Hipp & Huffman, 2010c; Roy & Hord, 2006) that has consistently made a positive impact on student achievement results (DuFour et al., 2008; DuFour & Eaker, 1998; Fullan, 2005b; Hord & Sommers, 2008; Huffman & Hipp, 2003). Similarly, Huffman and Hipp (2003) contend that PLCs are the best hope for school reform.

Many educational organizations have embraced the concept of a PLC (DuFour, Eaker, & DuFour, 2005b) and educational researchers and organizational theorists concur that PLCs are the best known method of achieving wide scale improvements in teaching and learning (Schmoker, 2004). Organizations such as the National Association of Elementary School Principals (2008) defined the job of school leaders as creating learning communities, and the National Association of Secondary School Principals (2004) called upon school leaders to implement PLCs as one of the three key strategies to improve the learning experience for the student. Furthermore, the National Commission on Teaching and America’s Future (2003), an organization created for the sole purpose of developing strategies for recruiting, preparing and supporting an exemplary teaching force, concluded that quality teaching requires PLCs.

Conceptual Framework

This study draws from a social constructivist worldview to examine how the implementation of a PLC influenced the transformation of one school district’s culture. According to Vygotsky (1978) individuals create knowledge from one another, collaboratively creating a small culture of shared meanings. Similarly, Creswell (2009) suggests that social
constructivists assume that individuals seek understanding of the world in which they live and work. This study focuses on two constructs from a social constructivist worldview; organizational and human relations theory. Organizational theory and human relations theory complement each other by attending to the different aspects of organizational activity (Knapp, 2008).

Within organizational theory, organizational learning (OL) is an area of knowledge that studies the way an organization learns and adapts (Spohrer, 2008). Knapp (2008) contends that OL is a construct that can give richer meaning to activities in school reform involving the flow of information, its interpretation, and how the organization processes its experience in reform events. Organizations implementing OL understand their process of learning, and how that learning impacts organizational behavior for improvement (Collinson, Cook, & Conley, 2006; Knapp, 2008).

The second field of literature influencing this study is human relations. Drawing from the work of Mayo (1930) human relation theory is an approach to management based on the idea that employees are motivated not only by financial reward but also by a range of social factors such as praise, a sense of belonging, feelings of achievement, and pride in one's work. His research found that productivity increased when workers were a part of a supportive group where each employee's work had a significant effect on the team output (Mayo, 1930).

In PLCs, teachers are involved in ways that go beyond their classroom instructional roles (Huffman & Hipp, 2003). As teachers and administrators come together collectively, they study in a social context what they consider to be areas in need of attention and to make decisions about what they need to learn to become more effective (Hord, 2003; Knapp, 2008). According
to (Hipp & Huffman, 2010c) the term *professional learning community* emerged from organizational theory and human relations literature.

**Theoretical Framework**

Hord’s (1997) five dimensions of a PLC were used as the theoretical framework to anchor this study for two reasons. First, Hord is considered the originator of the concept of PLC (Hord & Sommers, 2008; Jackson & Good, 2009). Second, the five dimensions of a PLC emerged from an extensive review of the literature focused on school improvement efforts (Hord, 1997). Her work on PLCs is the result of a 5-year study (1995-2000) conducted by Southwest Educational Development Laboratory (SEDL), funded by the U.S. Department of Education (Hord, 2004a). After the initial 5-year study, a small research team conducted research from 2001-2007 on the two highest performing schools from the original study (Hipp & Huffman, 2010c). Researchers analyzed the data collected from both studies to examine and substantiate Hord’s (1997) model of the five dimensions of a PLC (Hipp & Huffman, 2010c). Hord’s research outlined five dimensions:

1. **Supportive and Shared Leadership** requires the collegial and facilitative participation of the principal who shares leadership by inviting staff input and action in decision-making.
2. **Shared Values and Vision** include an unwavering commitment to student learning that is consistently articulated and referenced in staff’s work.
3. **Collective Learning and Application** of learning requires that school staff at all levels are engaged in the processes that collectively seek new knowledge among staff and application of the learning solutions that address students’ needs.
4. **Shared Personal Practice** involves the review of a teacher’s behavior by colleagues and includes feedback and assistance activity to support individual and community improvement.
5. **Supportive Conditions** include physical conditions and human capacities that encourage and sustain a collegial atmosphere and collective learning (Hord, 2004a, p. 7).

Hipp and Huffman (2010b) noted two types of conditions necessary to build effective PLCs; structures and relationships. Structures refers to the systems used to allow staff members to
come together to work and learn without infringing on their personal time (Hipp & Huffman, 2010b). Relationships refers to the creation of a culture of trust, respect, and inclusiveness to better develop the community of learners (Hipp & Huffman, 2010b). These dimensions do not operate in isolation but are intertwined; each dimension affects the others in a variety of ways (Hipp & Huffman, 2010c; Hord, 2004a; Huffman & Hipp, 2003).

Stoll and Louis (2007b) contend that PLCs are an integral part of today’s educational world. Similarly, Schmoker (2006) contends that PLCs have “emerged as the best, most agreed upon means to continuously improve instruction and student performance” (p.106). Hord (2004a) identified four factors that are likely to be present when a school develops into a PLC;

1. **Student learning.** Teachers agree on a vision of authentic (in agreement with real world experience or actuality, not contrived) and high quality intellectual work for students that includes intellectually challenging learning tasks and clear goals for high quality learning. The vision is communicated to students and parents.

2. **Authentic pedagogy.** High quality student learning is achieved in classrooms through authentic pedagogy (instruction and assessment), and students of all social backgrounds benefit equally, regardless of race, gender, or income.

3. **Organizational capacity.** In order to provide learning of high intellectual quality, the capacity of the staff to work well as a unit must be developed. The most successful schools functioned as professional communities, where teachers helped one another, took collective (not just individual) responsibility for student learning, and worked continuously to improve their teaching practices. Schools with strong professional communities offered more authentic pedagogy and were more effective in encouraging student achievement.

4. **External support.** Schools need essential financial, technical, and political support from districts, state and federal agencies, parents, and other citizens (Hord, 2004a, p. 13).

Converting schools into PLCs will not eliminate all the problems in education; however, it is certainly plausible that their development will result in the kind of understanding and learning needed to implement and sustain school improvement strategies (Hord, 2004a). PLCs are not an improvement program, but rather a structure for schools to improve staff by building capacity for learning and change (Hord, 2004a). Staff in schools with established PLCs put learning first
before achievement and testing, and student achievement improves as a consequence (Stoll & Louis, 2007a).

Statement of the Problem

As the idea and implementation of PLCs has spread, its original intent of creating communities of professionals coming together to work collaboratively for the benefit of improved student learning and achievement is rapidly being lost (DuFour, 2004; Hargreaves, 2007). “While the term has become widespread, the underlying practices have not, and many of the schools that proudly proclaim to be professional learning communities do none of the things PLCs actually do” (DuFour & DuFour, 2012, p. 3). Hargreaves (2007) contends that:

In principle, the idea of professional learning communities engenders broad support. It appeals to both Left and Right, to those who value process as well as those who care about the product, to those who demand hard evidence and those who value soft skills, to evidence as well as experience, relationships in addition to results. The inclusive appeal of ideas such as professional learning communities, like the very idea of community itself, can establish enthusiasm, attract adherents, and build initial commitment. But this very attractive inclusiveness can also be its undoing when planning is followed by implementation and impassioned rhetoric is converted into an imperfect reality (p. 182).

There are many educators who describe their PLC as a grade level meeting or subject department meeting in which individuals meet for the sake of meeting (Hord & Roussin, 2013; Hord, Roussin, & Sommers, 2010). Hargreaves (2007) cautions educators that PLCs are becoming add-on programs driven by the need to attain instant results. This trend will result in what Fullan calls (2005b) “temporary havens of excellence” (p. 210) that have come and gone via other school reforms.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to explore what influence the school district’s transformation into a PLC had on the district’s culture, identify specific actions and processes used by the district that facilitated change, and examine PLCs influence on student learning. The connection
between culture and PLCs is critical and acknowledges that dynamic school cultures contribute to their development through establishing norms, values, and practices (Hipp & Huffman, 2010c). Hipp, Huffman, Pankake, and Olivier (2008) proffered that

As schools transform into professional learning communities, the conceptualization becomes rooted within the school’s culture and a structure emerges providing both a foundation and a guide for learning goals, strategies and outcomes. This infrastructure is evident as the critical attributes and dimensions of a PLC process unfolds and becomes embedded into a transformed culture (Hipp et al., 2008, p. 177).

Therefore, in examining PLCs the school’s culture becomes an essential part of the research study.

**Research Questions**

The overarching question in this study was; what influence does the implementation of a PLC have in one school district’s culture? Therefore, data were gathered and analyzed to address the following sub-questions.

1. What dimensions of a PLC are evident in this school district?
2. How did South Central ISD (SCISD) facilitate the change process?
3. How has the implementation of a PLC influenced student achievement?

The methodology employed in this study is a Type 2 single-case study to gather and analyze data. A Type 2 single case-study design allows the researcher to examine a case within its natural setting, and focus on a particular subunit (Yin, 2009). Information regarding this district’s efforts to implement a PLC, and the PLC implementation’s influence on school culture were gathered via quantitative and qualitative methods. Descriptive statistics were used to analyze survey data gathered from central and campus administrators, teachers and other professional staff. Data gathered from different sources of evidence were triangulated for reliability.
Significance of the Study

The review of the literature uncovered a limited amount of empirical evidence examining PLC work at the district level and in schools with a high population of Latino students. First, Fullan (2005b) proposed a shift from what researchers refer to as the culture of the school to a larger focus of the culture of the district. Fullan suggested postulating PLCs in a larger perspective because there has been a fair amount of research conducted at the school level. Therefore, he noted that minimal or no research exists at the district level where all or most of the high schools have established PLCs.

Second, the review of the literature revealed limited empirical evidence on PLCs in schools serving a predominantly Latino student population. As Latino students continue to struggle academically, research on reform strategies that could potentially improve student learning is essential (Gandara & Contreras, 2009). The demographics of this research site will help administrators make decisions on school improvements efforts. The findings of this study add to the literature on PLCs by documenting the change process and challenges that a district experiences as it engages in districtwide PLC work.

Delimitations

Delimitations are the factors that prevent the researcher from claiming that the findings of their research are applicable to all populations at all times and places (Bryant, 2004). This study is delimited to the south central area of the United States. Limiting this research to this specific school district was intentional because the researcher wanted to target the demographics of this area due to limited research on this topic in this geographical location. Therefore, the findings are delimited to school districts with similar demographics.
Definitions of the Terms

- **Collaboration**: In a PLC collaboration “is a systemic process in which teachers work together, interdependently, to analyze and impact professional practice in order to improve results for their students, their team, and their school” (DuFour et al., 2008, p. 16).

- **Culture**: Barth (2007) defined the school culture as the complex norms, patterns, attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors, values, ceremonies, traditions, and myths that are deeply engrained in the very core of the school district (p.160).

- **Learning Organizations**: Senge (2006) defined a learning organization as an organization that is continually expanding its capacity to create its future (p.14).

- **Organizational Learning**: Organizational learning is a change theory that proposes that organizations possess the capacity to learn and grow in ways that mirror the learning of individuals (Argyris & Schön, 1996).

- **PLC Work**: The term PLC Work refers to the activities that aid in the development of a PLC (Nelson, 2009).

- **Professional Learning Communities (PLCs)**: Hord (2004a) defined a PLC as a structure for schools to continuously improve by building staff capacity for learning and change (p.14).

- **Professional Learning Communities Assessment- Revised (PLCA-R)**: The PLCA-R is a diagnostic tool for identifying school level practices that support intentional professional learning (Hipp & Huffman, 2010c, pp. 30-31).
• **Reculturing**: Reculturing is a change in culture that occurs by developing values, norms, and attitudes that affect the core of the culture of schools (Huffman & Hipp, 2003, p. 15).

• **Sustainability**: Fullan (2005a) defined sustainability as the “capacity of a system to engage in the complexities of continuous improvement consistent with the deep values of human purpose” (p. ix).

• **Sociocultural learning theories**: Sociocultural learning theories come from sociological and anthropological ideas that locate human learning in social interactions, and view learning as inseparable from individuals and their social, cultural, and institutional contexts (Rogoff, 1994).

• **Teacher leadership** is defined as a process by which teachers, collectively, influence their colleagues, principals, and other members of school communities to improve teaching and learning practices with the aim of increased student learning and achievement.

**Chapter Summary**

This chapter provided an introduction of the study, and discussed the conceptual and theoretical frameworks. The statement of the problem, purpose of the study, and research questions that guided the study were presented. The significance section outlined the importance of this study. The delimitations of the study were discussed, and terms relevant to this study were defined.

Chapter Two presents a review of the literature that examines different aspects of a PLC. This chapter examines the literatures on the definition and characteristics of PLCs, Hord’s five dimensions of a PLC, PLC and school improvement, and change in education. The final section
examines the literature through three frames proposed by Mullen and Schunk (2010) relevant to PLCs: leadership, organization, and culture.
CHAPTER 2: REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

This literature review provides a foundation to situate and survey the literature on Professional Learning Communities (PLCs). The review provided a theoretical framework that laid the groundwork for the development of the problem statement and provided a conceptual understanding for the analysis of data collected for the study. This chapter begins with the definition and five dimensions of a PLC. The following sections review the literature on PLCs and school improvement, as well as change in education. The final section examines the literature on PLCs through three frames proposed by Mullen and Schunk (2010): leadership, organization, and culture. For the purpose of this literature review, the term frame is defined as a lens for identifying the possibilities for school teams that underscores more extensive purposes, functions, and activities (Greeno, Collins, & Resnick, 1996). Moreover, the categorization of these three frames is artificial because they overlap and inform each other (Mullen & Schunk, 2010)

Selecting Relevant Literature

Searches on the electronic databases found in the education section of the university’s library consisted of SAGE, EBSCO, and Wilson-Web databases. Google Scholar was also used to conduct searches for relevant literature. The following key terms were used to search for relevant research;

- professional learning communities and school improvement
- professional learning communities and educational change
- professional learning communities and leadership
- professional learning communities and organizational learning
- professional learning communities and learning organizations
- professional learning communities and school culture
- professional learning communities and district leadership
Using these key terms to survey the field provided the researcher a wealth of literature on PLCs within the contexts of school improvement, change, leadership, organization, and culture.

Another search for literature using the terms professional learning communities and Hord was conducted to survey the field for empirical studies specific to Hord’s framework. The criteria were as follows: (1) empirical study was published between 1997 and 2013, the year 1997 was used because that was Hord’s initial publication on PLCs; (2) published in a peer-reviewed journal; and (3) drew from Hord’s (1997, 1998, 2004a; Hord & Sommers, 2008) work on PLCs. Sixteen empirical studies fit the criteria for this review (Abrego & Pankake, 2011; Andrews & Lewis, 2002; Giles & Hargreaves, 2006; Graham, 2007; Hipp et al., 2008; Huffman, 2003b; Huffman & Jacobson, 2003; Huffman, Pankake, & Muñoz, 2006; Huggins, Scheurich, & Morgan, 2011; Kilbane, 2009; Lee, Zhang, & Yin, 2011; Levine, 2011; Moller, 2006; Wells & Feun, 2007; Williams, Cate, & O'Hair, 2009; Wong, 2010).

Professional Learning Communities

Defining professional learning communities

PLC has become an umbrella term for different definitions and frameworks (Barth, 2010; DuFour et al., 2008). The review of the literature revealed different definitions, frameworks, and applications of the concept of a PLC within the field of education. Hord and Hirsh (2008) used each of the terms represented in the acronym PLC to give additional clarity to the concepts involved

- **P = Professional.** *Who will participate in the PLC?* The answer includes both staff and a school who have the responsibility and accountability to deliver an effective instructional program to students, ensuring that students achieve high standards of learning. PLCs include the administrators, teachers, and instructional support staff, who are counselors, librarians, school psychologist, and others.

- **L = Learning.** *What will dominate the work of a PLC?* The needs of the professionals are paramount-the content and activities, the knowledge and skills, and they feel are necessary to support improved instructional practice and to
increase their effectiveness. The PLC is structured around adults learning so that they develop, over time, the competencies required to ensure successful student learning.

- **C = Community.** *How is learning structured and organized to support educators in advancing their knowledge and skills?* PLCs require structures and processes to leverage the benefits of adult collegial learning (p. 24).

In reviewing the literature using Hord’s five dimensions as a theoretical framework, the following three studies applied different definitions of a PLC (Hipp & Huffman, 2010c; Huggins et al., 2011; Levine, 2011; Sargent & Hannum, 2009). Sargent and Hannum (2009) define PLCs as existing when two broad categories of activities are present; (1) when teachers regularly interact about teaching and learning; (2) when teachers produce knowledge about teaching through professional growth, such as teacher research and publications. On the other hand, two studies (Huggins et al., 2011; Levine, 2011) concentrate the definition of a PLC as a process, or subject specific group. Levine (2011) presented his understanding of PLCs as a two-step process. First, the school leader either announces a new vision for the school, or works with the staff to develop a shared vision. Second, leaders work tirelessly to ensure the collaborative teams improve results using student achievement data. On the other hand, Huggins et al. (2011) define PLCs as a subject specific group of teachers undertaking efforts to implement project based learning. Finally, Hipp and Huffman (2010c) define PLCs as “professional educators working collectively and purposefully to create and sustain a culture of learning for all students and adults” (p. 12). In summary, different researchers use varying definitions of PLC. The definitions range from subject specific groups to a process to creating cultures encompassing of all professional staff working together to improve student learning. For the purpose of this study, the researcher used Hord’s (1997) definition which conceptualizes PLCs as a model designed to foster collaboration and continuous learning among educators to facilitate school improvement. Hord’s (1997) five dimensions of a PLC were used as the theoretical framework.
to anchor this study because Hord is considered the originator of the concept of PLC (Hord & Sommers, 2008; Jackson & Good, 2009). Furthermore, the five dimensions of a PLC emerged from an extensive review of the literature focused on school improvement efforts and a 5-year study (1995-2000) conducted by Southwest Educational Development Laboratory (SEDL), funded by the U.S. Department of Education (Hord, 2004a).

**Characteristics of professional learning communities**

The literature revealed different characteristics that represent PLCs. For example, DuFour, DuFour and Eaker’s (2008) framed PLCs around six characteristics; (1) shared mission, vision, and values; (2) collective inquiry; (3) collaborative teams; (4) action orientation and experimentation; (5) continuous improvement; (6) results orientation. Their characteristics of a PLC added a results-oriented characteristic that is a point of contention in the discourse on PLCs. They argue that the first five characteristics must be assessed on the basis of “results rather than intentions” (p. 29). Furthermore, DuFour et al. (2008) declared that “unless initiatives are subjected to ongoing assessment on the basis of tangible results, they represent a random grouping” (p.29). On the other hand, Hord and Hirsh (2008) and Hipp and Huffman (2010c) contend that PLCs should place an emphasis on staff learning that results in increased student achievement. Similarly, Hargreaves (2007) argued that results oriented PLCs established as add on programs to achieve instant results are a diversion from their original intent of bringing teachers and staff members together to create a culture of collegiality aimed at improving student learning.

Table 1 presents five attributes and their characteristics identified by Roy and Hord (2006) as they reviewed 15 years of research on PLCs.
Table 1.
Comparison of Professional Learning Community Characteristics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristics</th>
<th>A</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>C</th>
<th>D</th>
<th>E</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Organizational scope</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Collaborative team focus</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
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<tr>
<td>Whole staff focus</td>
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<td><strong>Supportive and Shared Leadership</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Collegial and facilitated participation</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
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<tr>
<td>Shared leadership and shared decision making</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
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<td>X</td>
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<tr>
<td>Supportive leader</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
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<td>X</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Collective Learning and Application</strong></td>
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<td>Reflective dialogue</td>
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<td>Inquiry</td>
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<td>Application and use</td>
<td>X</td>
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<td>Assess efforts (data, interim assessments)</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Shared value and vision</strong></td>
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<td>Focus on student learning</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
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<tr>
<td>Shared vision and values</td>
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<tr>
<td>Vision used for decision making</td>
<td>X</td>
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<td><strong>Supportive Conditions</strong></td>
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<td>Physical and structural (Schedules, time, physical</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
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<td>proximity, communication structures)</td>
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<td>Human capacities (trust, respect, feedback, collegial</td>
<td>X</td>
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<td>relationships, risk taking</td>
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<td><strong>Shared practice</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Peers helping peers</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
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<tr>
<td>Observation and feedback</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Note.  A = (Hord, 2004b); B = (DuFour, Eaker, & DuFour, 2005a); C = (Louis & Kruse, 1995); D = (National Association of Elementary School Principals, 2004); E = (Rosenholtz, 1989)

(Roy & Hord, 2006, p. 492)

**Five Dimensions of a Professional Learning Community**

Drawing from the work of Hord (1997), Hipp and Huffman (2010c) outlined five dimensions of a PLC; Supportive and Shared Leadership; Shared Values and Vision; Collective
Learning and Application; Shared Personal Practice; and Supportive Conditions. Together the five dimensions of a PLC (Hord, 1997) provide a holistic picture of how a PLC operates and the actions school leaders must take to create such a culture (Hipp & Huffman, 2010c). These dimensions do not stand alone, and at some point intertwine and inform each other (Hipp & Huffman, 2010c; Hord, 2004b; Huffman, 2003b; Huffman & Hipp, 2003).

**Supportive and shared leadership**

According to Hord (1997, 2003, 2004a; Hord & Sommers, 2008) Supportive and Shared Leadership refers to the development of structures that allow for power and authority to be shared, within a school environment. Hipp and Huffman (2010c) outlined critical attributes in this dimension. They include; nurturing leadership among staff; sharing power, authority, and responsibility; broad-based decision making that reflects commitment and accountability; and sharing information. The school change and educational leadership literature recognizes the role and influence the campus leader plays in the implementation of a PLC (Hord et al., 2010). Eaker, DuFour, and DuFour (2002) argued that in traditional schools administrators are viewed as being in leadership positions and teachers function as followers, meanwhile in PLCs administrators are considered leaders of leaders. Transforming a school organization into a PLC can only be accomplished with the support and active nurturing of the entire staff by the school leadership (Hord et al., 2010; Thompson, Gregg, & Niska, 2004). Moller (2006) examined the dimension of Supportive and Shared Leadership to identify the contexts that build the capacity of teachers to share leadership. Moller found that the principal played a key role in the development of the conditions that promote Supportive and Shared Leadership.
**Shared values and vision**

The second dimension, Shared Values and Vision, calls for leaders to develop an undeviating organizational focus on student learning and norms that support decisions about teaching and learning (Hipp & Huffman, 2010c). The critical attributes outlined by Hipp and Huffman (2010c) include espoused values and norms, student learning, high expectations, and shared vision that guides teaching and learning. Similarly, Hord (1997) identified a shared vision as a concept in a learning community that leads to the norms of behavior focused on student learning and supported by all stakeholders. Huffman (2003b) examined mature and less mature communities of learners to uncover the role Shared Values and Vision played on the development of a PLC. Huffman’s findings suggest that visionary leadership and collaborative strategies provide support for all stakeholders to invest the time and effort needed to create a school vision. Furthermore, she argued that it is critical for practitioners to understand “that the emergence of a strong, shared vision based on collective values provides the foundation for informed leadership, staff member commitment, student success, and sustained school growth” (Huffman, 2003b, p. 32).

**Collective learning and application**

The third dimension, Collective Learning and Application, affords all staff members opportunities to share information and work collaboratively to plan, apply what they learn, and solve problems on the improvement of learning (Hipp & Huffman, 2010c). Hipp and Huffman (2010c) identified the dimension in the following context: as sharing information; seeking new knowledge, skills and encouragement; and working collaboratively to plan, solve problems, and improve learning opportunities. Hord (1997) promoted teachers’ continuous learning by focusing on matters that are central to improving student learning. For example, Lee et al.
(2011) conducted a quantitative study to examine the PLC dimensions’ relationship to faculty trust, collective efficacy, and teacher commitment in a Chinese setting. Using factor analysis, the findings suggest that Collective Learning and Application was the only dimension found to have a significant impact on teacher’s efficacy and student discipline.

**Shared personal practice**

The fourth dimension, Shared Personal Practice, allows teachers to visit one another and provide each other feedback on instructional practice to assist in the development of organizational capacity and student learning (Hipp & Huffman, 2010c). This dimension calls for teachers to meet and observe one another to provide feedback on instructional practices to increase human capacity and student learning (Hipp et al., 2008). Of the five dimensions, Shared Personal Practice is the one dimension that studies have found to be the least evidenced (Abrego & Pankake, 2011; Ostmeyer, 2003).

The critical attributes revealed in the research on Shared Personal Practice include: peer observations to offer knowledge, skills, and encouragement; feedback to improve instructional practices; and coaching and mentoring (Hipp & Huffman, 2010c). Bandura (1997) declared that when staff members are not conscious of their professional practice, they have difficulty in changing their ideas. In other words, being conscious of behavior is a prerequisite for improvement (Bandura, 1997). Hord and Sommers (2008) further suggested that educators must be aware of their practice and remain open to finding ways to solve problems.

**Supportive conditions**

Finally, Supportive Conditions include the development of collegial relationships amongst students, teachers, and administrators (Hipp & Huffman, 2010c). Hipp and Huffman (2010c) separated this dimension into two types of conditions necessary to build effective
learning communities: structures and relationships. Structures include the use of resources such as time, money, materials, and people. Relationships refer to the development of caring relationships, trust, respect, recognition, celebration, and an overall united effort to improve student learning (Hipp & Huffman, 2010c). Additionally, under this category, educators must take into account the use of communication systems to promote collegiality amongst all stakeholders. Abrego and Pankake (2011) found that participants identified structures such as retreats and meetings promoted teamwork, collegiality, and collaboration. As teachers work in teams, and collaborate increases in student learning are expected to follow (Hipp et al., 2008)

**PLCs and School Improvement**

The following section examines the literature on school improvement. First, the term *school improvement* is defined then the remaining sections examine concepts related to school improvement. School improvement is a complex phenomenon that has different facets. Van Velzen, Miles, Exkholm, Hameyer, and Robin’s (1998) defined school improvement as a systemic sustained effort focused on changing learning conditions and other related conditions in several schools, with the ultimate aim of accomplishing established goals more effectively. Meanwhile, Harris (2002) defined school improvement as a “strategy for educational change that enhances student outcomes as well as strengthening the school’s capacity for managing change” (p. 10).

The following four concepts surfaced in the literature as essential in school improvement. Barnett and O’Mahony (2006) identified three concepts related to school improvement: learning communities, data driven school improvement, and instructional capacity. Sustainability has been identified as a related concept essential in school improvement (Blankstein, Houston, & Cole, 2008; Datnow, 2005; Fullan, 2005a; Glickman, Gordon, & Ross-Gordon, 2001).
Learning communities

According to Barnett and O’Mahony (2006), learning communities are schools where teachers seek continuous staff development in an effort to improve their professional capacity leading to improved student learning. Wells and Feun (2007) examined the efforts of teachers and school leaders in six high schools as they transformed their schools into learning communities. In analyzing their data, Wells and Feun found that in the initial stages of the transformation, teachers focused more on sharing materials and resources and tended to ignore critical issues, thereby making the implementation of a PLC at the high school level a long and difficult journey (Wells & Feun, 2007). Meanwhile, Andrews and Lewis (2002) conducted a qualitative study documenting the experiences of a group of teachers as they participated in the implementation of a process called Innovative Designs for Enhancing the Achievements of Schools (IDEAS). The IDEAS framework is based on the PLC work of Hord (1997). Andrews and Lewis’ (2002) findings illustrate how a group of teachers created a PLC through their participation in the process and how shared understanding through professional learning had an impact in the classroom.

Huffman (2003) and Wells and Feun (2007) examined the challenges different schools encountered as teachers and administrators implemented PLCs. Huffman (2003b) argued that developing a shared vision is a crucial step to consider as administrators lead their schools through reform efforts. In this regard, Moller (2006) found that teacher leadership emerged from schools where principals advocated for collaboration and found ways to provide teachers opportunities to develop these skills. Teacher leadership refers to the process by which teachers influence their colleagues to improve teaching and learning (York-Barr & Duke, 2004).
Data-driven school improvement

According to Barnett and O'Mahony (2006), *data driven school improvement* refers to developing programs that result in measurable student learning. Three studies examined student achievement (Abrego & Pankake, 2011; Hipp et al., 2008; Huggins et al., 2011). Abrego & Pankake (2011) collected data from the Academic Excellence Indicator System (AEIS) developed by the Texas Education Agency (TEA), and analyzed student achievement data encompassing a five year period in a single school district. Abrego and Pankake (2011) found a 27% increase in the number of students passing all tested areas, i.e., reading, math, social studies, writing, and science. Earlier, Hipp et al. (2008) found that both schools examined in their study demonstrated high student achievement scores on their respective state mandated test. The researchers did not include specific numbers. They only referenced the increase in student achievement scores. On the other hand, Huggins et al. (2011) examined mathematics student achievement in one urban high school as teachers engaged in PLC work. The findings suggest that math achievement increased by 15% over the span of two years of teachers being engaged in PLC work.

Instructional capacity

Five studies (Andrews & Lewis, 2002; Graham, 2007; Huggins et al., 2011; Levine, 2011; Wong, 2010) examined how PLCs influenced *instructional capacity*. Andrews and Lewis (2002) examined the implementation of the IDEAS framework and found that shared understandings through PLCs can create the cultural change necessary to impact classroom instruction. Most recently, Levine (2011) explored how school reform influenced experienced teachers. He found that PLCs might lack the resources necessary to influence experienced
teachers, thus limiting their professional growth. On the other hand, TLCs created the structures necessary to influence experienced teachers to change aspects of their work in the classroom.

Graham (2007), Huggins et al. (2011), and Wong (2010) examined change in subject specific classrooms and departments. Graham (2007) found that same subject, and same subject-grade teams that engaged in PLC activities improved teacher effectiveness. Huggins et al. (2011) focused their study on the mathematics department of one high school. Their findings indicated that there were changes in teacher practices that resulted from the participation in PLC meetings. Prior to that, Wong (2010) examined subject specific PLCs in two high schools in Shanghai. He found that through collaboration, teachers were able to build their PLCs, but this development should be contextualized. In this study, he found that several sociocultural variables hindered the development of the PLC in both schools.

**Sustainability**

Sustainability is an essential component in any school improvement effort (Datnow, 2005). Fullan (2005a) defines sustainability as the “capacity of a system to engage in the complexities of continuous improvement consistent with the deep values of human purpose” (p. ix). In his article on sustainability of school reform, Datnow (2005) suggested that when referring to sustainability, we are referring to whether the reform lasts over time. Similarly, Glickman, Gordon, and Ross-Gordon (2001) argued that successful school improvement efforts are those that continue to improve student learning over time.

Five studies (Abrego & Pankake, 2011; Giles & Hargreaves, 2006; Hipp et al., 2008; Huffman et al., 2006; Kilbane, 2009) examined the sustainability of PLCs. Hipp et al. (2008) conducted a qualitative case study documenting the ongoing journey of two schools as they become PLCs. They found that implementing and sustaining PLCs is complex work that
requires determination and growth on the part of teachers, staff, and administrators. Meanwhile, Giles and Hargreaves (2006) examined the sustainability of innovative schools over time. They identified three change forces that hindered sustainability: (1) attrition of change, (2) pressure and envy from surrounding schools, and (3) pressure from a standardized reform agenda.

Furthermore, Giles and Hargreaves (2006) noted that PLCs helped offset the first and second change forces; attrition of change and pressure and envy from surrounding schools. They found that the standardized reform agenda undermined efforts and successes of innovative schools (Giles & Hargreaves, 2006). Kilbane (2009) found that changes in administration had an impact on the sustainability of a PLC. Teachers interviewed for this study reported that changes in administration stunted the implementation of a PLC because new administrators did not continue practices started by their predecessors. The changes of administration caused a loss of momentum and stalled the PLC implementation.

In an effort to postulate PLCs as a sustainable school reform effort, Huffman et al. (2006) found evidence of the eight elements of sustainability based on the work of Fullan (2005a). These elements include: public service with a moral purpose, commitment to changing context at all levels, lateral capacity building through networks, intelligent accountability and vertical relationships, deep learning, dual commitment to short-term and long-term results, cyclical energizing, and the long lever of leadership.

More recently, Abrego and Pankake (2011) conducted a follow up case study that examined the suitability of an existing districtwide PLC. Drawing from the previous work by Ostemeyer (2003), they collected data from interviews, artifacts and a survey to examine the impact leadership change at the superintendent level had on the PLC. They found evidence of
the five dimensions of a PLC and examined structures created and implemented in this district to sustain the PLC.

**Change in Education**

Research on PLCs indicates that it is a potent strategy for organizational change, specifically in school improvement (Mullen & Schunk, 2010). However, educational change is a necessary condition for reculturing schools as PLCs (DuFour et al., 2008; Hipp & Huffman, 2010c; Huffman & Hipp, 2003). DuFour, DuFour, and Eaker (2008) asserted that “it is impossible for a school or district to develop the capacity to function as a professional learning community without undergoing profound cultural shifts” (p. 91). Furthermore, they argued that the work of developing PLCs is not just adopting or implementing new initiatives- it is the challenge of reculturing or the challenge of impacting an organization’s habits, expectations, and beliefs that constitute the norm (DuFour et al., 2008).

Next is an examination of different aspects of change in education. The first part of this section examines the *principles of change* as outlined by Hall and Hord (2011). The next section examines the *change process* proposed by Fullan (2007), types of change (i.e., *cultural* and *structural* (Wells & Feun, 2007), and the *common errors in change* (Kotter, 2010).

**Principles of Change**

Hall and Hord (2011) outlined 10 principles that resulted from their long term research agenda on what happens when people and organizations engage in change. These principles represent the aspects of change that were repeatedly observed throughout their research and can “hold true for all cases” (Hall & Hord, 2011, p. 5). Table 2 lists the 10 *principles of change* identified in Hall and Hord (2011). Following Table 2 are sections examining each *principle of change* (Hall & Hord, 2011).
Table 2

Principles of Change

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Change is learning-It’s as simple and complicated as that,</td>
<td>Change is a process, not an event,</td>
<td>The school is the primary unit for change,</td>
<td>Organizations adopt change-Individuals implement change,</td>
<td>Interventions are the key to the success of the change process,</td>
<td>Appropriate interventions reduce resistance to the change process,</td>
<td>Administrator leadership is essential to long term change success,</td>
<td>Facilitating change is a team effort,</td>
<td>Mandates can work,</td>
<td>The context influences the process of learning and change.</td>
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(Hall & Hord, 2011, p. iv)

Change Principle 1

Change is learning-It’s as simple and complicated as that

According to Hall and Hord (2011), change is a process through which people and organizations move as they gradually learn, come to understand, and become skilled and competent in the use of new ways. Thus, learning is a critical component in the change process (Hall & Hord, 2011). Learning enables people to discard old practices and replace them with new behaviors relevant to their work (Hord & Roussin, 2013). Similarly, DuFour et al. (2008) contend that job embedded learning is essential in changing the culture of district or organization.

In their study, Richmond and Manokore (2010) found that teachers collaborating with their peers resulted in the sharing of resources, teaching practices, and learned from one another. On the other hand, Wells and Feun (2013) examined the implementation of a PLC in two different districts. They found that the district that emphasized teacher learning through a
collaborative meetings, and extensive professional learning opportunities coordinated by central office facilitated the implementation of a PLC in this district (Wells & Feun, 2013).

**Change Principle 2**

*Change is a process, not an event*

Hall and Hord (2011) contend that change does not happen as a result of a one-time meeting; instead it is a process that can take years with no shortcut. Fullan (2007) notes that it takes between five to eight years for an innovation to become embedded in the organization’s culture. Wells and Feun (2007) support Hall and Hord’s (2011) notion that change is a process. In their study, they document the change efforts of six high schools that completed a nine day training program sponsored by the regional educational service agency (Wells & Feun, 2007). Similarly, Wells and Feun (2013) examined the change process in two districts and found that the district that had its administrators attend a three day workshop with the expectation they would return to campus and work with their teachers to implement PLC principles experienced frustration and anger amongst teachers. The findings in both studies (Wells & Feun, 2007, 2013) confirm that change is a slow and deliberate journey.

**Change Principle 3**

*The school is the primary unit for change*

Hall and Hord (2011) argue that the school is the key organizational unit for making change and teachers and school leaders will make or break any change effort. For example, Kilbane (2009) examined two K-8 and two comprehensive high schools after they had participated in a four year comprehensive school reform effort. He found that environmental factors such as accountability and turnover in staff, both at the teacher and principal levels, promoted a climate hostile to cultural change (Kilbane, 2009).
However, the school forms a part of a school district and must move in concert and be supported at the district level (DuFour et al., 2008; Hall & Hord, 2011). Lezotte (2001) supports this assertion and claims that school improvement resulting in improved student achievement could only be created and sustained with strong district support. Horton and Martin (2013) found that active participation at the teacher, campus administration, district administration, superintendent, and school board in the change process helped change the focus of the school to one that has a collective emphasis on student achievement and learning (Horton & Martin, 2013).

**Change Principle 4**

*Organizations adopt change- Individuals implement change*

According to Hall and Hord (2011) when organizations engage in change, they tend to focus on policy, systems, and organizational factors; nevertheless change starts and ends at the individual level. Similarly, Hord and Roussin (2013) contend that the key to implementing any innovation is the individual. Even when the change is presented to everyone at the same time, individuals will change at different rates (Hall & Hord, 2011). Some individuals will understand and implement the change immediately, while others will take some time to adopt the change, and others will avoid making the change for a very long time (Hall & Hord, 2011). Change leaders need to anticipate these patterns and provide targeted interventions to address subgroups and the organization as a whole (Hall & Hord, 2011).

Hall and Hord (2011) proposed that in order for change to be successful each member of the organization has to move across the implementation bridge. Without the implementation bridge there is little reason to expect positive outcomes, instead there are casualties as individuals attempt to make the giant leap and fail. Figure 2.1 represents the implementation bridge.
For example, Wells and Feun (2007) examined the implementation of PLCs in six high schools over a two year period. Each high school had a team that consisted of the principal, assistant principal, and four teachers complete a nine-day training program. After the completion of the program, the team was expected to return to their respective schools and implement PLC concepts at their respective schools. The findings suggest that engaging in PLC work without a plan to support teachers and administrators resulted in challenges and frustrations amongst teachers and administrators (Wells & Feun, 2007).

Change Principle 5

_interventions are the key to the success of the change process_

As individuals plan and engage in change, a focus on activities and events that can influence the change process is essential; these activities and events are known as _interventions_ (Hall & Hord, 2011). More precisely, _interventions_ are activities that support individuals in gaining the requisite capacities for behaving in new ways (Hall & Hord, 2011). On the other hand, Wells and Feun (2013) use the term _PLC work_ to identify the activities the school districts
in their study engaged in as they implemented PLCs. This descriptive study examined the PLC work conducted in two districts and found that the district that provided administrative support as teachers engaged in PLC work (Wells & Feun, 2013). Levine (2011) examined field notes from 70 collaborative meetings held amongst ninth grade teachers in two high schools. Findings suggest that schools that nurture collaboration over time can create an environment that fosters change amongst experienced teachers (Levine, 2011).

According to Hall and Hord (2011), the most common type of interventions take the form of workshops. Wells and Feun (2007) described the changes six high schools experienced after attending a nine day training program (workshop) on PLCs. Graham (2007) identified different types of activities the, duration, and focus as he examined the relationship between PLC activities and teacher improvement in one middle school. Furthermore, Williams et al. (2009) documented five high school principals participation in a 75 hour leadership development program.

**Change Principle 6**

*Appropriate interventions reduce resistance to the change process*

In most change efforts, individual resistance is a common occurrence (Hall & Hord, 2011). The level of resistance from individuals can even lead to the active sabotaging of change efforts (Hall & Hord, 2011). For example, Wells and Feun (2013) examined two districts’ implementation of a PLC and found that the district that created a plan for implementation and provided appropriate interventions was successful in engaging in meaningful PLC work. On the other hand, the second district encountered challenges because interventions were not applied at the initiation or implementation phases of the change efforts (Wells & Feun, 2013).
**Change Principle 7**

**Administrator leadership is essential to long term change success**

Administrators play an integral part in the implementation and long term support of innovation (Hall & Hord, 2011). Researchers have argued that leadership at the school and district levels is essential in the long term success of change efforts (Fullan, 2008a, 2011; Hipp & Huffman, 2010c; Hord & Sommers, 2008; Horton & Martin, 2013; Huggins et al., 2011; Hurley, 2006; Kilbane, 2009; Moller, 2006; Williams et al., 2009). Even though the literature supports the need for administrator leadership at all levels of the school organization, Hall and Hord (2011) specifically refer to the administrator’s ability to secure the necessary infrastructure changes. For example, among the conclusions in research by Huggins et al. (2011) was that the principal played a key role in the development of structural changes that allowed for teachers to collaborate.

**Change Principle 8**

**Facilitating change is a team effort**

In facilitating change, it is important to make sure that everyone involved in the change initiative is doing their part to make the process of change less cumbersome (Hall & Hord, 2011). Senge (2006) proposed *team learning* as one of the components of learning organizations. Within organizations, *team learning* is composed of three dimensions; need to think insightfully about complex issues, need for innovative and coordinated action, and the understanding that a learning team continually fosters the learning of other teams.

Furthermore, Hall and Hord (2011) claim that facilitating change goes beyond the teacher and encompasses the classroom, school, district, state, and federal government. These agencies all play a role in change success (Hall & Hord, 2011). Fullan (2005b) proposed the adoption of a
The *tri-level solution* involves three levels: school, district, and state (Fullan, 2005b).

Postulating the *tri-level solution* in practice, Huffman et al. (2006) described the PLC experience of one middle school within the Galena Park Independent School District. At the time data was collected, the district’s superintendent had engaged the school and district in PLC work (Huffman et al., 2006). By the time the study was published, the district superintendent had become the commissioner of education for the state of Texas, thus the researchers speculated that the new commissioner’s background might influence the state’s future direction in educational initiatives (Huffman et al., 2006).

**Change Principle 9**

*Mandates can work*

According to Hall and Hord (2011), mandates can be used to provide clear priorities and to communicate expectations regarding the change initiative. Kruse and Louis (2007) argue that there is an important place for top down initiatives to create PLCs, challenging the belief that PLCs emerge organically in schools with effective leadership. Wells and Feun’s (2013) findings affirm the case for top down initiatives. The district they studied successfully engaged in PLC work by implementing a consistent directive approach to PLC initiatives across the district.

On the other hand, Kilbane (2009), Nelson, Slavit, Perkins, and Hathorn (2008), and Wells and Feun (2007) examined groups of teachers engaged in collaborative work. While their intent was to allow for the PLC to emerge organically, results varied. Kilbane (2009) found the lack of support from the school’s and district’s leadership and other external factors created a climate that was not conducive to change. Nelson et al. (2008) examined the second year findings of a five-year study on the implementation of a professional development model.
The findings suggest that even though the structure for PLC development allowed for continued dialogue, teachers experienced difficulties in asking critical questions about their practices. Wells and Feun (2007) documented frustration amongst teachers and administrators as they attempted to engage in PLC work after a nine day staff development event and minimal central office guidance. Fullan (2007) argued that command and control strategies do get results but only for a short time; he advocated the right blend of tightness and looseness be used in initiating change.

**Change Principle 10**

**The context influences the process of learning and change**

The context or environment in which the initiative is being implemented can have an impact on the learning and change process (Hall & Hord, 2011). Similarly, Fullan (2007) supported the notion that successful change efforts are contextually based. The findings in the literature reviewed for this study were contingent on contextual factors that played a role in the implementation of PLCs (Abrego & Pankake, 2011; Andrews & Lewis, 2002; Giles & Hargreaves, 2006; Graham, 2007; Hipp et al., 2008; Huffman, 2003b; Huffman & Jacobson, 2003; Huffman et al., 2006; Huggins et al., 2011; Kilbane, 2009; Lee et al., 2011; Levine, 2011; Moller, 2006; Wells & Feun, 2007; Williams et al., 2009; Wong, 2010).

Two main components of context have an influence on the progress of change initiatives: physical features and people factors (Hall & Hord, 2011). Physical features include the resources, policies, structures, and schedules that shape the workplace environment (Hall & Hord, 2011). People factors include attitudes, beliefs, values, relationships, and norms that tend to guide staff members’ behavior within the workplace (Hall & Hord, 2011).
In summary, central to the ability of leaders to implement and lead complex change is a foundation of change theory (Evans, Thornton, & Usinger, 2012; Wells & Feun, 2013). Evans et al. (2012) suggested that a strong foundation in change theory can provide school leaders with the tools necessary to implement meaningful school improvement. Evans (2010) found that district and campus leaders relied on individualistic efforts to implement change rather than system wide frameworks. He pointed out that the individualistic efforts hindered the implementation of the change effort and resulted in minimal organizational growth. As school leaders work on improvements, their skill in and understanding of change become essential elements in their work (DuFour et al., 2008; Evans et al., 2012; Fullan, 2007; Hord & Sommers, 2008; Kotter, 2010; Kruse & Louis, 2009).

**Change Process**

**Initiation**

Fullan (2007) identified three broad phases to the change process: *initiation*, *implementation*, and *institutionalization*. *Initiation* consists of the process that leads to and includes a decision to adopt or proceed with a change. This phase will always be initiated by a variety or combination of sources (Fullan, 2007). For example, Huggins et al. (2011) began PLC work when school personnel expressed a desire to change after years of minimal adequate performance on state mandated assessments and the school’s leadership demonstrated a commitment to reform. Similarly, Wells and Feun (2007) initiated PLC work by volunteering to be a part of a nine day staff development course that focused on PLC concepts. Kilbane (2009) initiated PLC work as a result of the district’s engagement with a comprehensive school reform grant awarded by the state.
Implementation

Implementation involves the first experiences of attempting to put an idea or reform into practice (Fullan, 2007). Fullan (2007) further noted there are many factors that can impact the implementation of a change. This led Hipp and Huffman (2010c) to contend that the road to implementing change is not always smooth. The literature for this study uncovered leadership and support as major factors in the implementation of PLC work. For example, Wells and Feun (2007) found that a lack of leadership and support at the campus and district disrupted the implementation of PLC work in the six high schools they studied. On the other hand, Horton and Martin (2013) found that the support of the superintendent, school board, and central office administration played a key role in the implementation of a district wide PLC.

Institutionalization

Institutionalization refers to whether the change gets built in as an ongoing part of a system or disappears by way of either a decision to discard or through attrition (Fullan, 2007). Three studies (Abrego & Pankake, 2011; Giles & Hargreaves, 2006; Kilbane, 2009) examined the how and if, PLC concepts were ingrained in their respective school cultures. Additionally, Abrego and Pankake (2011) examined the impact changes in leadership at the superintendent level had on the attributes of a PLC that had been developed over years under the previous superintendent. They found that specific processes were used to sustain the district as a PLC (Abrego & Pankake, 2011). The processes included site-based decision making at the campus and district levels, faculty meetings, campus and district leadership teams, vertical team meetings, book studies, and district retreats (Abrego & Pankake, 2011).

Two studies (Giles & Hargreaves, 2006; Kilbane, 2009) documented the factors that had a negative effect on the sustainability of schools as PLCs. Giles and Hargreaves (2006)
examined three innovative schools over time and found that PLCs provided schools the structures needed to withstand change forces with the exception of standardized reform. Similarly, Kilbane (2009) found that environmental factors such as administrative support and a lack of resources played a role in creating an environment that was not receptive to change.

In summary, Fullan (2007) proposed that the phases of the change process be used less as instruments of application and more as a means of helping practitioners and planners to make sense of the planning and implementing strategies and monitoring. For example, Hipp et al. (2008) documented the ongoing journey of two schools in becoming PLCs. They found that reculturing schools as PLCs is a complex journey, unique to each school and contingent on the context.

Types of Change

Structural and cultural change

Wells and Feun (2007) posited two types of change: cultural and structural. First, structural changes represent the phenomenon occurring as new policies and program implementation as a part of school improvement efforts. Similarly, Cuban (1990) stated that First-order organizational change is intended to enhance the existing organization by correcting deficiencies in organizational policies and procedures, and assumes that the existing goals and structure are adequate and desirable. In his case study of four schools involved in a four year reform effort, Kilbane (2009) found that environmental factors promoted a climate hostile to the change necessary for sustaining PLCs. In this study, environmental factors included standardized reform efforts adopted by the state. Kilbane (2009) found three common themes based on the analysis of the interview data. First, teachers attempted to maintain the change
efforts as best they could; second, there was a feeling of loss as teachers progressed through the reform efforts; third, and teachers supported the efforts school wide.

Second, cultural changes represent the deeper level changes in human behavior within a school, such as a deeper analysis of how educators approach teaching and learning. Cuban (1990) identified Second-order change, as change that alters the way that an organization is put organized and new goals, structures, and roles, and transforms familiar ways of performing duties into novel solutions. Huffman, Pankake, and Muñoz (2006) documented the challenges encountered by two schools as they engaged PLC work over a three year period. They found that changing into a PLC had a positive impact on improvement efforts at the campus and district levels. On the other hand, Andrews and Lewis (2002) conducted a qualitative study documenting the experiences of a group of teachers as they experienced change in implementing an a process called Innovation Designs for Enhancing Achievement in Schools (IDEAS). This process centered on the instructional practices in the classroom. The researchers found that shared understandings developed the PLCs and this change had an impact on classroom activities (Andrews & Lewis, 2002). Graham (2007), Huggins et al. (2011), and Wong (2010) examined change in subject specific classrooms and departments. Graham (2007) found that same subject, and same subject-grade teams that engaged in PLC activities had the potential to improve teacher effectiveness. Huggins et al. (2011) focused their study on the mathematics department of one high school. Their findings indicated that there were changes in teacher practices that resulted from the participation in PLC meetings. Finally, Wong (2010) examined subject specific PLCs in two high schools in Shanghai. He found that sociocultural variables such as collectivist values, authoritarian-oriented practices and influences of interpersonal relationships, are crucial in the development of PLCs in Shanghai.
In summary, Wells and Feun (2007) suggested that while significant changes required both structural and cultural changes, it is clear that cultural changes are more challenging to accomplish. Furthermore, “administrators leading complex change need theoretical understandings of the change process along with a broad-based knowledge of the conceptual framework of the model being studied for implementation” (Wells & Feun, 2007, p. 145). Evans et al. (2012) suggests that many change efforts are derailed by school leaders’ lack of application of an appropriate theory of change, thus forfeiting opportunities to facilitate any sustainable improvements. Similarly, Spillane (2000) argued that change initiatives fail because those guiding the efforts lack knowledge and skills regarding change and the underlying theoretical structures associated with successful change. Hargreaves and Goodson (2006) examined change over time in eight high schools; this work further supports Evans et al.’s (2012) assertion of the importance of a foundation in change theory to experience success.

Common errors in change

According to Kotter (1996), the downside of change is inevitable. Unfortunately, many school leaders that embark on implementing new initiatives lack the foundation in change theory to guide their organizations through sustainable change that improves student learning (Evans et al., 2012; Fullan, 2001). Kotter (2010) identified eight common errors that have traumatized change in organizations.

1. Allowing too much complacency - Kotter identified the biggest mistake people make is diving into the change process without having established a high enough sense of urgency (p. 4).
2. Failing to create a sufficiently powerful guiding coalition - Successful change is contingent on the leader’s ability to build a group of people to tackle the change process (p. 6).
3. Underestimating the power of vision - Vision helps align and guide the actions of people within the organization. Without a vision people will do their own thing, thus perpetuating an environment where people constantly have to check with their supervisors about the decisions they make (p. 7).
4. Under communicating the vision by a factor of 10 (or 100 or even 1,000) - Without effective communication, change efforts are destined to fail. Most often leaders underestimate the importance of communicating the vision. They assume that sending a couple of memos, making a couple of speeches, and informing people is enough to lead change (p. 9).

5. Permitting structural obstacles to block the new vision - Organizations often fail to address the structural and cultural obstacles that will hinder the change process. These obstacles include (a) structures that make it difficult to act, (b) insufficient training and support to key personnel, (c) disagreement on the change by members of the leadership team, and (d) information and incentives for change are not aligned (p. 10).

6. Failing to create short term wins - It is imperative to celebrate short-term wins because people need reassurance that they are on-track and will not lose sight of the end line. The creation of checkpoints is crucial in the success of the change process (p. 11).

7. Declaring victory too soon - There is a difference between celebrating a win and declaring a victory. Unless the change is anchored into the organization’s culture, they are fragile and are subject to a rapid regression. Leaders must understand this difference because celebrating short-term wins is crucial to the success of the change, but can also be detrimental to the change process (p. 12).

8. Neglecting to anchor changes firmly in the corporate culture - Kotter cautions that until new behaviors are deeply rooted into the social norms and shared values, they are always susceptible to demise as soon as the pressure associated with the change effort is removed (p. 14).

The aforementioned mistakes represent a challenge in the implementation of a PLC (DuFour et al., 2008). Even though these errors are inevitable, their awareness can help educators avoid or at least mitigate their attempts to derail change efforts (Kotter, 1996). According to Kotter (2010);

> the key lies in the understanding why organizations resist needed change, what exactly is the multistage process that can overcome destructive inertia, and most of all, how the leadership that is required to drive the process in a socially healthy way means more than good management (p. 16).

In summary, Fullan (2007) claimed that change in schools involves change in practice. Change in practice can occur at the classroom, campus and district levels. At the classroom level, change can take the form of teachers altering how they deliver their lessons or what materials they use to teach. At the campus level, change in practice can take the form of
administrators changing how they conduct grade level meetings or allowing for teachers to collaborate on a weekly basis. At the district level, change represents changes that foster a collective moral purpose, organize the structure and roles most effectively, provide ongoing leadership development in key roles, and formulate strategies where schools learn from each other (Fullan, 2005b).

The PLC Concept through Three Learning Community Frames

Mullen and Schunk (2010) identified three thematic frames in the PLC literature: leadership, organization, and culture. The discrete categories of the three frames is somewhat artificial because they overlay and inform each other (Mullen & Schunk, 2010). Each of the three frames is explored in this section. The leadership section examines three types of leadership, and the leadership needed to implement PLCs. The organization section examines the literature on organizational learning and learning organizations. The final section examines culture within the context of PLCs.

Leadership

Hord and Sommers (2008) asserted that leadership matters in organizations. They explained that leaders must create spaces for individuals to have conversations and reflect about teaching practices that improve student learning at the classroom level (Hord & Sommers, 2008). Similarly, Halverson (2007) suggested that the role of school leaders is to create structures that allow individuals to address issues of instructional improvement. The roles of the campus principal and district leadership in the development of a PLC are examined in the next two sections.
Campus principal

According to DuFour et al. (2008) researchers argue that the roles and behaviors of the building principal are essential in how a school operates as a PLC. Huggins et al. (2011) found that the principal’s leadership was the most significant factor in the implementation of a PLC. Mullen and Schunk (2010) identified three types of leadership in the literature regarding PLCs; instructional, transformational, and transactional. Drawing from the literature reviewed, Mullen and Schunk (2010) defined instructional leaders, as those who focus on the school’s goals, curriculum, instruction, and school environment. Transformational leaders are those who focus on restructuring the school environment and working conditions. Instructional and transformational leadership were especially prevalent in this literature due to emphasis on teaching and learning (Huffman & Jacobson, 2003; Stewart, 2006). Huffman and Jacobson (2003) suggested that leaders who exhibit a collaborative or transformational leadership style have greater opportunities for success in developing a PLC.

On the other hand, transactional leadership places emphasis on goal setting, alignment of goals and actions, and using punishments or rewards to achieve established goals (Mullen & Schunk, 2010). Fullan (2007) referred to these strategies as “command and control strategies” (p.43). According to Fullan this approach only renders short term results and only to a certain degree. Mullen and Schunk (2010) contend that good leaders must demonstrate all three types of leadership at different times to ensure the PLC work can get started. Because leadership is a contextually based endeavor (Bennis, 2009), Fullan (2007) supported the right blend of tightness and looseness in leadership. Lambert (1998) further supported this concept in her assertion:

School leadership needs to be a broad concept that is separated from person, role, and a discreet set of individual behaviors. It needs to be embedded in the school community as a whole. Such a broadening of the concept of leadership suggests shared responsibility for a shared purpose of community. (p.5)
Moller (2006), Huggins et al. (2011), and Williams et al. (2009) found that the principal plays an integral part in the development of the conditions within a school to promote shared leadership. Moller (2006) claimed that actions such as listening, knowing, learning about curriculum and instruction, and follow through on commitments created structures and conditions that allowed for teacher leadership within a school. Williams et al. (2009) conducted a multi-case study of five high schools and found that schools with leaders that understood learning communities and implemented collaborative structures were able to move their schools to become PLCs and Democratic Learning Communities. According to Hallinger and Heck (2010), collaborative leadership focuses on strategic school-wide actions that are directed toward school improvement and are shared among the principal, teachers, administrators and others.

**District leadership**

DuFour et al. (2008) asserted that considerable attention has been placed on the role central office can play in school improvement. More precisely, Horton and Martin (2013) contended that district leaders must be willing to work diligently to develop a clear and focused understanding for change to occur. They also asserted that district leadership must include the board of education in the process (Horton & Martin, 2013). Hurley (2006) noted that when the school board and the superintendent work in unison in communicating the same values and goals, an environment conducive for change to occur effectively is fostered. Building the capacity for change can begin with the board and district administrators when they create a space to review research, attend conferences, and engage in conversations on change (Hurley, 2006).

Superintendents play an integral role in change efforts (Horton & Martin, 2013). Their role is to communicate priorities effectively and in unison with district staff (Hurley, 2006). In their study, Horton and Martin (2013) found that teachers, district and campus level
administrators, and school board members expressed that it was important for all stakeholders to be involved in the development of PLCs, especially in the early stages. In this regard, they claimed that the implementation of PLCs has improved student learning by creating collaborative teams, focused on making data informed decisions (Horton & Martin, 2013).

**Organization**

**Organizational learning**

Within the last couple of decades, the term “professional learning community” has emerged from organizational theory and human relations literature (Huffman & Hipp, 2003). The following section examines organizational learning and learning organizations in relation to PLCs. Drawing from the field of business management, *organizational learning* is a model of cultural change based on two assumptions: “(1) common meaning is necessary to collective action, and (2) that change cannot occur unless ideas that challenge the status quo are available” (Louis, 2008, p. 50). In their three year study, Silins, Mulford, and Zarins (2002) examined Australian High Schools and found that the conditions for organizational learning are very much the conditions associated with the presence of three school leadership variables; principal transformational leadership, actively involved administrative teams, and distributed leadership. Similarly, North Carolina Department of Public Instruction (2004) implemented an organizational learning approach to their afterschool program and found that it was a strategy to improve student success.

Argyris and Shŏn (1996) introduced the theory that organizations possess the capacity to learn in ways that mirror individual learning. In order for organizational learning to occur, the organization must implement systems and strategies that integrate both individual and collective learning into skills and knowledge institutionalized in the organization’s culture. Argyris and
Shön outlined three types of organizational learning: single-loop learning, double-loop learning, and deuterolearning. Single-loop learning is a system or process aimed at correcting an issue that does not affect the beliefs, values, and policies that guide the whole organization. Double-loop learning is a system or process that affects an organization to the core. Scribner, Cockrell, Cockrell, and Valentine (1999) conducted a two-year qualitative study that found elements that define professional community and the principles of double-loop learning (Argyris & Schön, 1996). These professional learning communities can serve as a foundation for developing school-wide communities that maintain a focus on student learning, the fundamental purpose of schools (Scribner et al., 1999).

Deutero-learning is described by Argyris and Shön (1996) as the manner in which organizations learn how to learn. This type of learning is modeled by the leader’s intentional awareness and commitment to creating systems and structures for learning for the organization. Senge (2006) stated that many organizations tend to focus primarily on survival. Senge characterized the learning necessary to simply maintain or survive as “adaptive learning,” and the higher-level learning that enhances the organization’s ability to create requires “generative learning.” Senge (2006) suggests that in order for organizations to achieve a level of success beyond that of survival, learning strategies that are both adaptive and generative must be exploited.

**Learning organizations**

Senge (1990) introduced *learning organizations* as a theoretical framework in which members of an organization create structures to facilitate learning and adaptability to changing conditions. He defined a learning organization as “an organization that is continually expanding its capacity to create its future” (Senge, 2006, p. 14). Senge (1990, 2006) identified five
components in learning organizations: personal mastery, mental models, building a shared vision, team learning, and systems thinking. The fifth component *systems thinking* fuses the other four components and keeps them from being separate gimmicks or the latest organizational fad (Senge, 2006). Figure 1 illustrates components of a *learning organization*. The components are interdependent; a learning organization cannot exist without all components working in concert to create a culture where individual and organizational learning is the norm (Senge, 2006). Figure 2.1 illustrates each of the components separated by broken lines reinforcing that each of the components is unique in definition yet intertwined with each of the others (Evans et al., 2012).

Figure 2.2

A model of the essential components of Senge’s learning organization

![A model of the essential components of Senge’s learning organization](image)

(Evans et al., 2012)

Personal mastery represents the first domain of a learning organization, and is defined as people within the organization who are committed to their own lifelong learning (Senge, 2006). Senge further stated that “an organization's commitment to and capacity for learning can be no
greater than that of its members” (p. 7). Thompson, Gregg, and Niska (2004) suggested that organizations can no longer be satisfied with students being the only learners. The adults in the school must be willing to try new ways of doing things to increase learning opportunities for all students. Senge (2006) suggested that personal mastery develops when a clear vision emerges, becoming the roadmap to guide and inspire people to reach their goal. The same applies to organizations when a clear organizational vision offers great generative powers for all involved in the organization (Evans et al., 2012).

Mental models, the second component of Senge’s theory of learning organizations, are the beliefs and assumptions that individuals hold about the concepts and events that impact behavior (Evans et al., 2012). According to Senge (2006) mental models shape the manner in which organizations view reality. When stakeholders possess mental models that are not aligned to the organization’s vision or goals then the organizations will not succeed in moving forward (Evans et al., 2012).

Shared vision is the third component of learning organizations. Senge (2006) suggested that a shared vision is the compelling force that drives all stakeholders to achieve the organization’s goals. He goes on to say that it is not just an idea, it is,

A force in people's hearts, a force of impressive power. It may be inspired by an idea, but once it goes on further-if, it is compelling enough to acquire the support of more than one person-then it is no longer an abstraction. It is palpable. People begin to see it as if it exists. Few, if any, forces in human affairs are as powerful as shared vision (Senge, 2006, p. 192).

An organizational vision is a powerful tool; however, when stakeholders respond negatively or in opposition to the vision then the organization’s growth stagnates (Evans et al., 2012).

The fourth component of a learning organization is team learning. Senge (2006) defined team learning as “the process of alignment and developing the capacity of a team to create the
results its members truly desire” (p.218). Senge further suggested that individual learning has little impact on the organization as a whole: conversely, the impact of team learning is great.

Systems thinking, the fifth component of a learning organization, is the foundation from which all other components evolve (Senge, 2006). Systems thinking is the ability to see situations from a holistic perspective, and every decision made within an organization has an impact on all aspects of the organization (Evans et al., 2012). In education, for example, Hamayan, Sanchez-Lopez, and Damico (2007) suggested that schools should take a systemic approach to providing English Language Learners (ELLs) support and interventions rather than in isolation.

Peter Senge’s (1990, 2006) theory of organizational change includes teams that perceive the whole of the organization, grow professionally, navigate short- and long-term organizational experiences through mental models, share a vision, and hear each voice in an ongoing collaborative learning process. In his discussion on building learning organizations, Senge (1990) wrote;

When you ask people what it is like being part of a great team, what is most striking is the meaningfulness of the experience. People talk about being part of something larger than themselves, of being connected, of being generative. It becomes quite clear that, for many, their experiences as part of truly great teams stand out as singular periods of life lived to the fullest. Some spend the rest of their lives looking for ways to recapture that spirit (p.13).

Reynolds, Murrill, and Whitt (2006) examined the Margaret Sue Copenhaver’s Institute (MSCI) for Teaching and Learning implementation of a staff development program employing Senge’s model of Learning Organizations. MSCI is an annual professional development program held each summer on the campus of Roanoke College, a nationally recognized liberal arts college in Virginia. The Institute is a three-day residential experience for K–12 teachers and administrators.
Meanwhile, Thompson et al. (2004) conducted a mixed methods study to examine leadership and teachers’ perceptions of their school as a PLC. They found that faculty and staff that believed they were a *learning organization* had a positive impact in student learning. Their findings suggest that a school must understand and practice the five components of a *learning organization* outlined by Senge to be a true professional learning community and that leadership plays a significant role in the ability of a school to become a professional learning community that enhances student learning (Thompson et al., 2004).

**Culture**

School culture is a phenomenon that has been the focus of educational researchers since the 1970s but is the least discussed element about how to improve schools (Jerald, 2008). DuFour, Eaker, and DuFour (2005b) asserted that the PLC concept is more than just a series of practices- it rests on a set of beliefs, assumptions, and expectations regarding school improvement efforts. Therefore, significant school transformation requires more than just changes in structures such as policies, programs, and school procedures. It requires the transformation of the school’s culture - the beliefs, assumptions, expectations, and habits that constitute the norm for the people through the organization (DuFour et al., 2008; DuFour et al., 2005b). Barth (2007) defined the school culture as the complex norms, patterns, attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors, values, ceremonies, traditions, and myths that are engrained in the very core of the school district. DuFour et al. (2008) contended that school cultures may a) foster collaboration or isolation, b) promote self-efficacy or fatalism, c) be student-centered or teacher-centered, d) regard teaching as a craft that can be developed or as an innate art, e) assign primary responsibility for learning to teachers or students, f) view administrators and teachers as
colleagues or adversaries, g) encourage continuous improvement or defense of the status quo, and h) so on (p.90).

Kruse and Louis (2009) introduced Professional Community, Organizational Learning, and Trust (PCOLT) as three features in school cultures that have been tied to student learning. Their work builds on the notion that these cultural attributes create better opportunities for students to be successful (Kruse & Louis, 2009). The first feature professional community focuses on the structural and human resource conditions necessary for schools to focus on student learning (Kruse & Louis, 2009, p. 8). Drawing from their earlier professional communities work, Louis and Kruse (1995) present a framework that suggests that strong school cultures are based on shared norms and values, reflective dialogue, and collaboration.

The second feature, organizational learning, suggests that continuous improvement through collective engagement coupled with new ideas will improve classroom practices and a better understanding on how to improve the organization (Kruse & Louis, 2009). Particular attention is paid to how ideas new to the organization emerge, become ingrained in the organizational culture, and the process by which new knowledge is generated from these ideas (Kruse & Louis, 2009). According to Levitt and March (1988), organizational learning occurs when members of the organization acknowledge success and failures and take responsibility for problem finding and solving.

The third feature outlined in PCOLT by Kruse and Louis (2009) is trust. Trust is the glue that binds the social network and relationships together (Kruse & Louis, 2009). According to Kruse and Louis (2009), trust amongst all members of an organization is the result of several dispositions working in concert: “integrity (or honesty and openness), concern (also called benevolence or personal regard for others), competence, and reliability (or consistency)” (p.9).
DuFour et al. (2008) asserted that educators who cultivate PLCs must engage in the intentional process of changing the school district’s culture. Similarly, Hipp and Huffman (2010c) claimed a school’s culture contributes to the creation of a PLC through norms, values, and relationships that sustain school improvement over time. The most important job for the school-based reformer is to change the prevailing culture of the school (Barth, 2007). Developing PLCs is not adopting new rules or the implementation of new programs; it is reculturing by challenging the “assumptions, beliefs, expectations, and the habits that constitute the norm” (DuFour et al., 2008, p. 92). In an interview, Hargreaves asserted:

A PLC is a phenomenon that changes every aspect of a school’s operation. When a school becomes a professional learning community, everything in the school looks different than it did before - for instance, how time is used, the grouping of students, the participation of all teachers on learning teams, and the use of technology to improve staff communication and collaboration.(Sparks, 2004, p. 48).

Wells and Feun (2007) framed change around two types of change: cultural and structural. Structural changes refer to the phenomenon occurring as new policies and program implementation as a part of school improvement efforts. Cultural changes represent the deeper level changes in human behavior within a school, such as a deeper analysis in how educators approach teaching and learning.

Too often efforts to improve schools take the form of structural changes (Wells & Feun, 2007) that impact policies, procedures, and rules (DuFour et al., 2008). Policymakers are fond of structural changes because they are immediate and visible. Unfortunately, structural changes have a minimal impact on teacher practices in the classroom, and thus are insufficient in school improvement (DuFour et al., 2008). Meanwhile, DuFour et al. (2008) argued that cultural changes are less visible, unstructured, and difficult to make; yet, unless efforts to improve schools involves cultural changes, there is no reason to believe the school will improve.
On the other hand, Mullen (2009) suggested that from a cultural perspective, the focus of PLCs is on transforming schools into communities that extend the classroom into the community to enhance learning for students and teachers. Cooper, Allen, and Bettez (2009) noted that PLCs can serve as a powerful tool to prepare educators to equitably respond to demographic changes and guide their practice. They suggested that immigration, urbanization, and labor trends are causing demographic shifts that are changing the cultural landscape of the United States. These shifts often result in social conflicts that affect public schools. Their work suggests that PLCs can be forums in which educators collaborate to raise their cultural awareness to better serve diverse school populations (Cooper et al., 2009). They go on to say that teacher dialogue can foster understanding across student cultures and build relationships that embrace diversity as positive and affirming (Cooper et al., 2009).

Similarly, Mitchell and Sackney (2007) offered a progressive PLC model that infuses a culturally-responsive approach. They identified five principles based on their observations of various PLCs: deep respect, collective responsibility, appreciation for diversity, problem solving orientation, and positive role modeling among all participants (Mitchell & Sackney, 2007). Their PLC model is aimed at developing an inclusive and affirming school community (Mitchell & Sackney, 2007). Cooper (2007) offered an example of teachers who engaged in dialogue about race and other issues of identity and equity as part of their collaborative learning. The findings suggest that faculty felt that participating in cultural learning groups assisted them in working through their insecurities, frustration, and confusion and to be more effective teachers (Cooper, 2007). Cooper et al. (2009) suggested that the literature on PLCs lacks explicit connections to critical cultural contexts.
Chapter Summary

This chapter presented a review of the literature related to different aspects of a PLC. The literature related to the definition and characteristics of PLCs, Hord’s five dimensions of a PLC, PLC and school improvement, and change in education was reviewed. The final section examined the literature through three frames relevant to PLCs proposed by Mullen and Schunk (2010), i.e., leadership, organization, and culture. The literature on the role district leadership plays in PLC implementation was also examined.

Chapter Three describes the research design and methodology of this case study of one school district located in the south central region of the United States. The researcher employed a Type 2 single-case study using both qualitative and quantitative methods of data gathering to answer the research questions. Descriptions of the research setting, participants, process for accessing the research site, and data gathering and analysis procedures for this study are included.
CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this study was to explore what influence a school district’s transformation to a PLC had on the district’s culture. In particular, the study examined the actions and processes used by the school district to change its existing school culture into a PLC. At the core of transforming schools into PLCs is reculturing (DuFour et al., 2008; Huffman & Hipp, 2003) and the change process (Fullan, 1985, 2007).

The methodology employed in this study to gather and analyze data is a Type 2 single-case study. Information regarding this district’s efforts to implement a PLC, and influence on school culture was gathered via both quantitative and qualitative methods. Quantitative data was gathered via a survey and the resulting data were analyzed using descriptive statistics. Qualitative data included semi-structured interviews, direct observations and documents. The data collected was analyzed and triangulated to make assumptions about the district’s culture.

The overarching question in this study was: what influence does the implementation of a PLC have in one school district’s culture? Therefore, data were gathered and analyzed to address the following sub-questions.

1. What dimensions of a PLC are evident in this school district?
2. How did South Central ISD (SCISD) facilitate the change process?
3. How has the implementation of a PLC influenced student achievement?

Strategy of Inquiry

Strategies of inquiry are the types of qualitative, quantitative, or mixed methods designs that provide specific direction for procedures in a research design (Creswell, 2009). The strategy for inquiry for this study was a Type 2 single-case study based on the work of Yin (2009). Case studies allow the researcher to investigate a contemporary phenomenon within its real life content (Yin, 1994, 2009). Relevant to this study, this method allows the researcher to
investigate an organization as it functions on a day-to-day basis (Yin, 2009). Yin (2009) suggests that case studies contribute to the knowledge of individual, groups, organizational, social, political and related phenomena. She claims that this strategy of inquiry goes beyond just qualitative research and allows for the use of both quantitative and qualitative evidence. Consequently, both modes (quantitative and qualitative) evidence were used to answer the research questions in this study.

Although case studies are a distinctive form of empirical inquiry, some researchers challenge the validity of this research strategy (Yin, 2009). The greatest concerns about case study research are the lack of following a set of systemic procedures or the use of biased views that influence findings and conclusions (Yin, 2009). To address these concerns, the researcher contextualized this study using the five components of a single-case study, which explains the parts of a Type 2 Single-Case Study, and the five reasons for conducting single case study research based on Yin’s (2009) work.

**Components of a Single-Case Study**

There are five components of a research design that are especially important in case studies: (1) a study’s question; (2) its propositions, if any; (3) its unit(s) of analysis; (4) the logic of linking the data to the propositions; and (5) the criteria for interpreting the findings (Yin, 2009, p. 27). First, this study’s overarching question is a “what” question. According to Yin (2009) “what” questions are considered to be *exploratory* and can lead to the development of propositions for further inquiry. Creswell (2009) further suggests that case studies are favored when the researcher is attempting to document a process. For the purpose of this study, the process refers to the change process based on Fullan (2007). Creswell (2009) further suggests that qualitative research should focus on a single phenomenon or concept. In this regard, the
overarching question in this study focused on “what” influence the implementation of a PLC had in one school district. PLC is the single phenomenon explored in this study.

The second component in case studies is to identify the propositions or the areas of emphasis within the context of the study (Yin, 2009). In this study, there are two propositions: school culture and change. In particular, the researcher attempted to explore what influence the implementation of a PLC had on the school district’s culture. Because the implementation of a PLC involves changing the school district’s culture (Huffman & Hipp, 2003), the researcher attempted to uncover the actions and processes used in the change process.

The third component is defining the “case” (Yin, 2009). The case in this study is the school district’s implementation of a district wide PLC. Practitioners and researchers have provided numerous accounts of what PLCs should look like, but little has been documented as to how to create communities of learners (Darling-Hammond, 1996; DuFour & Eaker, 1998; Fullan, 2000; Hord, 1997; Senge, 1990). This study documented the change process the school district experienced as it engaged in PLC work for the past five years.

The fourth and fifth components linking the data to the propositions and the criteria for interpreting the findings are intertwined because they address the analysis of data for the case study (Yin, 2009). Both quantitative and qualitative methods were used to analyze data collected. Yin (2009) strongly supports the use of qualitative and quantitative data in case study research. Quantitative data is relevant because it covers behaviors and events that a case study might try to explain. In this study, quantitative data was used to determine which dimensions of a PLC are evident in the school district. More specifically, descriptive statistics allowed the researcher to categorize data and reveal what dimensions are evident in this school district.
Qualitative data allowed the researcher to examine a phenomenon in all its complexity, in context and not framed by operationalizing variables (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007). Conger (1998) suggested that due to the complexity of the leadership phenomenon, qualitative research should be the cornerstone methodology. According to Conger (1998), qualitative research offers the leadership field more opportunities to explore the leadership phenomenon in significant depth (Bryman, 1984), the flexibility to discern and detect unexpected phenomena during the research (Lundberg, 1976), an ability to investigate processes more effectively, opportunities to explore and be sensitive to contextual factors, and the means to investigate symbolic dimensions (Morgan & Smircich, 1980). Qualitative data allowed the researcher to examine the context of the school district engaged in PLC work for the past five years and provided flexibility to explore any unintended themes revealed throughout the data collection and analysis phases of this study.

**Type 2 Single-Case Study**

In this study, the case is the implementation of a PLC in one school district located in the south central region of the United States. Because the researcher focused on this single concept, (PLC) implementation in one school district, a single-case study was the most appropriate design. This case study focused on two embedded units of analysis. Therefore, a Type 2 single-case study design was the most appropriate. The two embedded units of analysis include the following; the change process and student achievement. Figure 3.1 illustrates the different parts of a Type 2 single-case study.
In this study, the context is the school district, and the case is the school district’s implementation of a PLC. The researcher identified one embedded unit of analysis to serve as the study’s proposition: change. This embedded unit of analysis was identified in the literature as essential in the school organization’s transformation into PLCs (DuFour et al., 2008; DuFour & Eaker, 1998; Hipp & Huffman, 2010c; Hord & Sommers, 2008; Huffman & Hipp, 2003).

In his work on case study research designs, Yin (2009) outlined five reasons for conducting a single-case study: (1) the study makes a critical case in testing a well-formulated theory, (2) it represents an extreme or unique case, (3) a typical case, (4) a revelatory case and, (5) a longitudinal case. First, a critical case can be made for testing this formulated theory (PLC) due to the limited literature that examines the PLC phenomenon within a district wide
context. Second, this study represents a unique case because this is the only district in this region that has made an effort to transform the entire district into a PLC. The decision to undertake this transformation was initiated at the district level and has been underway for the past five years. The decision to undergo this transformation was supported by the administration and the school board of trustees.

The third reason for conducting this study is to examine whether this case represents a typical case (Yin, 2009). The objective of examining a typical case is to capture the circumstances and conditions of an everyday situation (Yin, 2009). This study examined a school district’s transformation into a PLC. In the last 20 years, the term PLC has dominated the lexicon of school reform (Stoll & Louis, 2007a). Many schools believe they have established PLCs but, in reality, they have not (Hipp & Huffman, 2010c). By examining where this school district is in terms of a PLC and how administrators have approached the change process, this study will provide the field of educational research a documented case to inform future school administrators on challenges and triumphs of establishing a PLC as well as transforming a district’s culture.

The fourth reason is to examine whether this case study represents a revelatory case. This situation exists when a researcher has the opportunity to observe a phenomenon inaccessible to social science inquiry (Yin, 2009). The literature on school districts embarking on PLC work is limited (Fullan, 2005b). Fullan (2005b) supported the notion of shifting the focus from the culture of the school to the culture of the district in an effort to answer the question, “How do entire school districts become professional learning communities where all groups (within and across the schools) exemplify professional learning communities in action?”
This study provided an opportunity to add to the literature on the change efforts undertaken by a district wide implementation of a PLC.

Finally, the fifth reason for conducting a single-case study calls for a *longitudinal* case. According to Yin (2009), a single-case study design may be used as a pilot case that is the first of a multiple-case study. The demographics of this research site provide the field of educational research a documented case of district wide change efforts to become a PLC and can serve as the initial case-study in multiple-case studies examining the impact of the PLC phenomenon in this region.

**Data Collection**

Yin (2009) claimed that a data collection process for a case study is more complicated than other research methods. Case study data collection, unlike the routinized procedures of laboratory experiments, calls for a well-trained investigator that can recognize and take advantage of opportunities presented at the research site (Yin, 2009). Most importantly, according to Yin (2009), a researcher must follow a set of procedures to ensure quality control during the data collection process. Following are sections including a description of the procedures the researcher followed to collect data, the research site, access to the site and participants, the role of the researcher, sources of evidence, procedures for data gathering, and the analytic strategy used.

**Selection of the District**

According to Chein (as cited in Merriam, 1988), researchers should select a sample from which they can learn the most when operating under the assumption that the research’s purpose is to discover, understand, and gain insight of a phenomenon. The research site is a school district in the south central region of the United States. To maintain confidentiality, the district is
referred to as South Central ISD (SCISD). The researcher selected this site because the superintendent, hired in 2008, initiated the implementation a PLC at the request of the school board. Since then, central office has engaged the district in PLC work to transform the district into a PLC.

**Research Site**

SCISD is located in the south central region of the United States. According to the 2010 U.S. Census, the population that makes up SCISD has a population of 64,849 with a racial makeup of 18% White (Non-Hispanic), 1% Black or African American, 0.5% Native American, and 1.3% Asian. Hispanics or Latinos make up 79.5% of the population. The median income for a household in the city is $35,267 (U.S.Census, 2010).

The school district consists of 18 elementary schools, 5 middle schools, one early college high school, 2 alternative schools, and 2 comprehensive high schools. According to data reported to the state agency in 2013, SCISD had an enrollment of 18,411 students in grades K-12. The demographics of the school districts include 91.5% Hispanic and 78.3% economically disadvantaged student population.

According to data reported to the state agency the demographics of the teaching staff in SCISD are: 75.2% Hispanic, 22.9% white, 0.6% African American, and 0.3% American Indian. The average years of teachers experience is 13 years; this is 1.5 years above the state average. The average years’ experience for teachers in the district is 9.9, which is 1.9 above the state average. The teacher turnover rate for the district is 8.3, which is 7 below the state average.

The superintendent for SCISD has 27 years’ experience in the field of education, and holds a Ph.D. in Educational Administration. His resume includes a valid teaching certificate and a principal and superintendent’s certificate. The superintendent held previous positions of
teacher, coach, assistant principal, principal, assistant superintendent, deputy superintendent, acting superintendent, and superintendent. His school administrative experience spans 22 years in traditional public schools and has been the superintendent at SCISD since July 2008.

The average years of service by members of the board of trustees in the SCISD board is 12 yrs. The background of the board encompasses the following; one attorney, three higher education personnel, two public education employees, and one medical doctor. In terms of degrees, one board member earned a bachelor’s degree, three have master’s degree, and three have doctorates.

**Access to Research Site**

To gain access to the district, the researcher contacted the district’s office of research and development. An introductory email was sent providing a brief synopsis of the study to the director and requesting permission to conduct the study; additionally, a contact person for the researcher to establish a line of communication was requested. The director responded and provided the forms the district requires for approval of research studies. The researcher provided the documentation requested and approval was granted (see Appendix D).

**Participants**

There were two groups of participants for this study. The first group consisted of all current teachers, support staff, campus administrators, central office administrators, board members, and the superintendent. This group of participants were administered an online survey. To gain access to participants, the researcher collaborated with staff at the personnel office to obtain emails from the district’s secure server.

The second group of participants consisted of personnel employed by the district five years or more before the current superintendent was hired. Fullan (2007) suggested that the
change process from initiation to institutionalization can take from 5 to 10 yrs. Therefore, the researcher believed that personnel employed by the district five years prior to hiring the current superintendent would have institutional knowledge enabling them to identify the changes in the school district’s culture after the implementation of a district-wide PLC. In total, 605 professional staff members fit the criteria. They included 259 elementary, 162 middle school, and 124 high schools teachers, 9 counselors, 9 librarians, 24 campus leaders (assistant principals and instructional facilitators), and 15 support personnel (diagnosticians, and speech therapist).

From the identified list of 545 k-12 teachers a \textit{purposive sample} of 60 teachers was selected; 20 elementary, 20 middle school, and 20 high school. A \textit{purposive sample} is a common form of sampling used in experiments and quasi-experiments where participants are chosen with a purpose in mind (Vogt, 2007). Even if researchers use a purposeful sample in selecting interview participants, other participants can be added (Seidman, 2013; Stake, 1995). This sampling method allowed the researcher to select relevant participants critical to addressing the research questions (Seidman, 2013). Once all the participants for the second group were identified, \textit{Randomizer} was used to select interview participants. \textit{Randomizer} is a free service offered to students and researchers interested in conducting random and purposive sampling (Urbaniak & Plous, 2011).

As for district and campus level leadership, the researcher’s believed data collected from these individuals would be vital in determining what activities, tools and structures were used to facilitate or hinder the implementation of a PLC. An abundance of literature supports the importance of leadership to the development of PLCs (DuFour et al., 2008; Graham, 2007; Hord & Sommers, 2008; Mullen & Schunk, 2010; Pankake, 2004; Stoll, McMahon, & Thomas, 2006).
Therefore, all campus and central office administrators, and school board members were invited to be an interview participant.

**Role of the Researcher**

For the purpose of this study, the researcher played two roles: data collector and data interpreter. Initially, the researcher developed a relationship with the participants in the study to ensure that the data collected painted an authentic portrait of the school practices and culture in this school district. Walford (2008) stated that researchers need to nurture a trusting relationship in order to collect data that is an authentic representation of school level practices. Several visits to individual schools took place before data collection began. This helped the researcher develop and nurture a relationship that enriched the collection of authentic data. Walford (2008) also pointed out that a researcher’s position of anonymity may not necessarily be the most ethical decision. Because the role of school administrators and teachers is to support policies and be sensitive to the perceptions of the community, one of the challenges the researcher experienced was gathering authentic information that painted a true picture of the culture in this district. Therefore, building relationships with participants allowed the researcher to gather richer data than would have been possible by taking an anonymous approach.

Second, Grbich (2007) argued that every researcher is subject to the influences of their life experiences in interpreting data. She defined framing as an unconscious process that people use to make meaning or construct their reality (Grbich, 2007). The researcher has been a teacher, campus level administrator, and central office level for ten years. Therefore, the lens through which the researcher observed the schools was that of an experienced school administrator. Therefore to limit potential bias in data gathering the researcher documented decisions made throughout the data collection process to make visible to readers. Furthermore,
in data interpretation the researcher triangulated data and findings with different sources of evidence collected. Yin (2009) contends that one of the strengths of case study research is the development of converging lines of inquiry, which a process of triangulation and corroboration of facts.

**Sources of Evidence**

Yin (2009) argued that one of the strengths of using a case study is the use of multiple sources of evidence to develop converging lines of inquiry. According to Yin (2009), all sources of evidence are highly complementary of each other, with neither having a complete advantage over the other. Thus, a good case study will use as many sources of evidence as possible (Yin, 2009). For this study, the researcher collected data from a survey, interviews, documents, and direct observations.

**Survey – Professional Learning Community Assessment – Revised (PLCA-R)**

Yin (2009) identified the *survey* as a form of interviews consisting of structured questions to produce quantitative data (Yin, 2009). In this study, an online version of the Professional Learning Community Assessment-Revised (PLCA-R) was administered to all faculty and staff for SCISD. The PLCA-R is a questionnaire that measures staff perceptions of school practices related to the dimensions of a PLC (Olivier & Hipp, 2010). The widespread use of the PLCA allowed developers of the assessment to revise for internal consistency (Hipp & Huffman, 2010c). The tool has been tested and confirmed for internal consistency (Olivier & Hipp, 2010). The following are the Cronbach Alpha reliability coefficients for factored subscales (n=1209) include: Shared and Supportive Leadership (.94); Shared Values and Vision (.92); Collective Learning and Application (.91); Shared Personal Practice (.87); Supportive Conditions-
Relationships (.82); Supportive Conditions-Structures (.88); and a one-factor solution (.97) (Cormier, Olivier, & Lafayette, 2009; Olivier & Hipp, 2010).

The developers of the assessment determined that the original instrument excluded items that focused on “the collection, interpretation, and use of data in order to focus improvement efforts” (Olivier & Hipp, 2010, p. 30). Thus, seven specific items related to data were incorporated within the dimensions. The Professional Learning Community Assessment-Revised (PLCA-R) now serves as a more powerful diagnostic tool for identifying the school level practices that support the development of a PLC (Olivier & Hipp, 2010). To verify the relevance of the seven new statements responses to an Expert Opinion Questionnaire from educators who had knowledge of the original PLCA were solicited. “The panel of experts consisted of school administrators, teachers, district and regional supervisory personnel, university faculty and staff, educational consultants, and doctoral students studying PLCs” (Olivier & Hipp, 2010, p. 31). The results of the Expert Opinion Questionnaire from these experts indicated that the seven items assess data-related practices within the five dimensions of a PLC (Olivier & Hipp, 2010).

The PLCA-R provides the perceptions of staff as they relate to the five dimensions of a PLC. Respondents use a 4-point scale to indicate the degree to which they agree or disagree with each statement (Olivier & Hipp, 2010). Dianne F. Olivier developed the online version of the PLCA-R; access to the online version is provided through an agreement with the Southwest Educational Development Laboratory (SEDL). The online PLCA-R allowed the researcher to customize and deploy the PLCA-R questionnaire as well as automatically report on the results as participants completed the online questionnaire (SEDL, 2013).
Interviews

In case study research, interviews are considered one of the most important sources of gathering data (Stake, 1995; Yin, 2009). Yin (2009) defines interviews as guided conversations rather than structured queries. Seidman (2013) asserts that the purpose of conducting interviews is to understand the lived experiences of people and the meaning they make of those experiences. Stake (1995) describes his perspective in reference to qualitative interviews in case studies:

Qualitative case study seldom proceeds as a survey with the same questions asked of each respondent; rather, each interviewee is expected to have had a unique experience, and special stories to tell. The qualitative interviewer should arrive with a short list of issue oriented questions, possibly handing the respondent a copy, indicating there is a concern about completing an agenda. The purpose for the most part is not to get simple yes and no answers but description of an episode, a linkage, an explanation. Formulating the questions and anticipating probes is a special art (p.65).

Yin (2009) asserts that in conducting interviews the researcher is required to operate at two levels simultaneously -- satisfying the needs of the line of inquiry while putting forth nonthreatening questions. Three forms of interviews employed in case study research have been identified; they are in-depth interviews, focused interviews, and surveys (Yin, 2009). This study employed two forms of interviews to gather data. The two forms used in this study were in-depth interviews, and survey. The following section describes the researcher’s experience identifying the participants and gathering data through these two forms of interviews.

**In-Depth Interviews**

Yin (2009) identified *in-depth interviews* as a type where a person interviews key respondents about the facts of a matter as well as their opinions about events; and the respondent’s insights are used as the basis of further inquiry. In this study, the interview participants were identified based on a random sample of district employees who had been hired five years before the current superintendent had been appointed by the board of trustees. The
researcher ensured that the sample, however, was inclusive of teachers from all grade levels and academic areas, campus principals, key central office administrators identified as important contributors to the implementation of the PLC.

In this study, the researcher used Ostmeyer’s (2003) interview protocols for teachers, principals, central office administrators, the superintendent, and school board members (see Appendix H). Because this study examined how the implementation of a districtwide PLC influenced its culture, four culture questions (see Appendix I) were added to the end of each interview protocol developed by Ostmeyer (2003). The culture questions were developed by Kruse and Louis (2009). After conducting the first two interviews, the researcher moved the four culture questions to the beginning of the interview. Asking the culture questions at the beginning of the interviews helped interview respondents feel comfortable in the interview setting (Seidman, 2013; Stake, 1995; Yin, 2009). Thirty-eight interviews were conducted with 36 of them having the culture questions at the beginning of the interview.

**Documentation**

Yin (2006) defined *documentation* as newspaper articles, letter, emails, and reports. Emails and reports were the most common forms of documentation collected by the researcher during data collection. Documentation identified as relevant to answer the research questions was collected; this documentation included emails gathered throughout the months of May-August 2013.

**Archival Records**

The archival records collected for this study consisted of personnel records, school schedules, and planning documents. The district’s research department provided the personnel documents; these documents were used to identify the different groups of participants. The
school schedules collected were from different campuses in SCISD. Planning documents such as campus improvement plans, superintendent entry plan, grade level planning, documents, and strategic planning documents were collected at the different schools when the researcher conducted interviews. Other forms of documentation used were state assessment reports produced by the state education agency.

**Student Performance Report**

The Academic Excellence Indicator System (AEIS) is a yearly comprehensive report that pulls together a wide range of information on student performance in each school and district in Texas. The performance indicators include:

- Results of the state assessment;
- Student Progress from previous year;
- Attendance Rates;
- Annual Dropout Rates (grades 7-8 and grades 9-12);
- Completion Rates (4-year and 5-year longitudinal);
- College Readiness Indicators;
  - Completion of Advanced/Dual Enrollment Courses;
  - Completion of the Recommended High School Program or Distinguished Achievement Program;
  - Participation and Performance on Advanced Placement (AP) and International Baccalaureate (IB) Examinations;
  - Texas Success Initiative (TSI) – Higher Education Readiness Component;
  - Participation and Performance on the College Admissions Tests (SAT and ACT), and

Performance on each of these indicators is shown disaggregated by ethnicity, special education, income status, limited English proficient status (since 2002-03), at-risk status (since 2003-04, district, region, and state), and, beginning in 2008-09, by bilingual/ESL. The AEIS also provides extensive information on school and district staff, finances, programs and student demographics (Texas Education Agency, n.d.-b).
The AEIS is the result of the Texas Legislature’s emphasis on student achievement as the basis for accountability in 1984. That year, House Bill 72 called for a system of accountability based primarily on student performance (Texas Education Agency, n.d.-b). The first AEIS report was published in 1991; the content and format of these reports have evolved through legislation, recommendations of advisory committees and the commissioner of education, State Board of Education actions, and final development by Texas Education Agency (TEA) researchers and analysts (Texas Education Agency, n.d.-b). Since its inception, AEIS reports have provided student achievement data from three state assessments. They include the following: (1) Texas Assessment Academic Skills (TAAS); (2) Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS); and State of Texas Assessment of Academic Readiness (STAAR).

The TAAS was administered from 1990 through 2002 (Texas Education Agency, n.d.-a). In 2003, the State of Texas transitioned from the TAAS to the Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS). The TAKS was administered from 2003 through 2011 (Texas Education Agency, n.d.-e). In 2012 the STAAR was administered for the first time and is the state assessment currently used to compile passing rates (Texas Education Agency, n.d.-d). With the change to the STAAR the AEIS transitioned to the Texas Academic Performance Reports (TAPR). The initial TAPR was released in the fall of 2013 (Texas Education Agency, n.d.-f).

The main source of data for the AEIS and TAPR reports is the Public Education Information Management System (PEIMS). PEIMS is a state-wide data management system for public education information in the State of Texas. PEIMS collects a broad range of information from over 1,200 districts (including charters), more than 8,000 schools, 320,000+ educators, and over 4.9 million students (Texas Education Agency, n.d.-b). Additionally, testing contractors provide the agency with scores on standardized tests that are administered statewide (e.g.
STAAR, and TAKS). Other state agencies provide information such as tax rates and property values. School districts submit their data in a standardized electronic format. The data collection process is defined in an annual publication called PEIMS Data Standards (Texas Education Agency, n.d.-c). A software system of standard edits is used to enhance the quality of district data submissions. Currently, the major categories of data collected are: organization data; budgeted financial data; actual financial data; staff data; student demographic and program participation data; student attendance and course completion data; graduation rates (Texas Education Agency, n.d.-c).

**Direct observations**

According to Yin (2009), case studies create the perfect opportunity for direct observations because they should take place in the natural setting of the case. Conducting direct observations in the district’s natural setting revealed behaviors, culture, and environmental conditions relevant to the case study. Yin (2009) suggested that direct observations can range from formal to informal. Formal observations call for a creation of an observation protocol where the investigator observes certain types of behaviors during certain times. For this study, the researcher conducted observations during faculty meetings, department meetings, and other meetings in the district where interactions between and among staff members took place. Informal observations were also conducted when the researcher conducts and interview or any other field visits (Yin, 2009). Drawing from the work of Emerson, Fretz, and Shaw (1995) on field notes, the researcher recorded detailed notes of observed phenomenon.

**Data Collection Procedures**

Yin (2009) argued that collecting data from multiple sources of evidence allows the researcher to triangulate and corroborate facts. The following four steps were taken to assure
that data were collected from the different sources and types: (1) identified both sets of participants; (2) conducted interviews; (3) administered survey; (4) gathered current and archived documents.

The first step in collecting data for this study was to identify both sets of participants. This was accomplished when the researcher collaborated with the personnel office to collect names, current assignments, and emails for both groups of participants. One group of participants was made up of all current teachers, campus and central office staff, professional support staff, school board members, and the superintendent. The second group of participants consisted of all professional staff employed by the district five years prior to the hiring of the current superintendent by the board of trustees.

The second step in the data gathering process was to conduct interviews with personnel that fit the established criteria. The participants selected for interview consisted of two groups. The first group consisted of all professional staff employed by the district five years prior to the hiring of the current superintendent in July 2003. Interview participants for this study consisted of two groups. The district has a total of 1401 professional staff employed since July 2003, including teachers, librarians, counselors, campus administrators but not principals, and other support professional staff. Out of the 1,401 professional staff members, 320 had been employed by SCISD for 10 years or more. They included 139 elementary and 134 secondary teachers, 9 counselors, 9 librarians, 24 campus leaders (assistant principals and instructional facilitators), and 15 support personnel (diagnosticians, and speech therapist). A total of 60 participants were randomly chosen to be invited to participate in an interview; 20 elementary, 20 middle school, and 20 high school professional staff. In total, 26 teachers (15 elementary, 6 middle school, and 5 high school teachers) out of the 60 participants chose to participate and were interviewed.
Second, all leadership personnel including seven school board members, one superintendent, five assistant superintendents, 21 central office directors and coordinators, and 29 campus principals were selected for face-to-face interviews. Of the 56 individuals in the leadership groups, a total of 12 administrators accepted and were interviewed. Interviewees included six principals, two central office coordinators and directors, two assistant superintendents, one superintendent, and one school board member. The following table illustrates a breakdown of the interview participants. The interviews were conducted between May 2013 and August 2013.

Table 3

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Position/Role</th>
<th>Number Interviewed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Superintendent</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School Board Member</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central Office Administrators</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Principals</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elementary Teachers</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle School Teachers</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High School Teachers</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>38</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The researcher used the following hierarchy to conduct interviews; (1) teachers, (2) campus principals, (3) central office administrators, (4) superintendent, and (5) school board members. The teacher participants were not identified to campus or central office administrators in order to maintain their confidentiality. Once identified, all teacher interview participants were contacted directly via email. The email consisted of a synopsis of the scope of the study; participants were provided instructions to contact the researcher to schedule an interview. Within one week following the introductory email, the researcher visited every campus where interview participants were located. The researcher visited all the campuses to set up interview times and to make face-to-face contact with interview participants. Out of the 60 randomly selected teachers, 26 were interviewed, and 34 interview candidates were not interviewed. Out of the 34
that were not interviewed, 28 interview candidates did not respond to the introductory email or to the site visit, 5 declined via email, and one had retired earlier in the school year.

All campus principals and central office coordinators and directors were contacted directly via email. Follow-up campus visits to schedule interviews were conducted. District employees identified in interviews as having an active role in the implementation of a PLC were individually contacted to increase the chances of their participation in the study. Both Yin (2009) and Seidman (2013) suggested that in conducting in-depth interviews the researcher can interview individuals identified as key informants that can provide insights to critical to the success of the case study. In this study, there were three central office administrators identified as key contributors to the district’s transformation efforts into a PLC. All three were interviewed.

The third step was to administer the survey. A total of 1,401 survey participants were identified from the personnel information obtained from SCISD Personnel Department. The researcher administered the PLCA-R survey via email to all participants. The email sent to all SCISD employees contained a link to an electronic survey. The initial email was sent to all participants on May 8, 2013. A total of three reminders were sent to all employees. The reminders were sent to all employees every time. A statement at the very beginning of the email asking if the recipient had already taken the survey to disregard was included in all three reminders. A reminder was emailed once a week on Thursdays for three weeks in a row during the month of May 2013. Of the 1,401 employees 511 responded to the survey yielding a 37% response rate. Therefore, the survey response rate is a limitation.
Table 4

PLCA-R Respondent Breakdown (n=511)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subgroup</th>
<th>n</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>All Teachers, Counselor, Facilitator, or Librarian</td>
<td>489</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elementary Teachers</td>
<td>262</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle School Teachers</td>
<td>110</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High School Teachers</td>
<td>121</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Campus Administration</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central Office</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All</td>
<td>511</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Vogt (2007) suggested that students writing doctoral dissertations seldom yield better than 40% response rates on surveys. There were no problems reported by participants in the operation of the electronic survey. The survey data was collected from May 2013 to June 30, 2013. The PLCA-R response rate for this study was 37%.

The fourth step was to collect documents and archival records. The researcher collected schedules, plans, emails, and agendas while conducting observations and interviews. Archival records such as personnel records were collected before the interviews because they were used to identify participants. Archival records that consist of student achievement scores were gathered after the interviews and survey were conducted.

Analytic Strategy

Yin (2009) contended that the analysis of case study evidence is one of the least developed and most difficult aspects of case study research. However, potential analytic difficulties can be reduced if the researcher has a general strategy for analyzing data (Yin, 2009). Yin identified five analytic techniques. Of the five techniques identified by Yin, explanation building is the analytic technique relevant to this study.

Explanation building examines the causal links to explain “how” or “why” something happened to a given phenomenon (Yin, 2009). Furthermore, the “causal links may be complex
and difficult to measure in any precise manner” (Yin, 2009, p. 141). In this study, the researcher examined the causal links to changes in the school district’s culture as it has transformed into a PLC. Data analysis focused on providing the information to enable making assumptions to answer research questions in this study.

Data Analysis Procedures

Data collected from the PLCA-R, interviews, field notes, documents, and archival documents were analyzed using both quantitative and qualitative methods. The PLCA-R consists of 52 items and uses a 4-point Likert Scale to uncover staff members’ perceptions in relation to the five dimensions of a PLC (Olivier & Hipp, 2010). The survey consists of statements about practices that can occur in schools. Furthermore, respondents use a 4-point scale to indicate the degree to which they agree or disagree with each statement (SEDL, 2013). The Likert Scale includes; 1 (Strongly Disagree), 2 (Disagree), 3 (Agree), and 4 (Strongly Agree).

Descriptive statistics were used to analyze data gathered from the survey. Descriptive statistics describe and present data in terms of measures of central tendency including mean, median, and mode. In essence, descriptive statistics aim at finding a summary score that represents a set of scores (Ravid, 2011; Vogt, 2007). In this study, data collected from survey items focused on finding a summary score for each of the five dimensions of a PLC. The summary score represents how evident a dimension is within the context of this school district (Hipp & Huffman, 2010b). The online version allowed for respondents to add comments after each dimension. The data collected from the comments sections were coded for themes (to review all the items in the PLCA-R, (see Appendix F).
Data collected from the PLCA-R was automatically graphed, and a mean and standard deviation calculated for each dimension as each respondent completed the survey. The online version allowed the researcher to add subgroups to the cohort in order to view summaries of one or more subgroups. In this study, the cohort consisted of all professional staff for SCISD (n = 1401). The researcher set up five subgroups. This allowed the researcher to have access to individual participants' graphs, a district summary graph, and one or more subgroup summary graphs. The following table illustrates the subgroup prompts and the selection options for each prompt.
Table 5

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subgroup Prompt</th>
<th>Options</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. What is your role?</td>
<td>• Teacher, Counselor, Facilitator, or Librarian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Campus Administrator</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Central Office</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Other</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. How many years have you been with SCISD?</td>
<td>• 1-2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• 3-4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• 5-10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• 11-20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• 21+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. What is your current grade level assignment?</td>
<td>• Elementary PK-5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Middle School 6-8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• High School 9-12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Administrator</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Central Office</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Other</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Which term best describes your current role?</td>
<td>• English/ ELA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Math</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Science Social Studies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Fine Arts (Art, Band, Orchestra, Athletics/ PE, Theater Arts, Music, etc.) Administration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Other</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. What is your gender?</td>
<td>• Male</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Female</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The researcher collected reports based on different subgroups to examine the PLCA-R data through different lenses.

Interview recordings were transcribed. Data collected from transcriptions of in-depth interviews, field notes, and comments sections of the PLCA-R were uploaded to Ethnograph 6.0 (E⁶) software and coded. E⁶ is data analysis software that assists researchers in compiling and organizing qualitative data. The coded data was analyzed to extract themes. Data collected from
the online survey, in-depth interviews, field notes, and documentation were used for triangulation purposes.

Chapter Summary

This chapter described the research design and methodology of this case study of one school district located in the south central region of the United States. The researcher employed a Type 2 single-case study using both qualitative and quantitative methods of data gathering to answer the research questions. The research setting was described. The process used to select the research site, gain access to the research site, and identify the participants was described. A description of the different sources of evidence used in this study was provided. Finally, data gathering and analysis procedures for this study were reviewed.

Chapter Four presents the findings of data collected from the sources of evidence used in this study. The chapter begins with a section describing the study and is followed by a presentation of the data. The data is organized by research question and concludes with a summary of findings. The findings for the first research question were organized by each dimension of a PLC as identified by Hord (1997, 2004a). The dimensions include Shared and Supportive Leadership, Shared Values and Vision, Collective Learning and Application, Shared Personal Practice, and Supportive Conditions. The second research question examines how the district facilitated the change process. Finally, the third question examined how the implementation of a PLC influenced student achievement scores across the district.
CHAPTER 4: FINDINGS

Introduction

In this chapter, the findings of the study are presented. This chapter begins with an introductory section that briefly describes the scope of the study, restates the research questions, and reviews the methodology. A brief overview of the study is next, followed by sections outlining the findings for each research question.

Description of the Study

The purpose of this study was to explore what influence a school district’s transformation to a PLC had on culture. In particular, the study examined what dimensions of a PLC are evident, how the district approached the change process, and their influence on student achievement. The overarching question was: what influence does the implementation of a PLC have in one school district’s culture? Therefore, data were gathered and analyzed to address the following sub-questions.

1. What dimensions of a PLC are evident in this school district?
2. How did South Central ISD (SCISD) facilitate the change process?
3. How has the implementation of a PLC influenced student achievement?

The methodology employed in this study was a Type 2 single-case study. Data regarding this district’s implementation of a PLC and its influence on school culture was gathered via sources of evidence common in case study research, i.e., survey, documents, archival records, direct observations, and interviews (Yin, 2009).

Presentation of the Data

Data collected from the PLCA-R, interviews, field notes, and documents were organized to respond to each of the research questions. The PLCA-R data were calculated by the online version provided by Southwest Educational Development Laboratory (SEDL). As respondents...
completed the survey, the online version automatically graphed each group, individual, and subgroups with a mean score and standard deviation for each dimension. Respondents used a 4 point scale to indicate the degree to which they agree or disagree with each statement. Data sets were analyzed to determine mean sores for each dimension. The results were sorted into four categories; 1.00-1.99 (Strongly Disagree); 2.00-2.99 (Disagree); 3.00-3.99 (Agree); and, 4.00-4.99 (Strongly Agree). According to SEDL (2010) a mean score of 3.00 or higher represents a general consensus with the dimension. Because participants’ scores are included in the calculation of mean scores (Vogt, 2007), mean scores of 2.99 or 2.97 as in this case study, are close to becoming 3.00. Thus, the researcher can interpret mean scores of 2.99 and 2.97 as close to demonstrating a general consensus that the dimension is evident. Table 6 presents the mean scores conversion for the 4 point Likert scale.

Table 6

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mean Score Range</th>
<th>Likert Scale</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.00 – 1.99</td>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.00 – 2.99</td>
<td>Disagree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.00 – 3.99</td>
<td>Agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.00 – 4.99</td>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Descriptive statistics were used to analyze PLCA-R results. The use of descriptive statistics allowed the researcher to summarize data from a population to make assumptions (Vogt, 2007). Olivier and Hipp (2010) support the use of descriptive statistics to analyze PLCA-R results by dimension and by individual item. Descriptive statistics allow researchers to summarize large amounts of data into a few indices to formulate conclusions about a given population. This statistical method uses measures of central tendency or average scores of a group of scores. The mean score is the most common measure of central tendency. Due to the manner in which it is computed, a mean score represents every participant’s score (Vogt, 2007).
Data collected from the PLCA-R comments section, documents, field notes, and interviews were uploaded to Ethnograph 6.0 (E\(^6\)) software and coded. E\(^6\) is data analysis software that assists researchers in compiling and organizing qualitative data. The coded data was analyzed to extract themes. Interview excerpts are presented in both single quote and conversation formats. The single quote presents an excerpt from a single interviewee. The conversation excerpt cites a dialogue exchange between the researcher and the interview participant. The conversation format was utilized to present portions of the dialogue exchange that convey the interview participant’s lived experience and the meaning they make of that experience (Seidman, 2013). Data collected were triangulated to corroborate findings from the different sources of evidence. According to Yin (2009), using multiple sources of evidence to corroborate a fact results in a stronger case study.
Research Question One

What dimensions of a PLC are evident in this school district?

Question one sought to uncover which dimensions of a PLC are evident within the context of one school district. Data from the PLCA-R and interviews with participants were used to identify evidence related to each of the five dimensions of a PLC. The five dimensions of a PLC used in this study were: Shared and Supportive Leadership, Shared Values and Vision, Collective Learning and Application, Shared Personal Practice, and Supportive Conditions. Hord (2004a) identified two types of Supportive Conditions - Relationships and Structures.

Descriptive statistics were used to analyze the data collected from the PLCA-R. Out of the 1,401 individuals invited to participate in the survey, 511 completed surveys were returned, resulting in a 37% response rate. Mean scores were calculated using the following Likert Scale: (1) Strongly Disagree, (2) Disagree, (3) Agree, and (4) Strongly Agree (see Table 6).

A total of 38 interviews (see Table 2) were conducted. Individuals interviewed included the following: 15 elementary teachers, five middle school teachers, six high school teachers, six principals, four central office administrators, the superintendent, and one school board member. Campus assignments for the principals interviewed were as follows: 5 elementary school principals, and 1 high school principal. The researcher triangulated data from in-depth interviews, documents, archival records, and PLCA-R for reliability.

Table 7 illustrates a summary of results from the PLCA-R by dimensions of a PLC as identified by Hord (1997, 2004a).
Table 7

PLCA-R Results

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PLC Dimensions</th>
<th>D1</th>
<th>D2</th>
<th>D3</th>
<th>D4</th>
<th>D5a</th>
<th>D5b</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Q1: 1428</td>
<td>Q12: 1500</td>
<td>Q21: 1593</td>
<td>Q31: 1400</td>
<td>Q38: 1599</td>
<td>Q43: 1464</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q4: 1510</td>
<td>Q15: 1582</td>
<td>Q24: 1513</td>
<td>Q34: 1515</td>
<td>Q41: 1447</td>
<td>Q47: 1504</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q5: 1426</td>
<td>Q16: 1504</td>
<td>Q25: 1530</td>
<td>Q35: 1481</td>
<td>Q42: 1536</td>
<td>Q48: 1612</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q6: 1506</td>
<td>Q17: 1480</td>
<td>Q26: 1585</td>
<td>Q36: 1535</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q7: 1395</td>
<td>Q18: 1588</td>
<td>Q27: 1471</td>
<td>Q37: 1434</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q8: 1465</td>
<td>Q19: 1443</td>
<td>Q28: 1616</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q9: 1492</td>
<td>Q20: 1602</td>
<td>Q29: 1602</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q10: 1396</td>
<td></td>
<td>Q30: 1578</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Q52: 1566</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q11: 1634</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

No. of respondents: 511, 511, 511, 511, 511, 511
Sum of raw scores: 16166, 13753, 15631, 10376, 7640, 15189
Average Raw Score: 31.64, 26.91, 30.59, 20.31, 14.95, 29.72
Mean: 2.88, 2.99, 3.06, 2.90, 2.99, 2.97
Standard Deviation: 0.81, 0.74, 0.70, 0.75, 0.76, 0.73

Note. D1- Shared and Supportive Leadership; D2- Shared Values and Vision; D3- Collective Learning and Application; D4- Shared Personal Practice; D5a- Supportive Conditions-Relationships; D5b- Supportive Conditions-Structures; n- Number of Survey Respondents; Mean Score Range; 1.00-1.99= Strongly Disagree; 2.00-2.99= Disagree; 3.00-3.99= Agree; and 4.00-4.99= Strongly Agree; Q=Question.

PLCA-R results indicate the highest mean score of 3.06 for Collective Learning and Application (D3). Shared and Supportive Leadership (D1) had the lowest mean score of 2.88. Both Shared Values and Vision (D2), and relationships (D5a) on the Supportive Conditions dimension had a mean score of 2.99. Additionally, Shared Personal Practice (D4) had a mean score of 2.90, and structures (D5b) in the Supportive Conditions dimension had a mean score of 2.97.
SEDL’s analysis program for the PLCA-R allowed data to be organized and analyzed by specific subgroups. Table 8 illustrates the mean scores for all respondents and by subgroups based on positions and/or responsibilities in the district.

Table 8

PLCA-R Results by Subgroup and All Respondents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subgroups</th>
<th>D1</th>
<th>D2</th>
<th>D3</th>
<th>D4</th>
<th>D5a</th>
<th>D5b</th>
<th>n</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>All Teachers, Counselors, and Librarians</td>
<td>2.87</td>
<td>2.98</td>
<td>3.05</td>
<td>2.90</td>
<td>2.98</td>
<td>2.96</td>
<td>489</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Campus Administrators</td>
<td><strong>3.20</strong></td>
<td><strong>3.40</strong></td>
<td><strong>3.34</strong></td>
<td><strong>3.00</strong></td>
<td><strong>3.30</strong></td>
<td><strong>3.23</strong></td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central Office</td>
<td>2.71</td>
<td>2.73</td>
<td>2.78</td>
<td>2.60</td>
<td>2.60</td>
<td>2.98</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elementary Teachers only</td>
<td>2.78</td>
<td>2.96</td>
<td><strong>3.06</strong></td>
<td>2.87</td>
<td>2.93</td>
<td>2.93</td>
<td>262</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle School Teachers only</td>
<td><strong>3.00</strong></td>
<td><strong>3.04</strong></td>
<td><strong>3.12</strong></td>
<td>2.96</td>
<td><strong>3.06</strong></td>
<td><strong>3.04</strong></td>
<td>110</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High School Teachers only</td>
<td>2.94</td>
<td><strong>3.00</strong></td>
<td><strong>3.01</strong></td>
<td>2.90</td>
<td><strong>3.04</strong></td>
<td>2.89</td>
<td>121</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All</td>
<td>2.88</td>
<td>2.99</td>
<td><strong>3.06</strong></td>
<td>2.90</td>
<td>2.99</td>
<td>2.97</td>
<td>511</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. D1- Shared and Supportive Leadership; D2- Shared Values and Vision; D3- Collective Learning and Application; D4- Shared Personal Practice; D5a- Supportive Conditions-Relationships; D5b- Supportive Conditions-Structures; n- Number of Survey Respondents.

Mean Score Range; 1.00-1.99= Strongly Disagree; 2.00-2.99= Disagree; 3.00-3.99= Agree; and 4.00-4.99 Strongly Agree.

Mean scores of particular importance regarding Research Question One are presented in bolded numerals. Campus administrators’ mean scores were above 3.00 (Agree) on a 4-point scale for all dimensions. Collective Learning and Application (D3) was the only dimension with a mean score above a 3.00 (3.06 actual) for all respondents.

The following sections present the findings for Research Question One. The findings are presented by dimension. They are as follows; Shared and Supportive Leadership; Shared Values and Vision, Collective Learning and Application, Shared Personal Practice, and Supportive Conditions (Hipp & Huffman, 2010b; Hord, 1997). For each dimension, the findings are presented by the following subgroups: elementary teachers, middle school teachers, high school teachers, campus administrators, and central office. The only dimension that deviates from this
format is Supportive Conditions – Structures (D5b). The findings for this dimension are presented in two sections: district structures and campus level structures.

**Dimension 1: Shared and supportive leadership**

Hord (2004b) claims that Shared and Supportive Leadership exists when school administrators share power, authority, and decision-making with teachers. Table 9 displays the PLCA-R results for all respondents and by subgroups for Dimension 1: Shared and Supportive Leadership.

Table 9

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subgroups</th>
<th>D1</th>
<th>n</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>All Teachers, Counselors, and Librarians</td>
<td>2.87</td>
<td>489*</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Campus Administrators</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>All</td>
<td>2.88</td>
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</table>

* Denotes n is composed of the following subpopulations; elementary teachers, middle school teachers, and high school teachers; D1- Shared and Supportive Leadership; n- Number of Survey Respondents; Mean Score Range; 1.00-1.99= Strongly Disagree; 2.00-2.99= Disagree; 3.00-3.99= Agree; and 4.00-4.99 Strongly Agree.

PLCA-R results indicate there were two subgroups that had a mean score of 3.00 and above. They are *campus administrators* (3.20) and *middle school teachers* (3.00). Overall this Dimension 1: Shared and Supportive Leadership had a mean score of 2.88 (n=511).

PLCA-R items 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, and 11 are related to **Dimension 1: Shared and Supportive Leadership**. PLCA-R results indicate that item 11 had an overall mean score of 3.20 for all respondents. Table 10 presents the results by subgroup for item 11.
Table 10

**PLCA-R Mean Scores**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Elem Teachers</th>
<th>MS Teachers</th>
<th>HS Teachers</th>
<th>Campus Admin</th>
<th>Central Office</th>
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</tbody>
</table>

*Note:* Means Scores at or above 3.00 are bolded on column for all respondents; Mean Score Range; 1.00-1.99= Strongly Disagree; 2.00-2.99= Disagree; 3.00-3.99= Agree; and 4.00-4.99 Strongly Agree.

*a* Item 11- Staff members use multiple sources of data to make decisions about teaching and learning (Olivier & Hipp, 2010, p. 32).

PLCA-R results indicate that the following subgroups had a mean score of 3.00 and above:

*elementary teachers* (3.15), *middle school teachers* (3.29), *high school teachers* (3.20), *campus administrators* (3.29), and *central office* (3.00).

The following data were collected from interviews and the comments section of the PLCA-R. Data cited from the in-depth interviews include a transcript number; in contrast, data cited from the comments section of the PLCA-R does not include a number. The interview participants included the following: 15 elementary teachers, 5 middle school teachers, 6 high school teachers, 6 principals, and 4 central office administrators. The information is presented for each of the following subgroups: elementary teachers, middle school teachers, high school teachers, campus administrators, and central office.

**Subgroup: Elementary teachers**

PLCA-R data indicate that the elementary teacher subgroup had a mean score of 2.78. Interview data indicate that 3 out of the 15 elementary teachers interviewed claimed that administrators made decisions with little teacher input.

I really don't think that teachers have a whole lot of say in the decision making process (Elementary Teacher 8, 1314-1316).

*Researcher:* How are decisions made here at the campus?
Elementary Teacher 10: Our principal decides (2493-2495).

The following is an excerpt of the conversation with Elementary Teacher 5. The teacher explains how decisions are made at their respective campus.

Researcher: So let’s talk about here at the campus and then at the district. So from your perspective, how do decisions get made at the district level, and this is to your knowledge.

Elementary Teacher 5: Sometimes we just think that it’s just them that make up the decisions. I mean that they do not get any input, but I’m sure that there’s something that they go by, the administrators. It’s very rare that teachers have an input.

Researcher: How about here at the campus level, with your principal, how do decisions get made?

Elementary Teacher 5: It’s practically the administrators, the administration office.

Researcher: How would you rate your involvement in decision-making from first of all at the campus and then at the district level?

Elementary Teacher 5: Campus, if I was to rate it, between what?

Researcher: Let’s say one and ten.

Elementary Teacher 5: One and ten? Campus, maybe like a two.

Researcher: A two? Not being very high.

Elementary Teacher 5: Right. The district, I would keep it the same because I do not…

Researcher: Do you know of any other teacher that is involved or is it just across the board in decision-making?

Elementary Teacher 5: Here at the campus or the district?

Researcher: At the campus.

Elementary Teacher 5: Nope (Elementary Teacher 5, 5508-5545).

Out of the 15 elementary teachers interviewed, 11 cited the use of Site-Based Decision Making (SBDM). The following are the interview excerpts from several elementary teachers:
Well we have a site-based decision making committee and we meet regularly; at least once a month, sometimes more and we discuss all aspects of the campus and we come to a decision as a committee and then it filters down through the different grade levels (Elementary Teacher 1, 74-81).

Well there's a site based decision making committee that I've served in it, but you're free to tell your grade level representative concerns you have then it's brought up to the committee (Elementary Teacher 3, 5099-5104).

I know we have like a school cadre, one teacher from every grade level represents and we have like a cadre for that and the teacher goes to a meeting and they discuss some of the decisions that have to be made and the teachers come back and they ask us for our input, and then they meet again and they come up with a decision for any kind of problem that we're having. That's how they do it (Elementary Teacher 5, 5970-5981).

We have a teachers advisory committee, a campus…I forget what other name they give it but it basically means that when we have something that we need to make a decision about, representatives from each grade level meet and they discuss if there's anything we need for whatever that topic has to do with from wearing the right, appropriate footwear for safety or the safety during a lockdown. We make decisions about…from book studies to what types of supplemental materials we're going to adopt. Anything having to do with education, safety, climate, anything; we'll meet for that (Elementary Teacher 6, 6570-6587).

They are receptive to allowing us to make decisions. On campus we have cadres also. Every teacher is part of a cadre and the cadres are after school and there's your cadre, where it's gonna be your lead teacher for the year, and the lead teacher will meet with the principal, and they make decisions about campus things (Elementary Teacher 7, 7242-7251).

Well each committee member is a representative of their grade level so we kind of take whatever we hear, our needs/concerns, what we think the consensus would be at our grade level and we take that to the committee meeting (Elementary Teacher 8, 86-92).

We have committees for everything. Every grade level has one person that represents us all and they change us continuously. You get to serve for a year or two and then another one comes in and another one comes in (Elementary Teacher 9, 1932-1938).

We do have a site-based team. I don't think they have a set schedule of when to meet, but I think they meet at least every nine weeks (Elementary Teacher 12, 3385-3388). And that's when we started the site-based decision-making where teachers were actually asked what they thought (Elementary Teacher 13, 3744-3747).

The following conversation about decision-making is from an interview with elementary teachers 14 and 15. Both teachers chose to be interviewed at the same time slot and have been
with the district for more than 30 years. Both teachers indicate that the campus has an SBDM that regularly meets to make decisions.

Researcher: Let’s shift over to decision-making. From your perspective, how are decisions made here at the campus?

Elementary Teacher 14: Well we have a site-based decision-making committee and we meet regularly; at least once a month, sometimes more and we discuss all aspects of the campus and we come to a decision as a committee and then it filters down through the different grade levels.

Researcher: And even before things get on that agenda for this SBDM, what type of input is taken? Do SBDM members talk to different teachers?

Elementary Teacher 14: Well each committee member is a representative of their grade level so we kind of take whatever we hear, our needs/concerns, what we think the consensus would be at our grade level and we take that to the committee meeting.

Researcher: Are you the current SBDM?

Elementary Teacher 14: I am.

Researcher: How long have you served?

Elementary Teacher 14: This is my first year. Well, I’ve done it before, but we kind of do it on a rotation basis within the grade level.

Researcher: Have you ever served as a grade level representative?

Elementary Teacher 14: Yes I have.

Researcher: In terms of…there’s input that’s brought in and then that’s taken to the SBDM member; the SBDM member then talks about it or brings it up during the meeting.

Elementary Teacher 14: And I’ve done SBDM under different principals and it’s pretty much the same.

Researcher: Who comes up with the agenda for the SBDM?

Elementary Teacher 15: Probably the principal, yea, and she has her own topic of discussion as well.

Researcher: Now, how about the campus improvement plan?
Elementary Teacher 14: That’s part of the SBDM.

Researcher: Ok, and does the SBDM play a role in developing the campus improvement plan?

Elementary Teacher 14: Honestly, the way that I’ve seen it and I don’t know…there’s a standard and then the principal goes over it each year, this is one of the first things we do at the beginning of the year, she’ll go over it and she’ll make a point of saying, ok, this needs to be changed because of this or this needs to be added to because of this, and then we as a committee, we break it apart, all the different components of it either by grade level or by groups, whoever’s there, and then we discuss it and then we share whatever we’ve determined within the group and then the principal will take one final look at it and then we meet again and she’ll show us what we came up with as a finished copy (Elementary Teacher 14 & 15, 70-140).

Interview data indicated that SCISD has an active District Executive Improvement Committee (DEIC) that is comprised of teachers from each school in the district that are involved in providing input on a variety of topics. The following excerpts are from Elementary Teacher 1 who has been employed and assigned to the same campus for 22 years and throughout that time has served on several committees. The teacher served on the DEIC committee at the time of the interview.

Elementary Teacher 1: ...I'm also on the DEIC committee.

Researcher: And DEIC is?

Elementary Teacher 1: I'm with the district level. It's the district committee and it's composed of teachers from every school (Elementary Teacher 1, 701-706).

In the following excerpt, Elementary Teacher 1 explains the teacher representatives’ role in goal setting at the district level.

Researcher: Actually, that goes along with the next question. Describe how the district improvement plan is developed. Were you involved in developing either plan, and how were you involved?

Elementary Teacher 1: Campus level this year, no. I have been in past years when I’ve been a lead teacher. District level, yes. So at the beginning of the year they say we’ve worked on these goals, what do we need to change what do we need to improve? So it goes to the district committee and we look at it and we give them our feedback: what we
think should happen, and they usually make those changes. And the last meeting we had
about two; three weeks ago we evaluated how well we met our goals. So we went back
and sort of graded ourselves looking at each goal.

Researcher: And when you look at the goals, what’s the approach?

Elementary Teacher 1: That’s what we did. But it’s not a consensus across district,
because like our college readiness goal. Some schools looked at it and said that is a
weakness that we need to work on because we’re not addressing enough at the
elementary level college readiness. I said, but that that’s a strength for our school because
we are addressing that issue, but you see where each one is lacking and it’s not district
wide, it may be here or it may be over here cause its different in every campus, it’s not
the same.

Researcher: And do you feel it needs to be the same?

Elementary Teacher 1: I think it should, yes but like I said, it’s gonna be a process and
it’s gonna take…some people it takes a while to get them to change (Elementary Teacher
1, 707-750).

Overall, the elementary teacher subgroup (n=262) had a mean score of 2.78 for
Dimension 1: Shared and Supportive Leadership on the PLCA-R. Interview data indicate that
11 out of the 15 teachers interviewed cited the use of SBDM at the campus level. One
elementary teacher claimed to participate as a member of the DEIC. Additionally, 3 out of the
15 teachers interviewed cited they have little to no input in decision-making.

Subgroup: Middle school teachers

PLCA-R results indicate that, as a subgroup, middle school teachers (n=110) had a mean
score of 3.00 (see Table 9). Out of the five middle school teachers interviewed four reported
having a voice in decision-making at the campus level.

Well we do have a campus leadership team and it's been changed a little bit by (principal)
and that's his right and he felt like that it was better served to use that committee to make
sure that curriculum was being taught and lesson plans were being successful (Middle
School Teacher 3, 684-691).

I think as far as the student learning, it's decided by the teacher or the team (Middle
School Teacher 5, 1293-1295).
Two middle school teachers cited shared decision-making at the campus level but not at the district level. The following excerpt presents a conversation with two middle school teachers. In the excerpt, middle school teachers 1 and 2 illustrate their involvement in decision-making. This interview was conducted with the two teachers at the same time. This arrangement was at their request due to scheduling; both had conference periods at the same time and were assigned to the same school.

Researcher: So if you were to rate your involvement in that decision-making between one and ten, how would you rate it?

Middle School Teacher 1: I’d rate it a one.

Researcher: A one?

Middle School Teacher 1: Probably less, probably a one is being generous. But from the principal level, I would rate it a five, maybe six. She tries her best to make adjustments.

Middle School Teacher 2: I’d say probably a two when it comes to the district level because they pretty much have that locked in, and see, under (superintendent) they had a whole bunch of curriculum specialist that they hired and then they made facilitators for all the schools now, and I know the one we have really works hard because she used to be a history teacher here, so she works hard. But some of the other[s] all they do is just take care of parties and like I say, some of these projects they come up with is to justify their own jobs. We had the teachers do this, we had this meeting, this is our professional communities learning type thing, then they have all the superintendents come in and say oh look at what they did and it’s all smoke and mirrors in that way (Middle School Teacher 1 and 2, 72-149).

During the interview Middle School Teacher 5 cited that their vote in decision-making does not count:

Over the years I would say that…in the past, school level of course, probably a seven or an eight. And now I’m pretty much doing the same things, but I don't get to make any decision or my vote doesn't count. Decisions are already made and I have to do it… (Middle School Teacher 5, 2077-2085)
Out of the 5 middle school teachers interviewed, one teacher cited having a limited role in the decision-making at the campus level. The following excerpt presents the conversation during the interview.

*Researcher:* Let’s shift over to the campus level. How are decisions made here at the campus?

*Middle School Teacher 5:* Now, our input is not wanted, and we’re told what to do.

*Researcher:* Was it different before?

*Middle School Teacher 5:* Yes.

*Researcher:* Can you give me an example?

*Middle School Teacher 5:* Like in the site-based management meeting that I’m in, the administration comes in with an agenda and we have to agree to it, whereas before, they would have a count of votes; one, two, three, and is there anything else?

*Researcher:* Did you feel your input was more valuable before than now?

*Middle School Teacher 5:* Definitely, I felt like I was part of the whole program, the whole school district (Middle School Teacher 5, 2045-2064).

Overall, the *middle school teacher* (n=110) subgroup was the only teacher group with a mean score of 3.00 (see Table 9). Meanwhile, interview data indicate that out of the 5 *middle school teachers* interviewed, 4 revealed they were involved in decision-making at the campus level, and one teacher claimed to have a limited role in decision-making.

*Subgroup: High school teachers*

The *high school teacher* (n=121) subgroup had a mean score of 2.94 (see Table 9). High school teachers also shared their opinions on shared decision-making at their respective schools. The following data are from the PLCA-R comments section for high school teacher respondents. Interview data from the comments section of the PLCA-R do not contain a teacher number because data derived was extracted from the surveys that were not identified with individuals’
names. Out of the 121 respondents that categorized themselves as high school teachers, 9 provided a response in this section. Out of the 9 responses, 3 pertained to shared decision-making.

Teachers may be asked for opinions but I don't believe the opinions make that much difference (High School Teacher, 9-11).

We have a multiplicity of committees, but they seem more to distribute administrative tasks among the teaching staff than to give us any actual voice in decision-making (High School Teacher, 878-882).

Principal does not seem to invite teacher input. Many problems exist that can be fixed if principal asks for teacher input (High School Teacher, 885-888).

Out of the 6 high school teachers interviewed, 4 cited examples of how decisions are made at their campuses and the level of autonomy in making curricular decisions. The following excerpts are from high school teachers.

I have total flexibility and how my guys teach, but again, I don’t dictate how they teach. I let them tell me how they want to teach. If I see something that’s glaringly wrong I’ll correct it, but for the most part these are the teachers that are in the trenches; they’re dealing with the curriculum material all the time with the different groups of students and so they’re pretty good. If you let teachers, especially I think we got pretty good teachers in our science department…you let teachers come up with how to present curriculum, usually they’re gonna get it right. So, as far as at this school, we are given a lot of freedom to do that. Our principal does not come and try to dictate how we do something; the systems do not either (High School Teacher 2, 607-690).

Well, I have not been part of a committee, because there are so many committees that help and assist with the decision-making in different areas, but I have not been part of any of those committees (High School Teacher 3, 1445-1450).

But there are a lot of things where they’ll ask our opinion. They’ll do a survey, they’ll have our input, they’ll have meeting we can express our opinions, and it gets brought through a chain of command (High School Teacher 4, 2039-2044).

We always get to vote on the school calendar so we have input there. Each department kind of gets together and decides…like we do actually make up the district curriculum assessments; they call them DCAs (district curriculum assessment). We actually put them together. They have to be approved, but like our physics teachers get together and the physics teachers from south and we work on it. We don’t get together with them, but it’s
communicated between the two. So we have that input on the DCAs and what should be tested and what shouldn’t (High School Teacher 6, 2049-2063).

Out of the six high school teachers interviewed, one teacher claimed that all decisions are made by administration.

The decisions are from administration basically (High School Teacher 5, 1442-1443).

Overall, the high school teacher (n=121) subgroup had a mean score of 2.94 (see Table 9). Four out of the 6 high school teachers interviewed cited examples of how decisions are made at their respective schools.

Subgroup: Campus administrators

The campus administrator (n=14) subgroup had a mean score of 3.20 (see Table 9). Out of the 6 principals interviewed, all mentioned shared decision-making at the campus and district levels. Following are excerpts from principal interviews:

Site-based decision teams, vertical teams, grade level teams; you have to establish those because if you don’t establish those then you make all the decisions yourself; there’s not gonna be any buy in, but when it comes from them…and I’ll give you another example. Three weeks ago, we established those things for the next school year. Before I would assign them; you will serve on this, you will serve on that, because I knew what their strengths were. This year I said, you know what, you decide where you want to be at. All I require is that you are passionate, you are a voice for (Elementary School), and you have the best interest of students. Those are the three requirements. If you can fulfill those three requirements, then I expect you to be on two or more committees, and it went even better (Principal 1, 307-331).

I guess it depends on what the decisions are about, but I would say we all have an opportunity to share our concerns and then it’s put forth on an agenda and we problem solve through it so…I don’t know how to rate that you know. We do have an opportunity to make differences or bring up concerns (Principal 2, 787-794).

I feel like principals do have a very strong voice when it comes to making big district decisions and I think that, this is my third year as principal, but I do like we are heard when it comes to implementing certain things...do we want to, do we not want to, what is the cost benefit, and I feel like we have a good voice when it comes to big decisions we make (Principal 3, 1795-1805).
I think that we have a good balance. I think that we have the central office support and guidance in areas where it’s needed, but then also as a campus we’re given a lot of flexibility to make decisions based on what’s best for our kids at our campus, so I kind of feel like we got a good mix (Principal 4, 1673-1679).

Sure. I guess you can say we have quite a big influence because when you're sitting on those committees you're making huge decisions; district decisions (Principal 5, 1032-1036).

When it comes to decisions you’ve got your site-based committees (Principal 6, 868-870).

Overall, the campus administrator (n=14) subgroup had a mean score of 3.20 (see Table 9). Findings indicate that 6 out of 6 principals interviewed cited shared decision-making at the campus and district level.

Subgroup: Central office

The central office (n=5) subgroup had a mean score of 2.71 (see Table 9). Out of 4 central office administrators interviewed, all 4 noted it was important to involve stakeholders in decision-making. Following are excerpts from the in-depth interviews with central office administrators.

…at a district this size not everybody can be at the table for every decision but we are gonna keep you involved and we are gonna have representation at the table (Central Office 1, 590-594).

Ok, so we recognize that we need to work in collaborative teams and there are multiple teams of course, that are out there: there’s grade level teams, vertical teams, but how do we define those collaborative teams? And so the south central learning communities (SCLC) is our professional leaders and it’s our administrative leaders: it’s our principals, assistant principals, facilitators, we include all of the superintendent’s staff, and the directors in the district, and we come together once a month and we usually are driven by some piece of data that we’re looking at, whether it’s one set of scores or another, PBMAS or what not, and so we have some sort of a learning activity that goes along with that frequently, and then the campuses will take that back and they modify it for their campus and their teams there and so we’re hoping that they get a sense, and again, know what’s going on at the district level. For years we were so site-based oriented that we used to say that we had seventeen independent school districts that are elementary schools, right, I mean, each school really, kind of did their own thing and we’ve really tightened things up over the last few years and part of what’s helped us align all of that is through the learning community (Central Office 2, 203-239).
The academic and those teams get together and ensure that the conversations are taking place and strictly zoned in on student achievement, data, shared practices, best practices, and how do we enrich the program in what we're doing and how do we remediate when there's a need (Central Office 3, 864-875).

The second week of the month we move to an expansion of what our new Principal's learned and we move to our SCLC.....And that's all the administrators, directors, facilitators and an assistant principal from each campus come in and we talk about big concepts in the district that month. And then the third week we have our principal’s meetings on Wednesdays, our assistant principal academy on Thursday and on Friday we have our instructional facilitators (Central Office 4, 2070-2091).

The central office subgroup (n=5) subgroup had a mean score of 2.71 (see Table 9) for this dimension. Interview data indicate that 4 out of 4 central office administrators cited the use of grade level meetings, and SCLC meetings.

**Summary of Dimension 1: Shared and Supportive leadership**

Overall, Dimension 1: Shared and Supportive Leadership had a mean score of 2.88 (Disagree) (see Table 9). There were two subgroups that had a mean score of 3.00 (Agree) or above. They include: campus administrators (3.20) and middle school teachers (3.00) (see Table 9). PLCA-R results show that item 11 had a mean score of 3.00 or above in the following subgroups: elementary teachers (3.15), middle school teachers (3.29), high school teachers (3.20), campus administrators (3.29), and central office (3.00).

Interview data indicate:

- 11 out of the 15 elementary teachers interviewed cited the use of SBDM at the campus level;
- One elementary teacher claimed to participate as a member of the DEIC;
- 3 out of 15 elementary teachers cited decision-making at the campus level was done with little to no teacher input;
- 1 out of 5 middle school teachers interviewed cited having a limited role in decision-making at the campus level;
- 4 out of the 6 high school teachers interviewed provided examples of how decisions are made at the campus level;
- 6 out of 6 principals interviewed cited shared decision-making at the campus and district level;
- 4 out of 4 central office administrators indicated it was important to involve stakeholders in decision-making; and
- PLCA-R respondents (Item 11; mean score 3.20) agreed that teachers and staff use multiple sources of data to make decisions on teaching and learning.

**Dimension 2: Shared values and vision**

According to Hipp and Huffman (2010b), an effective vision presents a vivid picture of the organization that inspires its stakeholder’s to work towards a future goal. Hord (2004b) embraces the notion that a learning community adopts Shared Values and Vision that lead to norms and behaviors that the staff support. Table 11 displays the PLCA-R results for all respondents and by subgroups for this dimension.

Table 11

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PLCA-R Results for Dimension 2: Shared Values and Vision</th>
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<tr>
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**Note.** * Denotes n is composed of the following subpopulations; elementary teachers, middle school teachers, and high school teachers; D2 - Shared Values and Vision; n- Number of Survey Respondents; Mean Score Range; 1.00-1.99= Strongly Disagree; 2.00-2.99= Disagree; 3.00-3.99= Agree; and 4.00-4.99 Strongly Agree.

PLCA-R data indicate a mean score of 2.99 for all respondents. Further analysis of mean scores indicates there were three subgroups with a mean score of 3.00 or above. They are as follows: campus administrators (3.40), middle school teachers (3.04), and high school teachers (3.00).

Items 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, and 20 of the PLCA-R asked questions related to **Dimension 2: Shared Values and Vision.** PLCA-R results indicate that 4 out of 9 items in this
section (items 14, 15, 18, and 20) had overall mean scores of 3.00 or above. Table 12 presents the results for these items.

Table 12

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Elem Teachers</th>
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</table>

Note: Means Scores at or above 3.00 are bolded on column for all respondents; Mean Score Range; 1.00-1.99= Strongly Disagree; 2.00-2.99= Disagree; 3.00-3.99= Agree; and 4.00-4.99 Strongly Agree.

a Item 14- The staff share visions for school improvement that have an undeviating focus on student learning; b Item 15- Decisions are made in alignment with the school’s values and vision; c Item 18- Policies and programs are aligned to the school’s vision; d Item 20- Data are used to prioritize actions to reach a shared vision (Olivier & Hipp, 2010, p. 33).

PLCA-R results for survey item 15 generated a mean score of 3.00 or above for all subgroups; four items (14, 15, 18, and 20) had an overall mean score of 3.00 or above.

The following data were collected from the interviews, as well as the comments section of the PLCA-R. Interview data cited from the in-depth interviews includes a transcript number; in contrast, data cited from the comments section of the PLCA-R do not include a transcript number. The interview participants included the following: 15 elementary teachers, 5 middle school teachers, 6 high school teachers, 6 principals, and 4 central office administrators. The sections that follow are presented by subgroups of elementary teachers, middle school teachers, high school teachers, campus administrators, and central office.

Subgroup: Elementary teachers

PLCA-R data indicates the elementary teacher (n=262) subgroup had an overall mean score of 2.96 for Dimension 2: Shared Values and Vision (see Table 11). Out of the 15
elementary teachers, interviewed none knew the mission or vision statements for the district. However, 4 teachers were able to describe the process their campuses followed to revise the school's mission and vision. The following interview excerpts demonstrate elementary teachers’ knowledge of the process used to develop district's mission and vision.

They have a committee that goes in and works on that. It’s made up of people from the community, students from the high school, parents, teachers, school board members, and the superintendent staff. And they all work on that together, it’s collaborative. And then they bring it to the district committee, which is us, and we look at it and give our input on…that’s great or maybe we need to change this (Elementary Teacher 1, 771-783).

Together as a campus, we developed our vision statement and we developed our mission statement (Elementary Teacher 8, 1380-1383).

We have a book on our missions and a book on our visions for the future. I know we started it in August and we added on more to the visions as to what we want to see in the future. Right now, if you ask me about it I don't recall much, but I know that it involved everybody; the community, the staff, the administrations, everything. It involved everything, but we are familiar with the mission and vision statement. It's not foreign (Elementary Teacher 9, 2001-2013).

Teachers were asked to submit ideas. Every year we look at re-wording it and making sure that it goes with the goals of the district, and plus the goals of your campus. What is it that we want to accomplish at our school? And so I know two years ago we looked at the verbiage and we wanted it to be easy for people to understand, especially for ourselves. And then it's posted in every room, it’s posted on our door so we have it (Elementary Teacher 13, 3930-3941).

In summary, the elementary teacher (n=262) subgroup had a mean score of 2.96 (see Table 11) on this PLC Dimension. Interview data indicate the following: none of the 15 elementary teachers interviewed could recite the district's mission and vision; and 4 out of 15 elementary teachers interviewed described the process the campus followed to revise the mission and vision.

Subgroup: Middle school teachers

PLCA-R data indicate the middle school teacher (n=110) subgroup had an overall mean score of 3.04 (see Table 10) for PLC Dimension 2. PLCA-R data indicate that none of the 5
middle school teachers interviewed know the mission or vision statements for the district, but did not know there was one. The following interview excerpts demonstrate middle school teachers’ understanding of the district’s mission and vision.

I know that we have one and the district has one but I’m really not real familiar with them. That’s probably pretty bad (Middle School Teacher 3, 795-798).

It (mission and vision) exists on paper; it exists as part of the campus improvement plan, but I don’t think it’s effectively implemented (Middle School Teacher 4, 1450-1453).

One teacher described the process used at the district level to review and revise the district's mission and vision.

I know on the district level. I was on the committee…every five years we upgraded. I was on the committee two times and we would go through and really write down what we thought should be the mission statement and the goals and it was a long, arduous task. We would really sit down and…pros and cons on wording and how to make it global and all this other stuff, so that’s how that was done. I’ve never been on the one for the campus, so . . . (Middle School Teacher 3, 802-814).

In summary, the middle school teacher (n=110) subgroup generated a mean score of 3.04 (see Table 11) for Dimension 2 - Shared Mission and Vision on the PLCA-R. Interview data indicate the following: 0 out of 5 middle school teachers interviewed could recite the district's mission and vision; and, one of the teachers interviewed described the process the campus followed to revise the mission and vision.

Subgroup: High school teachers

PLCA-R data indicate the high school teacher (n=121) subgroup had a mean score of 3.00 (see Table 11) on PLC Dimension 2. Out of the 6 high school teachers interviewed none knew the mission or vision statements for the district, but did know they had one.

Researcher: Are you familiar with the vision and mission statement of the district?

High School Teacher 1: I am but right now my mind is blank, right now I just can't remember it (High School Teacher 1, 173-176).
Before (current superintendent), there were two other superintendents. Their visions have pretty much been the same but...I really don't have an answer for that, I'm sorry. I really don't. It's all been good. I've never really had complaints about the superintendents in any manner. Their vision has been the same, and of course, the whole ideas for the educational institution is to try and prepare our students for work place readiness and give them more of a college readiness (High School Teacher 3, 1414-1426).

One high school teacher recalled how the district's mission and vision had been developed. The following interview excerpts demonstrate how this high school teacher described the process the campus followed in developing the mission and vision.

Researcher: Now, do you know if the campus has a mission and a vision?

High School Teacher 2: Yea we came up with them, but I don’t remember them…?

Researcher: No, tell me a little bit about the process that you guys followed to develop the mission and vision.

High School Teacher 2: They came to us in a department chair meeting and said we got to have a mission...we need a mission statement and a vision. And so I emailed all my guys and said, we need this, what do you think will be a good one. And so, I forget how many people, but it wasn’t everybody, a few people emailed me back suggestions and then in a department chair meeting we laid them all out and we picked out which ones we thought were the best and fit our school best.

Researcher: Once you develop that mission and vision, what’s happen since then? Has there been any follow up or anything?

High School Teacher 2: No. Not that I can remember. And it’s obvious because I can’t remember what exactly they are (High School Teacher 2, 854-879).

In summary, the high school teachers (n=121) subgroup had an overall mean score of 3.00 (see Table 11) on Dimension 2 of the PLCA-R. Interview data indicate that none of the 6 high school teachers interviewed could recite the district’s mission and/or vision; only 1 out of six teachers described the process the campus had used to revise the district's vision.

Subgroup: Campus administrators

PLCA-R data indicate the campus administrator (n=14) subgroup had a mean score of 3.40 (see Table 10) for Dimension 2 of the PLCA-R. Out of the 6 principals interviewed all six
acknowledged having a mission and vision for the district. Their comments focused on the process the district followed to develop the mission and vision. The following interview excerpts are how one principal described the process the district followed to develop the mission and vision.

Well I think that it started from the board. The school board created one and then they take that vision and work its way down to the SCLC where it was shared and interpreted there and then we bring it down here to our campus and then piggy back off of that. This is our district's vision. What is our campus vision in relation to that district vision (Principal 2, 1191-1201)?

That is something that gets shared with and I'm not a hundred percent sure on that but I know that it gets developed and tweaked every year. The district improvement council, which there is representatives from every campus that participate in that just like at a campus the site-based team is the one that works on the campus mission and vision and goals (Principal 4, 1895-1904).

The following interview excerpts from Principal 2 note the experience of a new principal attempting to get their campus to embrace the school's mission and vision.

I will tell you, being new to being a principal my first year, I just kind of came in and ok guys let’s look at the vision, all gung ho not realizing that the staff wasn’t as gung ho as I was. It’s that realization where you know, okay . . . Have they embraced it? They know what it means, they know where they need to go, we’re still young in our development so that is something we’re really gonna visit this next school year because I don’t know that the buy in, their buy in is not there yet. We’re not buying in completely so that is one of my focus areas at the start of the year. We’re looking at it and we’re rewriting it to suit our campus but in the end when it comes to the decisions, then I refer to that and say, now, is this something that [is] best for kids, is this meeting our mission and vision, and then when it’s not the answer I want to hear (Principal 2, 1204-1231).

And so we need to revisit that and I’m gonna work on my style of presentation as well because I need to get their ownership. I need a better understanding of that. I think that’s just something that . . . it’s the change, they’ve never had to focus on the mission/vision goals. Their mission and vision was to make sure the kids passed and did well but now it’s more detailed in that we want more for our children than just to pass, you know. There are standards and they’re high standards and what are we doing to get our children to the top (Principal 2, 1233-1246).

In summary, the campus administrator (n=14) subgroup had an overall mean score of 3.40 (see Table 11) for Dimension 2 of the PLCA-R. The findings from in-depth interviews
indicate the following: none of 6 the principals could recite the district’s mission and/or vision. One principal described their experience as a new principal leading a campus and implementing a mission and vision.

Subgroup: Central office

PLCA-R data indicate the central office (n=5) subgroup had an overall mean score of 2.73 (see Table 11) for Dimension 2. Data collected from in-depth interviews with four central office administrators. Of the four central office administrators interviewed, one central office administrator indicated a vision to create systems that ensure PLC implementation across the district.

…we stay away from the word ‘pilot’ in this District, because pilot means it's an opportunity to divorce yourself from the project after one year. Phasing is we've made a commitment and we're going to get to the point where it's full implementation. We're phasing it in allowing for people to come along in the journey.

Okay. But we're – when we say we're going to phase in and formalize the professional learning community; it means it is going to be a standard in South Central. We are going to create systems and we're going to formalize systems and structures to allow meaningful conversations to take place vertically and horizontally among our professional staff and our principals. And so, we not only speak to the tenets of professional learning community but we ensure that the systems exist and we ensure that we are executing the systems (Central Office 3, 819-854).

In summary, the central office subgroup had a mean score of 2.73 (see Table 11) for Dimension 2 on the PLCA-R. Data from the in-depth interviews included one central office administrator’s description of their vision for PLC implementation across the district.

Summary of Dimension 2: Shared Values and Vision

Overall, Dimension 2: Shared Values and Vision had a mean score of 2.99 (see Table 11) for all respondents. There were three subgroups with a mean score of 3.00 or higher. The three subgroups are: campus administrators (3.40), middle school teachers (3.04), and high school teachers (3.00). Further analysis of PLCA-R results indicate that 4 out of 9 items for this
dimension had overall means of 3.00 or above. Item mean scores were calculated using the following: Item 14 (3.02), Item 15 (3.10), Item 18 (3.11), and Item 20 (3.14).

Interview data indicate the following:

- 0 out of 8 elementary teachers could recite the district's mission and vision;
- 4 out of 8 elementary teachers described the process the district followed to revise the mission and vision;
- 0 out of 5 middle school teachers could recite the district's mission and vision;
- 0 out of 6 high school teachers could recite the district's mission and vision;
- 1 out of 6 high school teachers recalled how the district revised its mission and vision;
- 0 out of 6 principals could recite the district's mission and vision; and
- 1 out of 4 central office administrators described their vision for PLCs.

Dimension 3: Collective learning and application

Collective Learning and Application promotes continuous learning by all staff members to build capacity geared towards the improvement of student learning (Hord, 2004b). Table 13 displays the PLCA-R results for all respondents and for each subgroup for this dimension.

Table 13

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subgroups</th>
<th>D3</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>All Teachers, Counselors, and Librarians</td>
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<td>489*</td>
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<tr>
<td>Campus Administrators</td>
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<td>5</td>
</tr>
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<td>3.12</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>High School Teachers only</td>
<td>3.01</td>
<td>121</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All</td>
<td>3.06</td>
<td>511</td>
</tr>
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</table>

Note. * Denotes n is composed of the following subpopulations; elementary teachers, middle school teachers, and high school teachers; D3 Collective Learning and Application; n- Number of Survey Respondents; Mean Score Range; 1.00-1.99= Strongly Disagree; 2.00-2.99= Disagree; 3.00-3.99= Agree; and 4.00-4.99= Strongly Agree.

PLCA-R data indicates a mean score of 3.06 for all respondents. Further analysis of mean scores indicates there were five subgroups with mean scores of 3.00 or above. The five subgroups are:
campus administrators (3.34), elementary teachers (3.06), middle school teachers (3.12), and high school teachers (3.01).

PLCA-R items 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, and 30 related to **Dimension 3: Collective Learning and Application**. PLCA-R results indicate that items 21, 22, 23, 26, 28, 29, and 30 each had an overall mean score of 3.00 or above for all respondents. Table 14 presents the results by subgroup for items 21, 22, 23, 26, 28, 29, and 30.

Table 14

<table>
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<tr>
<th>PLCA-R Mean Scores</th>
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<th>HS Teachers</th>
<th>Campus Admin</th>
<th>Central Office</th>
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**Note:** Means Scores at or above 3.00 are bolded on column for all respondents; Mean Score Range; 1.00-1.99 = Strongly Disagree; 2.00-2.99 = Disagree; 3.00-3.99 = Agree; and 4.00-4.99 = Strongly Agree.

aItem 21- Staff members work together to seek knowledge, skills and strategies and apply this new learning to their work; bItem 22- Collegial relationships exist among staff that reflect commitment to school improvement efforts; cItem 23- The staff plan and work together to search for solutions to address diverse student needs; dItem 26- Professional development focuses on teaching and learning; eItem 28- School staff is committed to programs that enhance learning; fItem 29- Staff members collaboratively analyze multiple sources of data to assess the effectiveness of instructional practices; and gItem 30- Staff members collaboratively analyze student work to improve teaching and learning. (Olivier & Hipp, 2010, p. 33).

PLCA-R results indicate that items 21, 26, and 28 had mean scores at or above a 3.00 for all subgroups.

The following data were collected from the in-depth interviews. The interview participants include the following: 15 elementary teachers, 5 middle school teachers, 6 high
school teachers, 6 principals, and 4 central office administrators. The excerpts are separated by the subgroups of elementary teachers, middle school teachers, high school teachers, campus administrators, and central office.

Subgroup: Elementary teachers

PLCA-R data indicate the elementary teacher (n=262) subgroup had an overall mean score of 3.06 (Agree). Data collected from in-depth interviews corroborate this finding. Interview data indicate that 15 out of the 15 elementary teachers acknowledged that the district provided staff development. The following interview excerpts demonstrate elementary teachers’ perception of the district's staff development program.

I’ve done a few, yes. We also have…on early release days, they’ll plan; they’ll ask the teachers what do you think are our weakest areas, where do you think we need to focus the most? What do we need to work on? And in October, on the beginning of the year they have what they call break-out sessions and it’s an in-service day, but they’ll have it like at the high school and you register and you go to whatever class you need to go get help with. They have them there; you just sign up and go (Elementary Teacher 1, 927-941).

Even staff development that the district offers has changed and that was due to budget cuts. But as I fill in my PDAS summative, I will write down that I want to continue to further investigate …… so that my administrator would know these are areas I want to be further trained in (Elementary Teacher 2, 4782-4795).

Staff development, I would have to say is very poorly [done], talking about my grade level. We need to go ahead…I believe that my grade level is the foundation and too many times they are not focusing on pre-k. They are focusing on third, fourth, fifth graders, and up because of the testing. There's too many emphasis on testing that they are leaving the lower grades out and a lot of times we just sit there (Elementary Teacher 3, 5637-5648).

…we have that extravaganza in the month of October and then from there it was carried on…there has been maybe two or three ladies that come here to the school and they have gone a little bit further into detail of the sessions that were presented in that extravaganza (Elementary Teacher 4, 5670-5677).

They do provide a lot of staff development. We have…well this year I got CPI training and they also, I believe it was once every two months, we had a meeting with the inclusion teachers where they showed us about different activities that we could do with our students (Elementary Teacher 5, 6158-6165).
Some years we have like a super Saturday where on a Saturday in the fall where we have an all-day in-service where you go to sessions and you go into things that relate to whatever you’re teaching. Like I went to one that was about writing or I went to one about science or you know, we have things like that. And sometimes we’ll do after school staff development whenever there’s an in-service day; we’ll have some kind of staff development (Elementary Teacher 6, 6796-6808).

So this year it was October eighth and they call it the extravaganza and all the teachers go to…we all have classes that we have to sign up for and we sign up for classes a good two or three weeks in advance. Some teachers, for example, like the bilingual teachers, might have to go to a specific workshop but otherwise you pretty much choose things that you want to go and learn about (Elementary Teacher 7, 7130-7141).

There’s a whole lot of it. You can pick whatever you want to learn; develop yourself in, and then there’s some, of course, that you need to do, but for the most part you get to pick whatever it is you think you need to improve on (Elementary Teacher 8, 1474-1481).

(Principal) is always looking for programs that will enhance…will make us better teachers. I know that lately, because of funding’s, that has kind of slowed down a little but he still finds ways and he finds funds that we can qualify as to where he can bring in presenters to talk to us and train us and make us better teachers for the following year (Elementary Teacher 9, 2138-2147).

Last year, we had an extravaganza day where there is a full day of staff development and you signed up for the different courses that you wanted to attend. We do sometimes have some staff development here at our campus, but that's pretty much the extent (Elementary Teacher 10, 2606-2613).

Well you see, first thing is the extravaganza. The last two years it's been in October. And it's a day that we have a work day for the teachers, but the kids are off and they have this huge thing. This year they were talking about having it in one of the back-to-school days, but every single person in the district goes to this and it's like little mini sessions, and you pick. Oh, I want to do something on math, so you go to that room and hear about math for an hour. Oh, I want to hear about data; I'll go to that room (Elementary Teacher 11, 2574-2588).

…and if she feels comfortable in something that she's been teaching she can say yea, I'll teach about that, you know, whatever it is; math hands-on activities. She says I want to do hands-on activities; she does her little proposal, and does it. We have digital classrooms this year…this year we had not very many, next year they're adding like sixteen more, but this year was like twenty across the whole district; we have one. One of our third grade teachers got a digital classroom so she probably would go to the sessions on technology, but now that she's had the digital classroom, they might also ask her to be a presenter on digital technology (Elementary Teacher 12, 3603-3621).
Well, they provide training, I know at the administration building and you can always go to training. And we have an extravaganza day, in the past it's been in the fall; Columbus Day, it was that Monday and we have an in-service day and everyone went to classes that they picked from a list. You would go online and you would pick the courses that you wanted. They gave you a list of everything that was available, or you looked online as to what you wanted to do (Elementary Teacher 13, 4178-4191).

…every summer there's a lot of things (staff development) that the school district sets up, and it's just a variety of thing[s] (Elementary Teacher 14, 190-192).

They usually have in-services set aside that you can attend if you want, during the summer time, and then throughout the year I'm sure they have some too, but in the beginning of the year there's things that the principal might feel that we might need when we have the in-service days, and they decide what they're gonna discuss and then we just attend. But it's pretty much open I think (Elementary Teacher 15, 178-188).

Interview data revealed teachers had the freedom to implement different instructional strategies. The following is a conversation with Elementary Teacher 1. In the excerpt the teacher explains how they are building a video library that consists of different teachers modeling different instructional strategies. The videos are accessible to all teachers for future reference.

_Elementary Teacher 1_: We’re getting very much into…we have vertical alignment committees and it’s hard to pull teachers from classrooms because they really need to be there so we’re developing videos for our webpage that teachers can go in and draw from and pull from. So the vertical alignment team, like I’m the ELA representative. We had to develop a game to teach a certain strategy within the classroom. How can I help improve that strategy? So we had to come up with some way to do that. And we all made videos, and are collected and put on our webpage for anyone to go in and view staff.

_Researcher_: So you’re kind of building a library?

_Elementary Teacher 1_: A library, yes. A virtual library so they don’t have to [be] pulled out to do. And we do a lot during the summer also. Which is strictly voluntary, but a lot of teachers like to do it because they don’t want to be pulled out of their classroom.

_Researcher_: Well that says a lot about their dedication right? Are follow up activities provided after staff development trainings? How do you think they could improve upon those?

_Elementary Teacher 1_: When you go and learn something…if you’re sent and nobody else from your campus goes you have to come back and you have to give like an in-
service on it and train the other teachers; this is how we would do this, this is how we would use this (Elementary Teacher 1, 884-920).

In summary, the elementary teacher (n=262) subgroup had an overall mean score of 3.06 (see Table 13) for Dimension 3 - Collective Learning and Application. Meanwhile, interview data indicate that 15 out of 15 elementary teachers interviewed acknowledged that the district provided staff development; one teacher acknowledged that teachers had the freedom to implement different instructional strategies.

Subgroup: Middle school teachers

PLCA-R data indicate the middle school teacher (n=110) subgroup had a mean score of 3.12 (see Table 11). Interview data indicate that 5 out of the 5 middle school teachers interviewed acknowledged the district provided staff development programs consisting of opportunities to learn different instructional strategies. The following interview excerpts demonstrates middle school teachers’ perceptions of the district's staff development program.

Now the staff development, again, in a lot of ways they give a lot of leeway to the principals for some of that because I know we’ve had a lot of staff developments that we’ve used just for (Middle School) here because we see some needs for that which they allow flexibility like that, those have been real good and so some of the other[s] have been not so good (Middle School Teacher 1, 152-162).

They’ve been very good when it comes to staff development. You go here and learn more technology…They’re always coming up with workshop for this, workshop for that…encourage you to go here, go there, that sort of thing (Middle School Teacher 2, 164-173).

In the years past, we’ve been sent to a lot of in-services, but now the in-services are held inside the school district and they’re held by teachers who have worked a good idea and very successful with it. And those are very informative (Middle School Teacher 3, 1452-1460).

The thing is, for the past few years, it’s (staff development) been exclusively in house so I think we limit our new ideas when it’s in house because I can find out about your idea anyway. But there’s some ideas out there that are blowing around that haven’t got to (region) yet, and those are the ones I’d like to hear (Middle School Teacher 4, 1332-1340).
That's one thing that's changed, at least from my perspective. I know prior to (current superintendent), and I don't know if that has to do with the superintendent that has to do with our principals because it was under another principal, the staff development that came up, if I was interested in it, I would say this is really good or this sounds good that maybe we can implement. We would put in, we would go. It's been a while since I've attended a staff development that either presented to me or I wanted to go to. Up until this year though, I did, with this internship, I did ask (Principal) if I could attend a technology one because to me that's kind of my weaker… I wanted to see what was out there and he did, but staff development, it comes, again, with initiatives. Whatever the district says, ok, this is what we're going for, we're going for implementation but the way it used to be it's kind of like I'm weak in this area, I'm interested in this area, I'd like to gain some knowledge, and then you would go (Middle School Teacher 5, 1549-1578).

In summary, the middle school teacher (n=110) subgroup had a mean score of 3.12 (see Table 13) for Dimension 3 - Collective Learning and Application. Interview data indicate that 5 out of 5 middle school teachers interviewed acknowledged that the district provided staff development.

Subgroup: High school teachers

PLCA-R data indicate the high school teacher (n=121) subgroup had a mean score of 3.01 (see Table 13). Data collected from in-depth interviews indicate that 5 out of the 6 high school teachers interviewed acknowledged that the district provided staff development. The following interview excerpt indicates high school teachers’ cited district’s staff development opportunities offered to them. They cited autonomy in deciding what staff development to attend.

Yes we do. We have conferences that we can go to. We have meetings within the district that are counted towards staff development. The teachers as well, they have meetings, and then we have staff development here on campus. We have like teacher work days. We have staff development days. We have some coming up already in August too, planning already for the next year. We have one that's district wide where everybody attends so there are sessions for every area; whatever area you're in. That one's coming up for the beginning of next school year (High School Teacher 1, 225-240).

Over all, the staff development, I think we have ok overall staff development. There are some things that they do over at the main office, and most of it happens at our main
office, they'll have trainings you can sign up for or they'll have a big training that they'll try to get people to go to. And it depends on which ones, what they are, and who's presenting them, because I've been to...of course I have to go to a lot of them because of my position, and I've been to a lot of them that are totally worthless, but I've been to some that I thought were pretty good (High School Teacher 2, 885-901).

The staff development here is...one of the first things is at any point in time that we have the teacher in-service dates, those are the dates that we are required to go through some professional development and they’re generally assigned. They’re sessions that are put together by the development department and we’re just given a list and they ask us to choose what it is that we want and so forth. It’s a whole day activity. Other than that standard was of doing it that we’re actually told, you need to go somewhere on this day, what’s offered is through online. Online development, you can sit at your own leisure at home or after work, or maybe even during your lunch break, it just depends on when that session is offered, depending on what activity you want to learn or improve in or interested in; you work through it online or you schedule yourself to go to the main office and they have a computer lab center where all the presentations are also done; you have a person, you have a contact. That’s the second way of going through professional development. The third way is, as teachers we have to keep up, abreast of all the technology changes and so forth. We in the career and technology department look forward to that (conference), and that is a huge professional development conference that we try to take advantage of going over there (High School Teacher 3, 1549-1587).

Usually it's the first week of school that we have the different meetings and they (administration) usually bring in somebody; lately they haven't been bringing in as many people because they (administration) decided, I guess, to use more of our people. We have people (teachers) that will go to a meeting in the summer and then they'll come back and present what they learned at the meeting, to the department. It's specific for us because a lot of times when they bring in someone it's not really specific. It's only specific for one department a lot of times, the information they bring you, so by having our local people go to training and then have them (teachers) present about what they learned about that particular topic it helps us out that way (Middle School Teacher 4, 2144-2166).

We decide which ones we want to attend. Everybody decides which one they want to attend, but mostly everybody sticks to their content area (High School Teacher 5, 271-275).

In summary, the high school teacher (n=121) subgroup had a mean score of 3.01 (see Table 13). Interview data indicate that 5 out of 6 high school teachers interviewed acknowledged that the district provided staff development.
Subgroup: Campus administrators

PLCA-R data indicate the campus administrator (n=14) subgroup had a mean score of 3.34 (see Table 13). Data collected from in-depth interviews indicate that 6 of the 6 principals acknowledged that the district’s staff development program provided opportunities for professional development. The following are excerpts from the interviews with principals.

At the district we have the extravaganza where they try to meet the needs of all the campuses based on the data that we receive (Principal 1, 372-375).

At the district we have the extravaganza where they try to meet the needs of all the campuses based on the data we receive. At times we’ll have targeted staff development. This past year at the beginning of the school year, two things concerned me. One was modification of instruction so I brought in the special ed. department to kind of give us a run down or refresher course. The other thing I really felt that we needed to address was our bilingual population so I brought in the bilingual department to come in and kind of refresh us on what we should be doing, on how to be true blue to the model. Whether it’s the 70-30 model or 60-40 model, we need to look at what we were doing, best practices. Those two things really helped us out throughout the year (Principal 2, 372-395).

Now, a principal's meeting always has a learning piece, always has a . . . the board meeting is the smallest portion of the principal meeting now. It's like here's the information you could have gotten in minutes on the internet, so now let's go into the learning piece, the cooperative learning, the development of PLCs…they're constantly training, the staff development is embedded, the sharing of knowledge, it's just a whole different purpose of meeting (Principal 3, 701-715).

I think the staff development program for the teachers has been . . . they’ve really been able to drill down and target areas and provide different trainings for different areas of need for the department whether it’s short; they offer things that are short and sweet after school, an hour/hour and a half versus in the summer, they’ll have stuff that’s all day and they have incorporated an extravaganza the last two years I believe where teachers get to sign up for a day’s worth of trainings and I think some sessions were ninety minutes, some were a hundred and eighty minutes and that was the full day of sessions and I believe this year it’s going to be done a little bit differently. We’re going to have an opportunity to kind of put teachers where we feel they would benefit the most because maybe what I think you need is very different from what you want to attend, and so I think that we’re gonna have a little bit of a voice on this as far as who will be attending what (Principal 4, 1812-1830).

Once we identify what the needs [are] we go one hundred miles per hour. It's real hard to do it within the year but we have managed to do that through our vertical team meetings.
that the district holds and that we hold on campus. We have grade level meetings where we do trainings weekly, depending on the need. Now this year what they've asked me is for differentiated instruction for staff development so that's what we're looking at for the next coming school year (Principal 5, 402-415).

We had some training in reading assignments, and of course you ask me the title of the book and I'm not gonna be able to tell you but we had some guidance from central office. I feel that we got good exposure to it but I feel like maybe the teachers didn't. And that's probably where I failed as the principal (Principal 6, 2072-2080).

In summary, the campus administrator (n=14) subgroup had a mean score of 3.34 (see Table 13) for items related to Dimension 3 on the PLCA-R. Interview data indicate that 6 out of 6 principals acknowledged that the district provided staff development.

Subgroup: Central office

PLCA-R data indicate the central office (n=5) subgroup had a mean score of 2.73 (see Table 13). Data collected from in-depth interviews indicate that three central office administrators acknowledged three forms of staff learning: instructional coaching, PLCs, and prescriptive training for principals.

At our high schools in particular, we had instructional facilitators for many years; they were sort of pseudo administrators, and we did away with them for one year via attrition, and we decided we would add associate principals for teaching and learning, and that would be the number two person at each high school and they would focus on the learning, right, so leading and learning to help continue to work the transformational piece and work closely with my office in curriculum. And so we added the coaching, we've been studying the different coaching models and so we didn't even want to go back in even with the same title, especially at our comprehensive high school so we went in with instructional coaches and we actually sent them to smart-coaching training this year so that can really work to support the teachers, so literally like a coach; they're on the teachers side: I'm here to help you do better, I'm gonna work with you, I'm gonna teach you, I'm gonna be on the sidelines, I'm gonna help you disaggregate data (Central Office 2, 52-83).

I think that the last few years when we've really focused on as a part of our transformational journey is to formalize a process of -- professional learning community is now. The term professional learning community is a recent term that we used in the District. We have always had these systems in place that allow for conversations to take place between teachers and staff (Central Office 3, 794-803).
It does and the leadership styles of our principals differ and their strength and weaknesses differ. And so, what we try and do, and this is another approach in our transformation of our district is that we have – we have a system by each month we do a very prescriptive training to all our principals to all our system principals, all our instructional facilitators and all our counselors. And we call it layers of learning. And so, it's a general topic. We roll it out with the principals. Then the next group, we bring our assistant principals and they come to what we call leaving and support and instruction institute. Attend to a half-day training monthly on a topic that has been identified as a need in this District through survey, through results, through PLC conversations. And so, one of the things that came up last year is we're rolling this up and we're moving in this direction (Central Office 4, 1169-1201).

In the next excerpt Central Office 3 explains where the district is in terms of PLC implementation.

And so the piece that we're refining now is a monitoring piece to ensure that it's happening throughout the District and to ensure that what is – its one thing to create the system for conversations to occur. It's another thing to ensure that what's happening in that system is quality. So we're at that point where we're refining the quality of what's happening within our systems (Central Office 3, 896-911).

In summary, the campus administrators (n=5) subgroup had an overall mean score of 2.73 (see Table 13). Interview data indicate that three central office administrators acknowledged three forms of staff learning: instructional coaching, PLCs, and prescriptive training for principals.

*Summary for Dimension 3 – Collective learning and application*

Overall, *Dimension 3 – Collective Learning and Application* had a mean score of 3.06 (Agree) (see Table 13) for all respondents. There were six subgroups with a mean score of 3.00 (Agree) or above. They include; all teachers, counselors, and librarians (3.05), campus administrators (3.34), elementary teachers (3.06), middle school teachers (3.12), high school teachers (3.01) (see Table 13). Further analysis indicates that items 21, 22, 23, 26, 28, 29, and 30 of the PLCA-R had an overall mean score of 3.00 or above for all respondents. Furthermore, items 21, 26, and 28 had mean scores at or above a 3.00 for all subgroups (see Table 14).
Interview data indicate the following:

- 15 out of 15 elementary teachers acknowledged that the district provided staff development;
- One elementary teacher indicated teachers had the freedom to implement different instructional strategies;
- 5 out of 5 middle school teachers acknowledged that the district provided staff development;
- 5 out of 6 high school teachers acknowledged that the district provided staff development;
- 6 out of 6 principals acknowledged that the district provided staff development; and
- 3 out of 4 central office administrators cited three forms of staff learning: instructional coaching, PLCs, and training for principals.

**Dimension 4: Shared personal practice**

Hord (2004b) defines *Shared Personal Practice* as peer review and feedback on instructional practice to increase individual and organizational capacity. PLCA-R data indicate a mean score of 2.90 for all respondents. Table 15 displays the PLCA-R results for all respondents and by subgroup for this dimension.

Table 15

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subgroups</th>
<th>D4</th>
<th>n</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>All Teachers, Counselors, and Librarians</td>
<td>2.90</td>
<td>489*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Campus Administrators</strong></td>
<td><strong>3.00</strong></td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central Office</td>
<td>2.60</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elementary Teachers only</td>
<td>2.87</td>
<td>262</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle School Teachers only</td>
<td>2.96</td>
<td>110</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High School Teachers only</td>
<td>2.90</td>
<td>121</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All</td>
<td>2.90</td>
<td>511</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Denotes n is composed of the following subpopulations: elementary teachers, middle school teachers, and high school teachers; D4 – Shared Personal Practice; N- Number of Survey Respondents; Mean Score Range: 1.00-1.99= Strongly Disagree; 2.00-2.99= Disagree; 3.00-3.99= Agree; and 4.00-4.99 Strongly Agree.

Further analysis of mean scores indicates that the *campus administrators* (3.00) subgroup was the only subgroup with a 3.00.
PLCA-R items 31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 36, and 37 related to *Dimension 4: Shared Personal Practice*. PLCA-R results indicate that 2 out of 7 items (items 33 and 36) had mean scores of 3.00 or above. Item 33 had a mean of 3.12 for all respondents and item 36 had a mean score of 3.00 for all respondents. Table 16 presents the results by subgroup for items 33 and 36.

Table 16

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Elem Teachers</th>
<th>MS Teachers</th>
<th>HS Teachers</th>
<th>Campus Admin</th>
<th>Central Office</th>
<th>All</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>33</td>
<td>3.08</td>
<td>3.23</td>
<td>3.11</td>
<td>3.21</td>
<td>2.80</td>
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<tr>
<td>36</td>
<td>2.99</td>
<td>3.08</td>
<td>2.96</td>
<td>3.07</td>
<td>2.60</td>
<td>3.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note: Means Scores at or above 3.00 are bolded; Mean Score Range: 1.00-1.99= Strongly Disagree; 2.00-2.99= Disagree; 3.00-3.99= Agree; and 4.00-4.99 Strongly Agree.*

aItem 33- Staff members informally share ideas and suggestions for improving student learning; bItem 36- Individuals and teams have the opportunity to apply learning and share the results of their peers (Olivier & Hipp, 2010, p. 34).

The following data were collected from the interviews and the comments section of the PLCA-R. Quotes from the in-depth interviews include a number, in contrast to data cited from the comments section of the PLCA-R do not include a number. The presentation of excerpts is separated by subgroups: elementary teachers, middle school teachers, high school teachers, campus administrators, and central office.

**Subgroup: Elementary teachers**

PLCA-R data indicate the *elementary teacher* (n=262) subgroup had an overall mean score of 2.87 (see Table 15) for this dimension. Data collected from interviews indicate that 10 out of the 15 *elementary teachers* interviewed reported that teachers informally shared ideas to improve student learning. The following excerpts from interviews support the finding that staff members informally share ideas, have the opportunity to apply learning, and share results.
Oh yes. They have meetings and it's always the grade level chair that goes. But the grade level chair will say, ok this is where I'm going today, this is what we're going to discuss, what concerns do you have that I can bring up at this meeting that we can address and see how we need to fix or change or what we need to do (Elementary Teacher 1, 840-848).

I talked about myself being a district vertical team leader, but I am also on a campus vertical team. So I will meet with a fifth grade teacher. My grade level is fourth; third grade teacher, second grade teacher. All the way down. We will meet in one room and talk about…ok what is it that we need to be changing. An example being math; there's different vocabulary being used across the grade levels so every time they got to a different grade level they have to re-learn things. So this year, that vertical team developed a math strategy where they would be using a certain format so that every grade level would be using that format. So if they went from grade level to grade level, they would see that grid and say ok, what is the question here? How do we begin to solve it? So it's this format that they're using like a grid (Elementary Teacher 2, 4751-4776).

And at the same time while we're in the team, we can discuss what areas that we're stressing that particular week and try to carry on over to the other subjects. That's pretty easy when it comes to history, because history covers everything, world history. So I can incorporate math, I can incorporate science and since I kind of have a bent towards science, I stress quite a bit of science in here; that's just me. In other words, we cross teach. These crossings introduce certain areas (Elementary Teacher 4, 417-431).

This year we haven't. But we have had a program which is called SFA (Success For All) where we would go…it was a reading program and we would go observe other teachers but it was as needed. If we wanted to go see the way someone else was doing a specific skill, you know, teaching the skill, we would be allowed to go in (Elementary Teacher 5, 6200-6209).

We discuss what skills need to be met in every grade level because what we started to see and this was years ago, we started to see that we felt like we were teaching the same things every year. For some reason what somebody taught in third grade, they were already teaching it in first grade and a third grade teacher was still teaching it so we thought; we need to find a better way to teach it at this grade level because we don't need to be teaching it again in third grade. We're supposed to be building on it, not re-teaching the same thing over and over. So we discuss how we want to approach the teaching of certain skills; the ones that are built upon like say, vocabulary, context clues, main idea, that is taught in first grade that build up. We want to build it up, not keep it the same; at the same level (Elementary Teacher 6, 6769-6792).

I think it was done a lot more years ago; we used to do that a lot, years ago. We would observe another teacher. It just depends from year to year. It's not the same all the time. Like one year they encourage you; go see this teacher do that. It varies. Some years we do, some years we don't (Elementary Teacher 6, 6861-6869).
Like I meet with the science teachers because I teach science and I teach math. So we all sit down and we discuss; where are you all at, where should you be. You should have been here already at this subject. Why are you not there? What's going on? We discuss how we teach things in our own classroom so we do discuss; this is what I saw, and as a whole, fourth graders came in weak with properties of matter. So we discuss what's coming in weak. The thing is we do realize everybody's teaching now. It took a long time but it finally made everybody realize that if you don't teach something in pre-k then we're gonna have trouble with the kinder kids. If you don't teach it in first grade that might be the last time they see it until third grade. A few years back, I would say the last two or three years, everybody finally bought into the fact that even if you're a pre-k teacher you are affecting their learning along the way and if you don't do it you're gonna create a gap. So these vertical team meetings have become really good. Nobody complains about them, we tell them, this is what you didn't do, but it's more of this is what I saw in this year's kids. And then we suggest, well how do you teach it. And we start discussing how everybody teaches it and its funny because you can tell everybody to teach something but everybody's gonna teach it differently no matter what. And that's probably the most interesting part of being able to sit there and oh really you did that, that sounds interesting, and you know, everybody gets ideas from each other. So we talk about the strengths, we talk about the weaknesses when we make a plan of ok this is what we need to focus on. Focus on vocabulary all the time for science. So yea, it's very positive now, but it wasn't in the beginning (Elementary Teacher 7, 7437-7488).

Ok…and it's not just new teachers or anything like that, if someone across the hall from me is teaching something a certain way and I just feel I'm not doing all that well, I can go and observe them and see how they're doing it, and then ask questions later about it. When you did this…how about this (Elementary Teacher 8, 1579-1587).

That's another thing we do. All the science teachers meet once a month with Ms. (incomprehensible), she's the science teacher; she's the one that's been here longer than I have and she's the fifth grade teacher so we meet with her; we share ideas, we talk about how kindergarten is doing. Let's say we're studying plants, what are kindergarten teachers doing to introduce the plants to the students? How is that rolling over to first grade; first grade to second and second grade to third (Elementary Teacher 9, 2200-2214).

I'll go ahead and say hey I'm having trouble here help me out, how do I do this for the math, I'm having trouble with this, the kids can't understand what's another strategy? So we tend to talk to talk to each other a lot about that (Elementary Teacher 14, 248-255).

In summary, the elementary teacher (n=262) subgroup had an overall mean score of 2.87 (see Table 15) for Dimension 4: Shared Personal Practice. Interview data indicate that 10 out of the 15 elementary teachers interviewed acknowledged that teachers informally shared ideas to improve student learning.
**Subgroup: Middle school teachers**

PLCA-R data indicates the *middle school teacher* (n=110) subgroup had an overall mean score of 2.96 (see Table 15). Interview data indicate that 1 out of the 5 *middle school teachers* interviewed acknowledged they had opportunities to share ideas, apply new knowledge, and share the results.

Yes, we're encouraged to. I don't know how much that has been done, but I know that at the beginning of the year they encouraged us to go in and maybe not the whole period, but sit and watch our peers and just to ourselves write a little critique and then share it with them on a non-confrontational manner. Just I saw this, maybe you might want to try this, or whatever, but we were encouraged to do it (Middle School 3, 1005-1017).

Interview data indicate that 3 out of 5 *middle school teachers* interviewed acknowledged they did not have the time to observe other teachers.

To observe, no. We don't have the time (Middle School Teacher 1, 338-339). We just don't have the time (Middle School Teacher 2, 331).

The following is an excerpt from the interview with middle school teacher 5.

*Researcher:* Ok, how about observing each other? Does staff have a chance to observe each other?

*Middle School Teacher 5:* They brought that up this year, but I don't know that anybody has.

*Researcher:* So to your knowledge, nobody has observed each other?

*Middle School Teacher 5:* No (Middle School Teacher 5, 1606-1614).

The next excerpt is from the *middle school teachers* comment section of the PLCA-R. Note there is no teacher number because these data were retrieved from the comments section of the PLCA-R. In total, 110 respondents, self-identifying as middle school teachers, completed the PLCA-R.

We don't really have the opportunity to observe our peers teaching since we have the same schedules with classes (Middle School Teacher, 143-146).
In summary, the middle school teacher (n=110) subgroup had an overall mean score of 2.87 (see Table 15) for Dimension 4: Shared Personal Practice. Interview data indicate that 3 out of 5 middle school teachers interviewed acknowledged they did not have the time to observe other teachers. One middle school teacher reported they had opportunities to share ideas, apply new knowledge, and share the results.

Subgroup: High school teachers

PLCA-R data indicate the high school teacher (n=121) subgroup had an overall mean score of 2.90 (see Table 15). Interview data indicate that 3 out of the 6 high school teachers interviewed acknowledged they had not observed other teachers teach.

No, teacher to teacher, no. The only ones that would do that would be your department chairs doing walk-throughs, the assistant principal, but no anyone saying, you know what there's a better ideas why don't you try it, no; nothing like that (High School Teacher 1, 3727-3734).

Rarely (High School Teacher 2, 980).

Because one main reason is, number one, we can't leave the classroom unattended; the time basically, there's really no time. During our conference period, well everybody has a different conference period. Like for right now I'm in conference period, and everybody else is out to lunch. Now, I could make time to interrupt their lunch, I don't know if they'll like it or not, so there's really no time to meet. But there are times like when we have our departmental meetings and things like that; we can visit afterwards (High School Teacher 2, 3737-3752).

In summary, the high school teacher (n=121) subgroup had an overall mean score of 2.90 (see Table 15) for Dimension 4: Shared Personal Practice. Interview data indicate that 3 out of the 6 high school teachers interviewed acknowledged they could not observe other teachers teach.

Subgroup: Campus administrators

PLCA-R data indicate the campus administrator (n=14) subgroup had an overall mean score of 3.00 (see Table 15). Interview data indicate that 2 out of the 6 principals interviewed
noted challenges in having teachers observe each other, but acknowledged that, as principals, they have opportunities to visit other schools. The following is an excerpt from Principal 2 on teachers observing each other.

…it’s been really tough, and they’re just very uncomfortable with the sharing piece like I said. It’s been one of my goals this year, to really get that sharing piece going because that was very foreign to them (Principal 2, 1325-1331).

This past year we were able to be more flexible and be able to provide more teachers coverage for their classroom for forty-five minutes during the day so these meetings can happen and then they wouldn’t lose their conference period that day. That is in question for this coming up year because our enrollment in our kindergarten classes is really moving up pretty high, and last year we would pull the kindergarten paraprofessionals to go cover various classes and I’m not sure if that’s gonna be able to happen this coming up year but I am working on trying to provide support in other ways, possibly not on a weekly basis but looking at getting coverage for teachers maybe every nine weeks for maybe half a day to have them really work together and work hard and planning for the upcoming nine weeks (Principal 4, 2123-2145).

Interview data indicate that 1 out of the 6 principals acknowledged that, as principals, they have opportunities to visit other schools. The following excerpt illustrates Principal 2’s experience with visiting other schools.

*Researcher:* How about you as principals, do you guys go and observe other principals?

*Principal 2:* Yes we do. It’s a great piece for South Central. I learn more that way than any other way.

*Researcher:* So which schools have you gone to?

*Principal 2:* Oh gosh, I’ve been to (elementary school in SCISD), I’ve been to (elementary school in SCISD), I’ve been to (elementary school in SCISD), I’ve been to (elementary school in SCISD), and I’ve been to (elementary school in SCISD). We utilize each other. We used to do highlight walks and so we’d all go to each other’s campus for something we wanted to highlight. This last year they didn’t do so much of the highlight walks; they just found campuses with areas of need and sent an invite; please come over we’d like you to see this piece, so we did a lot of that this year.

*Researcher:* And when you went to go visit…?

*Principal 2:* PLCs, level meetings, and we were actually watching them and the process was very good.
Researcher: So you got to see other schools do their meetings?

Principal 2: Correct. And I will tell you it was great because every time we thought we were doing it...in my mind I’m like alright we’re really going, we’re on the ball, then you’d go to another campus and see what they’re doing and realize you’re so far from the mark it’s not even funny. When you see that in action you’re like wow they’re very highly developed, and I’m here thinking mine are doing good and they’re just getting off and running. It’s a realization of oh we can really improve.

Researcher: So you do the visit, you get the invite, so the visit, and what’s the follow up afterwards?

Principal 2: It can either be just to sit down and we usually come together and just have collaborative conversations. It’s not supposed to be punitive for anyone, but it’s what did you gain? do you have questions? and that kind of thing and then I’ll follow up with my campus about the visit.

Researcher: Who organizes these visits at central office?

Principal 2: It varies; it depends on what the visit is about, you know which domain they’re hitting or whatever goal but it’s our instructional team. We’ve got our instructional facilitators or we have the assistant superintendent for C&I or the lady for staff development (Principal 4, 1383-1452).

In summary, the campus administrator (n=14) subgroup had an overall mean score of 2.90 (see Table 15). Interview data indicate that 2 out of the 6 principals interviewed noted challenges in having teachers observe each other, but acknowledged that, as principals, they have opportunities to visit other schools.

Subgroup: Central office

PLCA-R data indicate the central office (n=5) subgroup had an overall mean score of 2.60 (see Table 15). Data collected from in-depth interviews indicate that 2 out of 4 central office administrators revealed that it was important to have teachers and administrators observe each other.

We call them highlight walks but we’ll visit the campuses and they’ll kind of showcase; here are some of the things that we’re doing and it has grown into really modeling what is an effective learning community looks like (Central Office 2, 250-257).
And so, from central administration, it's very prescriptive. Our visits are very prescriptive. We can – I can tell you when they're meeting. I can tell you when the third-grade teachers are meeting at SCISD Elementary. And because they have – we moved to the point where we submit, we ask, and we require the principals to submit their PLC times . . . The purpose and the rationale for submitting your systems this past year was because as a principal of campus A, my third-grade teachers are struggling, I can look on the dashboard when campus B, their third-grade teachers are doing it and I can do a campus visit and bring my third-grade teachers to see a high-functioning PLC.

And so, now we created a system of support to our campuses. And so, for example in the Spring Semester at SCISD Middle School, my principal there hosted what we call a highlight walk and said, "Come see a high-functioning PLC at SCISD Middle School." And so, that's an invitation to all the administration. And so I had – I would say I had about 50 people show up, and they wanting to see. So the teachers are going about their business in the PLC while they’ve got about 50 people looking at them saying; what’s the quality of the conversation? (Central Office 3, 1024-1081).

In summary, the central office (n=5) subgroup had an overall mean score of 2.60 (see Table 15). Interview data indicate that 2 out of 4 central office administrators reported it was important to have teachers and administrators observe each other.

**Summary for Dimension 4: Shared Personal Practice**

Overall, Dimension 4: Shared Personal Practice had a mean score of 2.90 (Disagree) (see Table 15) for all respondents. Further analysis suggests that one subgroup had a 3.00 (Agree) or above, campus administrators. PLCA-R results indicate that items 33 and 36 had mean scores of 3.00 or above. Item 33 had a mean of 3.12 for all respondents and item 36 had a mean score of 3.00 for all respondents (see Table 16).

Interview data indicate the following:

- 10 out of the 15 elementary teachers interviewed acknowledged that teachers informally shared ideas to improve student learning;
- 1 out of the 5 middle school teachers interviewed acknowledged they had opportunities to share ideas, apply new knowledge, and share the results;
- 3 out of 5 middle school teachers interviewed acknowledged they did not have the time to observe other teachers;
- 3 out of the 6 high school teachers interviewed acknowledged they could not observe other teachers teach;
• 2 out of the 6 principals interviewed noted challenges in having teachers observe each other;
• 1 out of 6 principals acknowledged that, as principals, they have opportunities to visit other schools; and
• 2 out of 4 central office administrators revealed that it was important to have teachers and administrators observe each other.

Dimension 5: Supportive conditions

Hord (2004b) defines Supportive Conditions as school conditions and capacities that support the implementation of a PLC. Hord (2004a) notes two types of conditions as essential in building an effective learning community: relationships and structural conditions. The following two sections reveal the findings for the two conditions of relationships and structures.

Dimension 5: Supportive conditions - Relationships

Huffman and Hipp (2003) contend that creating a culture of trust, respect, and inclusiveness with an emphasis on relationships is essential in creating a community of learners.

Table 17 presents the results of the PLCA-R for Dimension 5 by subgroup.

Table 17

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subgroups</th>
<th>D5a</th>
<th>n</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>All Teachers, Counselors, and Librarians</td>
<td>2.98</td>
<td>489*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Campus Administrators</strong></td>
<td>3.30</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central Office</td>
<td>2.60</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elementary Teachers only</td>
<td>2.93</td>
<td>262</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Middle School Teachers only</strong></td>
<td>3.06</td>
<td>110</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>High School Teachers only</strong></td>
<td>3.04</td>
<td>121</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All</td>
<td>2.99</td>
<td>511</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Denotes n is composed of the following subpopulations; elementary teachers, middle school teachers, and high school teachers; D5a – Supportive Conditions – Relationships; n-Number of Survey Respondents; Mean Score Range; 1.00-1.99= Strongly Disagree; 2.00-2.99= Disagree; 3.00-3.99= Agree; and 4.00-4.99 Strongly Agree.
PLCA-R data indicate a mean score of 2.99 for all respondents. Further analysis of mean scores indicates there were three subgroups with mean scores of 3.00 or above. The subgroups are: campus administrators (3.30), middle school teachers (3.06), and high school teachers (3.04).

PLCA-R items 38, 39, 40, 41, and 42 focused on Supportive Conditions surrounding relationships. Further analysis indicates that items 38, 40, and 42 had mean scores of 3.00 or above. Table 18 presents results by subgroup for items 38, 40, and 42.

Table 18

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PLCA-R Mean Scores for Dimension 5: Supportive Conditions – Relationships</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Item</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Means Scores at or above 3.00 are bolded; Mean Score Range; 1.00-1.99= Strongly Disagree; 2.00-2.99= Disagree; 3.00-3.99= Agree; and 4.00-4.99= Strongly Agree.

Item 38- Caring relationships exist among staff and students that are built on trust and respect; Item 40- Outstanding achievement is recognized and celebrated regularly in our school; Item 42- Relationships among staff members support honest and respectful examination of data to enhance teaching and learning (Olivier & Hipp, 2010, p. 34).

The following data were collected from in-depth interviews. The interview participants were: 15 elementary teachers, 5 middle school teachers, 6 high school teachers, 6 principals, and 4 central office administrators. The following interview excerpts are presented by subgroups: elementary teachers, middle school teachers, high school teachers, campus administrators, and central office administrators.

Subgroup: Elementary teachers

PLCA-R data indicate the elementary teacher (n=262) subgroup had an overall mean score of 2.93 (see Table 17). The mean score for Item 38 of the PLCA-R is a 3.06. One
individual out of the 15 elementary teachers interviewed did not have a good relationship with their campus administration. The following excerpt is from the interview.

Researcher: Do you feel supported from your campus administrators?

Elementary Teacher 7: No. We've had a change and it just feels like all the rules that we had are gone. I'll give you an example, dress code, in fifth grade it's very important that you're not distracted because you got all the hormones, you got the friendships, you got that they want to chat and talk and you got already so many things you're already fighting: technology and home lives. And of the things we were able to control before was things like dress code. We didn't allow the girls to wear their manicured nails, or dye their hair, distracting clothing; things like that, and now...I can say the first day of school I had one with blue hair and I told the little girl very gently that blue hair was not part of the dress code because it's considered distracting and I even went as far as ok, you need to ask (Principal) and see what she thinks. And completely thinking ok, she'll go over there and they'll tell her no blue hair; must be dyed back to natural color. The mother came and told me off the next day and said, even your principal said it's ok, so no, we don't feel supported (Elementary Teacher 7, 7832-7865).

The following interview excerpts indicates elementary teachers’ felt supported by campus administrators.

- Absolutely! I feel supported (Elementary Teacher 1, 356).
- Oh yes, she's very supportive. My administrator is very supportive (Elementary Teacher 2, 4832-4833).
- Yes, definitely. I just feel like being a team player, aiding to the goal of the district and the campus. Supporting the campus and the moves that the campus is making, and the work we're trying to accomplish. So being in support of that I think that the principal would see that the person is, you know, being part of the team. Working towards the same goals; that it’s visible (Elementary Teacher 4, 4944-4955).
- Yes. Well if I need anything in my classroom, if I need any kind of supplies or materials all I have to do is go and tell them (campus administration) what I need and why I need it and they're very good about that (Elementary Teacher 5, 6360-6366).
- I think so. So far I haven't felt like I haven't been supported (Elementary Teacher 8, 1731-1732).
- Very good district, we had healthy support for our schools and administration. I believe that it was Dr. (incomprehensible) that was here before; worked very closely with the principals and teachers; very solid, very healthy school board relationship with the administration (Elementary Teacher 10, 2461-2469).
• I think I feel a lot more supported by the district now that (superintendent) came in because years ago it was like we didn't exist. That's how we felt; we didn't exist in this district. If you heard about something, you were the last one to hear about it. You would see something in the paper; they wouldn't even ask us, they wouldn't include us, that's how we felt (Elementary Teacher 6, 6953-6963).

• I think for the most part. I see them out in the real world, and they know you; some of them, they're making a point of being on campus and getting to know people better, and that's a good feeling, that they actually recognize you when you're out in the real world and not at school all the time. And you see each other, and they may not remember your name, but they kind of sort of remember where you work, and what you do, and that's nice to know (Elementary Teacher 13, 4302-4315).

In summary, the elementary teacher (n=262) subgroup had an overall mean score of 2.93 (see Table 17). Interview data indicate that 1 of the 15 elementary teachers interviewed did not trust the principal.

Subgroup: Middle school teachers

PLCA-R data indicate the middle school teacher (n=110) subgroup had an overall mean score of 3.06 (see Table 17). Interview data indicate that 2 of the 5 middle school teachers felt supported by campus administration.

Researcher: So do you guys feel supported by your campus administration?

Middle School Teacher 1: Oh yea, no doubt.

Middle School Teacher 2: I mean, there are some things when it comes to discipline or some other things you find real quick, ok there’s some limitations because of what the district is doing, so they can’t help you in certain ways or certain things in that, so their hand[s] are as tied as ours are.

Middle School Teacher 1: So they do what they can. That’s what we feel, I would say.

Middle School Teacher 2: I think that’s why we’ve been as successful as we have been here especially with the level of economic population that we have here at the school (Middle School Teachers 1 and 2, 475-499).
In summary, the *middle school teacher* (n=110) subgroup had an overall mean score of 3.04 (see Table 17). Interview data indicate that 2 of 5 middle school teachers interviewed felt supported by their campus administration.

*Subgroup: High school teachers*

PLCA-R data indicate the *high school teacher* (n=121) subgroup had an overall mean score of 3.06 (see Table 17). Interview data indicate that 1 out of the 6 *high school teachers* interviewed felt supported by campus administration.

*Researcher:* Do you feel supported, first of all by your campus administrators and then at the district level?

*High School Teacher 2:* Yes I do.

*Researcher:* Can you give me an example? What do they do that makes you feel supported?

*High School Teacher 2:* Here on campus our principal is very supportive of backing us up any time there’s a question. He’ll always give us the benefit of the doubt before he chews our head off, you know. He listens to both sides and decides. He’s not one of those that attacks you right away, that says hey you’re doing this wrong, you’re doing that wrong (High School Teacher 1, 401-417).

In summary, the *high school teacher* (n=121) subgroup had a mean score of 3.06 (see Table 17) for *Dimension 5: Supportive Conditions: Relationships*. Interview data indicate that 1 out of the 6 *high school teachers* interviewed did not have a good relationship with campus administrators.

*Subgroup: Campus administrators*

PLCA-R data indicate the *campus administrator* (n=14) subgroup had an overall mean score of 3.30 (see Table 17). Interview data indicate that 3 of the 6 *principals* interviewed specifically talk about their relationship with district administrators. The following interview
excerpts indicates that principals feel supported and have an open line of communication with district level administrators.

…but at no time are left alone. Anytime we can pick up the phone and call (superintendent), the deputy superintendent, and get advice as to whatever concerns that we (principals) have. I know that if I call deputy superintendent, he'll pick up right away (Principal 1, 533-541).

In my personal experiences I feel very supported. I feel supported throughout different levels at central office. There are different people for different support roles but I feel overall, if I have a concern or an issue I am heard out and taken into consideration of my concerns and I feel like the support roles are there (Principal 4, 1650-1658).

The next interview excerpt from Principal 2 indicates they feel supported by district administrators because they help them problem solve.

Researcher: Wow, ok. Last question, do you feel like you get support from your central office administrators?

Principal 2: Most definitely.

Researcher: Give me an example.

Principal 2: Anything. If I’m frustrated here I’ll just call and say, hey I’m running into this problem, I’m not getting anywhere give me some advice. They’ll say, come on over lets meet and I will, or they’ll say I don’t have that answer but let me give you this number because I think this person is doing a good job over here and they’ll refer me to someone that can handle that. I’m not a shy one. I’ll pick up the phone and call. I know some principals are nervous about maybe letting people know that they don’t know stuff, but I’m not. I’m gonna say, hey I’m in a problem over here with something, and they’ll say oh nobody has called me on that one yet.

Researcher: So what you’re saying is that the district is supportive of you reaching out to other principals?

Principal 2: Other principals or themselves or anyone. That’s the whole point. We’re a network and we need to use each other for our talents.

In summary, the campus administrator (n=14) subgroup had a mean score of 3.30 (see Table 17) for Dimension 5b – Supportive Conditions: Relationships. Interview data indicate that
3 out of 6 principals interviewed specifically talk about their relationship with district administrators.

**Subgroup: Central office**

PLCA-R data indicate the central office (n=5) subgroup had an overall mean score of 2.60 (see Table 17). Data collected from the comment section from the PLCA-R indicated that one central office administrator cited contentious relationships in department staff. This excerpt does not contain a central office staff number because it was collected from the comments section of the PLCA-R. In total five respondents identified themselves as central office administrators when they completed the PLCA-R.

Department relationships are often contentious as a result of top-down management; however, some relationships among the staff are strong (Central Office, 30-34). Interview data indicate that 1 out of 4 central office administrators interviewed thought that relationships had improved throughout the implementation of a PLC. The following statement is from the interview with Central Office 2.

*Researcher*: What have been some of the positives of the expansion of the professional learning communities?

*Central Office 2*: I would say the relationships that have formed on multiple levels. People are not as isolated as they were and so they feel like the way you would want teachers to feel on a team; that they’re not out there alone. So they can call on another, they visit each other’s campuses. We call them highlight walks but we’ll visit the campuses and they’ll kind of showcase; here are some of the things that we’re doing and it has grown into really modeling what an effective learning community looks like, or this is what it should look like, this is how we do it at (Elementary School), this is what it looks like at (Elementary School), this is how we do it at another school, so each one, it’s a little different and yet it has the same tenants of a PLC.

In summary, the central office (n=14) subgroup had a mean score of 2.60 (see Table 17). Interview data indicate that 1 out of the 4 central office administrators interviewed cited improved relationships throughout the implementation of a PLC. Data from the PLCA-R
comments section indicate that 1 of the 5 central office administrators completing the PLCA-R cited contentious relationships in departments.

*Summary for Dimension 5 – Supportive conditions- Relationships*

Overall, *Dimension 5 – Supportive Conditions- Relationships* had a mean score of 2.99 (Disagree) (see Table 17). There were three subgroups with mean scores of 3.00 (Agree) or above. They were: *campus administrator* (3.30), *middle school teachers* (3.06), and *high school teachers* (3.04). Further analysis indicates that items 38, 40, and 42 each had a mean score of 3.00 or above (see Table 18).

Interview data indicate the following:

- 1 out of the 15 elementary teachers interviewed did not trust the principal;
- 2 out of 5 middle school teachers interviewed did not feel fully supported by their district administration;
- 1 out of the 6 *high school teachers* interviewed did not have a good relationship with district administrators;
- 3 out of 6 *principals* interviewed specifically talk about their relationship with district administrators;
- 1 out of 4 central office administrators interviewed cited improved relationships throughout the implementation of a PLC; and
- 1 out of 5 central office administrators cited contentious relationships in departments on the PLCA-R comments section.

*Dimension 5: Supportive conditions: Structures*

Structures refers to the systems used to allow staff members to come together to work and learn without infringing on their personal time (Hipp & Huffman, 2010b). *Structures* “include systems (i.e., communication and technology) and resources (i.e., personnel, facilities, time, fiscal, and materials) to enable staff to meet and examine practices and student outcomes (Hipp & Huffman, 2010c, p. 13). Table 19 presents the results for Dimension 5b: Supportive Conditions – Structures by subgroup.
Table 19

*PLCA-R Results for Dimension 5: Supportive Conditions – Structures*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subgroups</th>
<th>D5b</th>
<th>n</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>All Teachers, Counselors, and Librarians</td>
<td>2.96</td>
<td>489*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Campus Administrators</strong></td>
<td>3.23</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central Office</td>
<td>2.98</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elementary Teachers only</td>
<td>2.93</td>
<td>262</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Middle School Teachers only</strong></td>
<td>3.04</td>
<td>110</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High School Teachers only</td>
<td>2.89</td>
<td>121</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All</td>
<td>2.97</td>
<td>511</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note.*  * Denotes n is composed of the following subpopulations; elementary teachers, middle school teachers, and high school teachers; D5b – Supportive Conditions - Structures; n-Number of Survey Respondents; Mean Score Range: 1.00-1.99= Strongly Disagree; 2.00-2.99= Disagree; 3.00-3.99= Agree; and 4.00-4.99= Strongly Agree.

PLCA-R data indicate a mean score of 2.97 for all respondents. Further analysis of mean scores indicates that the *campus administrators* had a mean score of 3.00 and *middle school teachers* had a mean score of 3.04. Both subgroups had mean scores of 3.00 or above.

PLCA-R items 43, 44, 45, 46, 47, 48, 49, 50, 51, and 52 focused on questions concerning structures available to staff such as time to meet, daily schedules that promote collaboration, funding for professional development, clean facilities, support for staff members, proximity of personnel to allow collaboration, flow of communication, and data organized and made available to staff. PLCA-R results indicate that items 46, 48, 49, 50, and 52 each had a mean score of 3.00 or above for all respondents. Table 20 presents the findings by subgroup for items 46, 48, 49, 50, and 52.
Table 20

**PLCA-R Mean Scores for Dimension 5b: Supportive Conditions – Structures**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Elem Teachers</th>
<th>MS Teachers</th>
<th>HS Teachers</th>
<th>Campus Admin</th>
<th>Central Office</th>
<th>All</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>46</td>
<td>2.98</td>
<td>2.98</td>
<td><strong>3.01</strong></td>
<td><strong>3.43</strong></td>
<td><strong>3.40</strong></td>
<td><strong>3.00</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>48</td>
<td><strong>3.16</strong></td>
<td><strong>3.07</strong></td>
<td><strong>3.20</strong></td>
<td><strong>3.14</strong></td>
<td><strong>3.40</strong></td>
<td><strong>3.15</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>49</td>
<td><strong>3.03</strong></td>
<td><strong>3.19</strong></td>
<td>2.96</td>
<td><strong>3.43</strong></td>
<td><strong>3.00</strong></td>
<td><strong>3.05</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50</td>
<td>2.98</td>
<td><strong>3.10</strong></td>
<td><strong>3.00</strong></td>
<td><strong>3.07</strong></td>
<td>2.80</td>
<td><strong>3.01</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>52</td>
<td><strong>3.06</strong></td>
<td><strong>3.12</strong></td>
<td><strong>3.01</strong></td>
<td><strong>3.36</strong></td>
<td><strong>3.00</strong></td>
<td><strong>3.06</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Item 46- Appropriate technology and instructional materials are available to staff; Item 48- The school facility is clean, attractive and inviting; Item 49- The proximity of grade level and department personnel allows for ease in collaborating with colleagues; Item 50- Communication systems promote a flow of information among staff; Item 52- Data are organized and made available to provide easy access to staff members (Olivier & Hipp, 2010, pp. 34-35).*

Data collected from in-depth interviews indicate that the district implemented the following structures: (1) collaborative meetings at the district and campus levels, (2) added support personnel, and (3) created a staff development structure. The following sections examine these three structures.

**District Level: Collaborative meetings**

Interview data indicate the district implemented both district and campus level collaborative meetings. Table 21 identifies the collaborative structures implemented across the district.
Table 21

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Meeting Time</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SCLC</td>
<td>Central Office</td>
<td>Monthly</td>
<td>Collaborative Structure to build capacity in Central Office and Campus Administrators</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Counselor Meetings</td>
<td>Central Office</td>
<td>Monthly</td>
<td>Central Office Contact person organizes meetings for district wide collaboration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Librarian Meetings</td>
<td>Central Office</td>
<td>Monthly</td>
<td>Central Office Contact person organizes meetings for district wide collaboration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Principal Meetings</td>
<td>Central Office</td>
<td>Monthly</td>
<td>Central Office Contact person organizes meetings for district wide collaboration</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**District Level: South Central Learning Community (SCLC)**

The South Central Learning Community (SCLC) is comprised of principals, assistant principals, facilitators, associate principals, district directors and coordinators. The following is an excerpt from an interview where the central office administrator talks about the SCLC.

And so the South Central Learning Communities is our professional leaders and it’s our administrative leaders: it’s our principals, assistant principals, facilitators, we include all of the superintendent’s staff, and the directors in the district, and we come together once a month and we usually are driven by some piece of data that we’re looking at, whether it’s one set of scores or another, (state accountability report) or what not, and so we have some sort of a learning activity that goes along with that frequently, and then the campuses will take that back and they modify it for their campus and their teams there and so we’re hoping that they get a sense, and again, know what’s going on at the district level. For years we were so site-based oriented that we used to say that we had seventeen independent school districts that are elementary schools, right, I mean, each school really, kind of did their own thing and we’ve really tightened things up over the last few years and part of what’s helped us align all of that is through the learning community (Central Office 2, 209-239).

Interview data suggest that meeting time for the SCLC is considered the PLC Time at the district level. The district used its PLC Time at the district level (referred to as SCLC) to model for
principals on how to hold their PLC meetings at the campus. The following is an excerpt for the interview with Central Office 4.

And so I will give you an example. We are data driven in our District but as we went to the different campuses being data driven is defined differently. Right? And so last year I have to say if we made an extraordinary amount of progress with that but again because I think that South Central Learning Community time that gives our Principals time for them to learn about what does a real PLC look like (Central Office 4, 2333-2342).

The following excerpt is from the interview with Principal 1.

Principal 1: It's been directed by (superintendent) since he stepped in this district, doing our South Central Learning Communities. They were the ones who pretty much got everything off and running. He started those learning communities and it's filtered down to every campus.

Researcher: Oh ok. You're a part of the South Central Learning Community, right?

Principal 1: All principals, assistant principals, facilitators, and department heads (Principal 1, 582-594).

In summary, the district established the SCLC for two reasons. First, the district wanted to establish a time when they could develop principals’ leadership. Second, they wanted to model what conversations should look like so that principals could carry that learning over to the campus level.

District Level: Counselor meetings

Out of the 38 interviews conducted, four were with support staff members. Of the four support staff, one counselor was interviewed. The following is an excerpt from the counselor’s interview in which they explain the support counselors across the district receive as part of the district’s collaborative structures.

Researcher: In central office is there a person that you guys report to for support and all those things, as counselors?

Support Staff 3: In central office we have our director of guidance and counseling.

Researcher: So the district has a director and this director oversees all the counselors?
Support Staff 3: She oversees all the counselors and we have monthly meetings.

Researcher: Those monthly meetings, are the agendas formal or informal?

Support Staff 3: Yes, formal. We have speakers that come in and talk to us. In fact, we just had one the day before yesterday. We had speakers from (local cities).

Researcher: Do counselors ever present in those, within the district? Have you presented?

Support Staff 3: No, I haven’t but they do allow us the opportunity to.

Researcher: In terms of counselors, do you guys ever observe each other like go visit each other at different schools or things like that?

Support Staff 3: We have, whenever another counselor has something to share. For example, let’s say a bullying program and they’re gonna present something and they invite us if we want to go. See if we want to come and present it in our own campus and stuff like that. We all share ideas (Support Staff 3, 218-254).

Interview data indicate that the counselor meetings are a part of the systems of support provided by the district.

District Level: Librarian meetings

SCISD administrators changed the librarian’s role at the campus. The following excerpt explains the transformation of the librarian to that of a Library Media Specialist at each campus.

Researcher: How about with yourself as a librarian? Do you get a chance to network with all the librarians from other…?

Support Staff 1: We do have a monthly meeting where all the librarians and our tech support attend. And then we meet with the techs and librarians together for an hour or so and then the librarians meet separately so I do have that. It’s from one to four, so the first hour is techs and librarians. The second part is just librarians together.

Researcher: What’s discussed in this meeting?

Support Staff 1: Well we have some new initiatives this year. They changed our library positions to library media specialists. That’s what we’re officially called. The libraries are information literacy centers. With the digital classrooms and things they’re teaching us each month, one new skill like (incomprehensible) iPads one month. They’re the new sky drives, whatever they’re calling it now, one month and then we are supposed to come back and share that information with our campus. And then also library issues, budgets,
you know some of the different things, things like that that are just librarian things (Support Staff 1, 2676-2708).

Interview data indicates that Librarian’s Monthly meetings is a this time is used to provide training and continue to move forward on initiatives to transform the libraries into Information Literacy Centers (ILCs).

**District Level: Principal meetings**

In SCISD, the principal’s meetings is a structure considered as the PLC Time for principals. According to the campus principals interviewed, the following excerpt explains how they feel the principals meeting have evolved with the implementation of a PLC.

For example, you'd go to a principal meeting and what they would do is give you all the information that occurred at the board meeting; a run-down of the board meeting used to be a principals’ meeting. Now, a principals’ meeting always has a learning piece, always has a…the board meeting is the smallest portion of the principal meeting now. It's like here's the information you could have gotten in minutes on the internet, so now let's go into the learning piece, the cooperative learning, the development of PLCs…they're constantly training, the staff development is embedded, the sharing of knowledge, it's just a whole different purpose of meeting (Principal 2, 695-715).

The following is an excerpt from the interview with Central Office 2 on principals’ meetings.

Well in the meetings once a month, that we have for the South Central Learning Community, that's everybody in the morning so it's about one-hundred and twenty-five people if everybody's there, well in the afternoon the principals come back and they meet as a principal learning community (Central Office 2, 535-543).

The **principals’ meeting** is another example of a structure implemented by the district.

**Campus level: Collaborative meetings**

The next sections outline the structures implemented at the campus level. The structures include grade level meetings (PLC Time), and *Leaders Achieving Superior Educational Results* (LASER) Team Meetings. Table 22 provides a synopsis of these structures.
## Campus Level Collaborative Meetings

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Meeting Time</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Grade Level Meetings (PLC Time)</td>
<td>Campus</td>
<td>Varies</td>
<td>Campus Level Collaborative Structure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LASER Team Meetings</td>
<td>High Schools</td>
<td>Varies</td>
<td>Assist in collaborative efforts at High Schools</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Campus level: Grade level meetings (PLC Time)

While reviewing district documents the researcher discovered that campuses had included a *PLC Time* in their campus improvement plans (CIPs). CIPs are campus specific improvement plans that have to be revised, approved by central office, and the board of trustees. Throughout the interviews the researcher asked questions to uncover the purpose of the *PLC Time*. The following is an excerpt from an interview where a campus principal explains the evolution of the term grade level meeting.

It (PLC Time) wasn’t immediately with the change in superintendent but it came shortly thereafter. We kind of started with it at the district level with our South Central Learning Community, the SCLC and then that kind of trickled down into that. Now instead of them being called grade level meetings, they’re called PLC meetings (Principal 4, 2060-2068).

Interview data suggest that the PLC Time was used as a structure for teachers, campus administrators, and district administrators to collaborate, plan, and learn. In this excerpt the central office administrator outlines expected conversations during PLC Times.

The academic and those teams get together and ensure that the conversations are taking place or strictly zoned in on student achievement, data, shared practices, best practices, and how do we enrich the program in what we're doing and how do we remediate when there's a need. So it's very purposeful. We establish norms. How those meetings are going to be held. And it's been a progression. And so, we're at the point where we have monthly professional learning communities with all their administrator staffs and we have monthly professional learning communities with our principals only. And so, we have structures that we organize here at the central administration and we model the behavior we expect to see at our campuses (Central Office 3, 864-894).
The following excerpt outlines an elementary teacher’s perception as to what happens during a PLC meeting.

…sometimes we go over data especially like if they just…like the accelerated reader and (state assessment) testing. We do a lot of goal setting with accelerated reader so we talk about that. What are the kids’ goals and are they meeting them? And if they’ve just tested DCA (District Curriculum Assessment), which are like our benchmarks; we go over those results and discuss all that. We do our timelines; we talk about our timelines. Different grades are different because like for their grade, they’re all departmentalized. Like in kinder, they are all self-contained so they come in and…ok, this is what we’re gonna be doing for math next week, and talks to all the teachers. Ok, yea, can we do this instead? Yea, ok and the other one…ok, here’s what we’re gonna be doing for reading, and they share lesson plans. They don’t have that kind of luxury because they’re all different, but they do have lots of discussions about the kids (Elementary Teacher 12, 3513-3538).

The following consists of interview excerpts from elementary teachers, middle school teachers, and campus administrators.

Well the classroom teachers meet once a week but sometimes it depends on if there's an issue that needs to [be] dealt with, then we meet more than once a week. I know, with this reading intervention, with the facilitator and the other teacher that was teaching reading and myself, we met Monday and Tuesday during our conference period to plan some strategies of what would be taught and how it would be taught (Elementary Teacher 13, 4063-4074).

It's (PLC implementation) been directed by (superintendent) since he stepped in this district, doing our South Central Learning Communities. They were the ones who pretty much got everything off and running. He started those learning communities and it's filtered down to every campus (Principal 1, 582-589).

The following is an excerpt from the interview with Elementary Teacher 5.

*Elementary Teacher 5:* Each PLC, each grade level meets once a week for forty-five minutes.

*Researcher:* They meet once a week. Who's involved in PLCs?

*Elementary Teacher 5:* The principal, assistant principal, facilitator, and classroom teachers.

*Researcher:* And to your knowledge what's discussed in these meetings?
Elementary Teacher 5: Data. They're intended to be a time where the teachers could plan for the week and collaborate plan, vertically align and things like that but it's become, at our school at least, from what the teachers are telling me, just looking at data; data, data, data, just going over that (Elementary Teacher 2585-2603).

The following is an excerpt from the interview with Middle School Teacher 4.

Researcher: Ok, tell me a little bit more about your PLC.

Middle School Teacher 4: Well our PLCs used to meet like once a week but it would be like our facilitator or principal coming in to talk about whatever the topic was and I guess it was more just providing information. I don't know, to me a PLC is that we're actually, I don't know, it would be not so much a topic as much as planning, or you know…

Researcher: How much time would you recommend to give to the PLC time?

Middle School Teacher 4: I think it depends on the goal. I think it depends on what you're wanting the PLC to do.

Researcher: How long have you been having PLC meetings?

Middle School Teacher 4: Two years, I think this is the second year.

Researcher: And what brought upon that change? Who initiated the PLCs?

Middle School Teacher 4: I think it came down from the district. I think it came down from (superintendent), and said, you know…I think the previous principal, there was a lot of buzz words or things that would go and it was kind of like…previously, I don't know if there was a clear vision and clear mission so it was like kind of pulling a little bit from everywhere; let's try this, let's try that (Middle School Teacher 4, 1664-1698).

During the interview Central Office 4 shared an experience that occurred while conducting observations of PLC Times implementation,

I’m very impressed with our teachers. I’ll tell you one of the visits that we did I walked into a sixth grade PLC Time and they had their data and it was a team of three but they had their data and it was teachers. They looked at their data, they looked at their year at a glance and collectively they said ‘wow you really did great on that how did you get your kids to master that?’
…And these are real conversations that our teachers were having.
…And they looked at their timeline and they said you know these are the three, across all of our classrooms; these are the three areas that our kids just aren’t getting. We need to go back and reteach that (Central Office 4, 2813-2857).
In the interview, Central Office 3 indicated that the term PLC is a common term used across the district.

…keep in mind that we're using PLC as a common term and a common language. And I think that any transformation piece takes greater root and has a greater chance of success when you begin the – when you begin the transformational piece with the common language. Absent of a common language, and we don’t have a definition for what we're doing, right. And so, we focus a lot and then you can ask my principals and staff here in the District. I've talked a lot about the – hold on, we're going to do a – we're going to anchor here, because I think that we don’t have a common language. What does compliance mean versus commitment? And let's give some example to that. When people come in and they say, "Well, sorry, you're the principal. Whatever you want me to do." That's compliance and that's a – that's a green light to divorce myself from the commitment to this initiative. And to allow that to happen then you know that you simply have my compliance. So we have those conversations. And so, now the principals are looking for those kinds of things as they're working with their staffs, right. So we have a PLC centered around a common language (Central Office 3, 1284-1331).

PLC is a term used in SCISD to describe systems where individuals meet to have structured conversations.

Creating the systems. I think creating the systems and the structures to ensure that the conversations can take place (Central Office 3, 1403-1408).

At the district Level all divisions and departments operate as PLCs according to the superintendent.

So our divisions, even our division leaders, lead their employees or our essential office staff, through Professional Learning Communities. Our deputy superintendent for transformation leads through a PLC concept (Superintendent, 510-519).

Central Office 2 further supports this in the following excerpt:

Well in the meetings once a month, that we have for the South Central Learning Community, that's everybody in the morning so it's about one-hundred and twenty-five people if everybody's there, well in the afternoon the principals come back and they meet as a principal learning community (Central Office 2, 535-543).

In summary, this section provided interview data that indicates the following:

- Evolution of PLC meetings;
A structure for teachers, campus administrators, and district administrators to collaborate, plan, and learn;

What happens in a PLC meeting; and

Central office administrator’s observations of PLC meetings.

Campus level: Leaders achieving superior educational results (LASER) team

The following is an excerpt from a conversation with a central office administrator that is explaining why LASER Teams were established at the comprehensive high schools.

Originally last summer, we were trying to provide an extra period off for every department so that they can plan together and some of our departments are pretty big so to put all biology teachers the same period off, if not all [of] the science department that same period, but we just couldn’t afford it. We had moved away from block scheduling already because of financial reasons and so we said we can’t do everybody, we can’t afford that but we can do some, and so let’s do some then. What if we had a team that helped, because we only have one instructional coach at each high school anyway and we have forty-six hundred kids at (SCISD High School), and so that’s what we decided to do. We created an extra layer there so that it represented each department, we had several representatives plus we have our special populations that are represented as well (Central Office 2, 392-417).

Well we created a structure that helped; we call them our LASER Teams. They’re essentially like our extra layer of PLC development and so they had to apply. We had fifteen members from each high school, they had an extra period off and they would come together during that time to look at school district data. We sent out support staff on those days at least once a week. They meet every day, we send out support staff at least once a week and then they spend two full days a month out on the campuses—each campus-- supporting, and so that was really well, it worked very well and that’s what helped facilitate it too. It was because we built those relationships and we also gave them the time because we’re on traditional schedule now so our high schools are going from eight-fifteen in the morning to four-o’ five and so high schools have all that activity after and before school to try to get everybody together in one room at one time is very difficult for high school (Central Office 2, 356-384).

So with our LASER Teams that really allowed us an opportunity to start spreading the word and to start to really focus on this is what a PLC looks like (Central Office 4, 2514-2520).

The LASER Team is an example of a structure implemented at the district’s comprehensive high schools.
Support personnel

Several positions in the district were created to provide support personnel. The following sections examine each position created based on the interview data. The sections report on the positions of: deputy superintendent, associate principal, facilitator, and director for staff development.

Support personnel: Deputy Superintendent

The first position the superintendent created was that of a deputy superintendent to oversee the district’s transformation. The deputy superintendent position, in collaboration with the superintendent of curriculum and instruction, plays different roles in the district’s organizational structure. Figure 4.1 illustrates the organizational structure created to transform the district.

Figure 4.1
PLC Development Plan: Organizational structure of SCISD
The following is an excerpt from the interview with Central Office 3. This individual describes the organizational structure put in place to transform the district into a PLC.

…we have instructional facilitators at all of our campuses, and we now have associate principals at our high schools. And so all those things that deal with what we say the learning side of the house, that's my responsibility, and the leading side of the house, think of a Venn-diagram, that is deputy superintendent, that side, that's the leading side and I'm on the learning side. And so we work together in concert to make sure that we hit the leaders, all the principals etc., and then also on the learning side together (Central Office 3, 32-47).

When asked how the superintendent collaborated with central office administrators the following response was given:

We meet every week, every other week as superintendent's staff, and off weeks is our deputy superintendent dates and one of the things we've done is we do regular updates and presentations even to the superintendent staff or the deputy superintendent staff so any new proposals will come through updates on scores, where we're at, and so we spend the whole day on topics that pertain to other things in the district too but we focus a lot on that learning piece so if we have a benchmark exam, we call them district curriculum assessments right now. If we do that, then those results also get fed up line so that even the superintendent knows where are we at, how are we doing, what do we need to do to adjust and then we work together on that to execute whatever plans we come up with (Central Office 2, 176-198).

Support personnel: Associate principal

Data gathered via interviews suggested that the associate principal for teaching and learning position was created at SCISD to provide leadership and support teachers at each of the comprehensive high schools across the district. The following excerpts from the interviews with central office administrators provide more background on this role at the campus.

At our high schools in particular, we had instructional facilitators for many years; they were sort of pseudo administrators, and we did away with them for one year via attrition, and we decided we would add associate principals for teaching and learning, and that would be the number two person at each high school and they would focus on the learning, right, so leading and learning to help continue to work the transformational piece and work closely with my office in curriculum. And so we added the coaching, we've been studying the different coaching models and so we didn't even want to go back in even with the same title, especially at our comprehensive high school so we went in with instructional coaches and we actually sent them to smart-coaching training this year
so that [they] can really work to support the teachers, so literally like a coach; they're on the teachers side: I'm here to help you do better, I'm gonna work with you, I'm gonna teach you, I'm gonna be on the sidelines, I'm gonna help you desegregate data; all of those things as opposed to being evaluative like (teacher evaluation system) (Central Office 2, 53-85).

But they also had their associate principals and their instructional coaches who were right in the trenches with teachers who were in their classrooms every day (Central Office 4, 2570-2576).

Support personnel: Facilitator

Much like the associate principal the facilitator position has been established at the elementary schools and repurposed at the middle schools to be a support system for teachers.

The following excerpt provides a rationale for the facilitator position at the elementary and middle schools from the perspective of the central office administrator.

…now we have facilitators, we still call them instructional facilitators, at all of our middle schools and all of our elementary schools. The elementary schools, this is our fourth year for that, and we've always fostered that sort of coaching mentality and role since we started those. The middle schools have been a little bit in transition because they've had facilitators before so they already had some existing job responsibilities and its being tweaked a little bit every year, really as we've grown as a district to recognize that PLC development is not just something else we do, it's not an add on -- It's our main strategy for school improvement. It's what we're all about because, you know, everything falls under that: there's the curriculum, there's the data piece, there's the accountability piece, so we use like the DuFour’s model; what do we expect students to know, and how do we know they're doing it, all of that good stuff all falls somewhere under that umbrella of a professional learning community (Central Office 2, 88-119).

The following are excerpts from teacher interviews. In the excerpts, the teachers explain the role facilitators have at each campus.

Elementary Teacher 1: Yes, I've had teachers come and observe me.

Researcher: And what does that look like? Who sets those up?

Elementary Teacher 1: Usually the facilitator, they'll go and ask well can I go see so and so teacher. Yes, yes, they'll pull someone to watch their class so they can go in and watch that (Elementary Teacher 1, 1043-4051).
The following are additional excerpts regarding the role of facilitators. The excerpts are presented using a single quote format.

I’ve been observed by the principal and the assistant principal, and the facilitator (Elementary Teacher 1, 1084-1087).

We discuss them sometimes in the conference room and sometimes in one of the classrooms where the grade levels meet, and we meet with the instructional facilitator and we all discuss what are our successes, what are we aiming for, where are we going; that sort of thing. (Elementary Teacher 8, 1429-1438).

Personally, and I think speaking for some of the teachers, it (facilitator program) has impacted us a lot because we’ve gotten a lot more new ideas. You know it’s real easy to tell a teacher well go to your room and figure it out. Ok, first of all, yes where am I gonna find the time to do that part plus my lesson, plus this, plus this. Well my facilitator now has been able to generate new ideas, bring in flashcards maybe she’s seen somewhere else, and say do you want these? Yes, send them. I have this new game for fractions you know, you throw the dice and the kids have to know the numerator, denominator. It’s like, do you like it? Oh, I love it. Different way to teach fractions instead of just going, this is the picture, so a lot of creativity has come in with this facilitator program that we have here (Elementary Teacher 11, 2913-2934).

…the facilitator would come in, she would talk about the ELPS (English Language Proficiency Standard), and then when they were trying to go through…sometimes it was on (data analysis software) using the system to get scores, some RTI (Response To Intervention), and sometimes it was just a topic (Secondary Teacher 6, 3399-3406).

Support personnel: Director for staff development

The Director for Staff Development position was created to oversee the district plan on staff development. This individual was assigned by the superintendent to lead the district’s efforts to develop the PLC concept.

So as a staff development director for our district, she leads our PLC concept (Superintendent, 256-260).

The following excerpts are from the director for staff development. In these excerpts the Central Office 4 provides an explanation of their role in PLC development.

…my role in that department was to help her implement PLCs around the district (Central Office 4, 2006-2009)
And by supporting and helping I mean getting resources together, making sure that we had a framework, looking of course at the four critical questions of the PLC and trying to implement those in everything we do. I am going to be starting, I have been in my position, my current position for two and a half years (Central Office 4, 2014-2026).

We have a very, we have a very succinct, a very systemic way of even creating our meeting calendars because like our first, most Wednesdays are booked with meetings but we have a PLC specifically for first and second year principals and they get messages that first week of the month (Central Office 4, 2058-2069).

The second week of the month we move to an expansion of what our new principals learned and we move to our South Central Learning Community…And that’s all the administrators, directors, facilitators and an assistant principal from each campus come in and we talk about big concepts in the district that month…And then the third week we have our principals’ meetings on Wednesdays, our assistant principal academy on Thursday and on Fridays we have our instructional facilitators…But all of that is very methodical, you know we look at that month at a glance (Central Office 4, 2071-2096).

Staff development structure

Extravaganza

Interview participants in the positions of teacher, campus principal, and central office levels cited the district’s implementation of a staff development event called the Extravaganza. During this event the professional staff members within the district present on effective teaching strategies to their peers. Event participants have the opportunity to choose which sessions they want to attend.

The following are excerpts from central office administrators, principals, and teacher interviews pertaining to this event. The following are excerpts from interviews with central office administrator 4, the originator of the Extravaganza for SCISD.

…we're having our District Extravaganza, every one of our employees will be learning on that day (Central Office 4, 3615-3618).

….when I came up with Extravaganza, my principal friends that have known me for… they were like ‘Of course! Can’t just be District Day, has to be District Extravaganza.’ Make it sound fun. But the other thing that we’re doing is that our sessions are all geared towards PBMAS (Performance Based Monitoring Assessment System) and data. Everything has to fall within those areas. The other piece though is that as a principal, I
have my roster, I have all my sessions and I’m plugging them in and letting them know where they’re going to go and that’s powerful, because that allows you as a principal to say, ‘Here are all my third grade and fourth grade teachers. You’re going to the Math for fourth grade, you’re going to the Social Studies for fourth grade…’ and so on. And you’re going to go to the data committee and when you have your PLC, this is what you need to do. So, I think that’s very powerful (Central Office 4, 3644-3668).

The following excerpt is from the interview with principals 1 and 4. The principals explained their understanding of the *Extravaganza* event.

I think the staff development program for the teachers has been…they’ve really been able to drill down and target areas and provide different trainings for different areas of need for the department whether it’s short; they offer things that are short and sweet after school, an hour/hour and a half versus in the summer, they’ll have stuff that’s all day and they have incorporated an extravaganza the last two years I believe where teachers get to sign up for a day’s worth of trainings and I think some sessions were ninety minutes, some were a hundred and eighty minutes and that was the full day of sessions and I believe this year it’s going to be done a little bit differently. We’re going to have an opportunity to kind of put teachers where we feel they would benefit the most because maybe what I think you need is very different from what you want to attend, and so I think that we’re gonna have a little bit of a voice in deciding who will be attending what. I’m not a hundred percent sure on that but I think that we’ll get to…and it’s gonna be held on a different time of year this year, instead of October it’s going to be in August, so it’s going to be at the beginning of the year and they’re also gonna build in, the following day…it’s one full day and they’re also gonna do half day sessions because it seemed as though the ninety minute sessions were a little too rushed getting from the morning session to the second morning session so I think they’re just gonna stick to the one-hundred eighty minute sessions for this one and then there is a built in the following day. One of the issues that was brought up when we used to do this in October was that it was on a Monday, usually Columbus Day, the kids were out but we were here and then you come back and the kids are here and its back to work and so what staff development has incorporated along with support from central administration is the following day is a campus-based staff development, but half of that day is going to be sharing what everybody learned at the extravaganza; that’s gonna be a good piece to have in there (Principal 4, 1812-1870).

At the district we have the extravaganza where they try to meet the needs of all the campuses based on the data they received (Principal 1, 373-375).

The following excerpts are from SCISD teachers. In the excerpts they explain their understanding of the *Extravaganza* event.
Last year, we had an extravaganza day where there is a full day of staff development and you signed up for the different courses that you wanted to attend (Elementary Teacher 10, 2606-2610).

Well you see, first thing is the extravaganza. The last two years it's been in October. And it's a day that we have a work-day for the teachers, but the kids are off and they have this huge thing. This year they were talking about having it in one of the back-to-school days, but every single person in the district goes to this and it's like little mini sessions, and you pick. Oh, I want to do something on math, so you go to that room and hear about math for an hour. Oh, I want to hear about data. I'll go to that room (Elementary Teacher 12, 3574-3588).

Well, they provide training, I know at the administration building and you can always go to training. And we have an extravaganza day, in the past it's been in the fall; Columbus Day, it was that Monday and we have an in-service day and everyone went to classes that they picked from a list. You would go online and you would pick the courses that you wanted. They gave you a list of everything that was available, or you looked online as to what you wanted to do (Elementary Teacher 13, 4178-4191).

Yea, Columbus Day so the kids are off. So this year it was October 8th and they call it the “extravaganza” and all the teachers go to...we all have classes that we have to sign up for and we sign up for classes a good two or three weeks in advance. Some teachers, for example, like the bilingual teachers, might have to go to a specific workshop but otherwise you pretty much choose things that you want to go and learn about. So some of the things...you might learn about (incomprehensible) or you might learn about how to incorporate technology in a classroom. It might be behavior management. All the classes are different; hands on math, hands on science, and you go in and you're a student that day. And the ones that are teaching you are teachers from the district and they're just people who have done these things in the classroom; people that have experienced it. It's not outsiders teaching us, it's our own teachers teaching others (Elementary Teacher 7, 7129-7156).

There has been some, this year we have that extravaganza in the month of October and then from there it was carried on...there has been maybe two or three ladies that come here to the school and they have gone a little bit further into detail of the sessions that were presented in that extravaganza (Elementary Teacher 4, 5669-5679).

Even though the staff enjoyed presenting teaching strategies during 10 minute presentations during faculty meetings, regular opportunities for collaborative learning (vertically aligned) is not available. The majority of staff learning new techniques is done during inservices at the beginning of the school year & during district-wide extravaganza trainings (Elementary Teachers, 162-173).
Summary for Dimension 5: Supportive Conditions- Structures

Overall, Dimension 5b – Supportive Conditions – Structures had a mean score of 2.97 (Disagree) (see Table 15). Further analysis indicates that two subgroups had a mean score of 3.00 (Agree) or above. They include: campus administrators (3.23) and middle school teachers (3.04). PLCA-R results indicate that items 46, 48, 49, 50, and 52 each had a mean score of 3.00 or above for all respondents (see Table 20). Interview data indicate that the district employed three types of structures as they implemented a PLC. The district implemented collaborative meetings, added support personnel, and created a staff development structure.

Summary of Findings for Research Question One

Data collected from the PLCA-R and interviews provided evidence related to the five dimensions of a PLC: Shared and Supportive Leadership (D1), Shared Values and Vision (D2), Collective Learning and Application (D3), Shared Personal Practice (D4), and Supportive Conditions (D5). Researchers have identified two types of Supportive Conditions -- relationships (D5a) and structures (D5b) (Hipp & Huffman, 2010b; Hord, 1997). In total 511 respondents completed the PLCA-R (37% response rate) and 38 interviews (see Table 2) were conducted.

The first dimension, Shared and Supportive Leadership had an overall mean score of 2.88 (see Table 9) for all respondents. There were two subgroups with mean scores of 3.00 (Agree) or above. They were: campus administrators (3.20) and middle school teachers (3.00). Interview data indicate the following:

- 3 out of 15 elementary teachers cited that decisions at the campus level were made with little to no teacher input;
- 1 out of 5 middle school teachers interviewed cited having a limited role in decision-making at the campus level;
- 4 out of the 6 high school teachers interviewed provided examples of how decisions are made at the campus level;
- 6 out of 6 principals interviewed indicated that shared decision-making occurred at the campus and district level;
- 4 out of 4 central office administrators indicated it was important to involve stakeholders in decision-making; and
- PLCA-R respondents (n=511) agreed that teachers and staff use multiple sources of data to make decisions on teaching and learning.

The second dimension, Shared Values and Vision had an overall mean score of 2.99 (see Table 11) for all respondents. There were three subgroups that had a mean score of 3.00 (Agree) or higher. They were: campus administrators (3.40), middle school teachers (3.04), and high school teachers (3.00). Interview data indicate the following:

- 0 out of 8 elementary teachers could recite the district's mission and vision;
- 4 out of 8 elementary teachers described the process the district followed to revise the mission and vision;
- 0 out of 5 middle school teachers could recite the district's mission and vision;
- 0 out of 6 high school teachers could recite the district's mission and vision;
- 1 out of 6 high school teachers recalled how the district revised its mission and vision;
- 0 out of 6 principals could recite the district's mission and vision; and
- 1 out of 4 central office administrators described their vision for PLCs.

The third dimension, Collective Learning and Application had an overall mean score of 3.06 (see Table 13) for all respondents. Further analysis indicates there were five subgroups with mean scores of 3.00 (Agree) or above. The five subgroups were: all teachers, counselors, and librarians (3.05), campus administrators (3.34), elementary teachers (3.06), middle school teachers (3.12), and high school teachers (3.01) (see Table 13).

Interviews indicate the following:

- 15 out of 15 elementary teachers acknowledged that the district provided staff development;
- One elementary teacher indicated they had the freedom to implement different instructional strategies;
- 5 out of 5 middle school teachers acknowledged that the district provided staff development;
- 5 out of 6 high school teachers acknowledged that the district provided staff development;
• 6 out of 6 principals acknowledged that the district provided staff development; and
• 3 out of 4 central office administrators cited three forms of staff learning -- instructional coaching, PLCs, and training -- for principals.

The fourth dimension, *Shared Personal Practice* had an overall mean score of 2.90 (see Table 15) for all respondents. Further analysis suggests that one subgroup had a mean of 3.00 (Agree) or above. The *campus administrator* subgroup had an overall mean score of 3.00.

Interview data indicate the following:

• 10 out of the 15 *elementary teachers* interviewed acknowledged that teachers informally shared ideas to improve student learning;
• 1 out of the 5 *middle school teachers* interviewed acknowledged they had opportunities to share ideas, apply new knowledge, and share the results;
• 3 out of 5 *middle school teachers* interviewed acknowledged they did not have the time to observe other teachers;
• 3 out of the 6 *high school teachers* interviewed acknowledged they could not observe other teachers teach;
• 2 out of the 6 *principals* interviewed noted challenges in having teachers observe each other;
• 1 out of 6 *principals* acknowledged that, as principals, they have opportunities to visit other schools; and
• 2 out of 4 *central office administrators* revealed that it was important to have teachers and administrators observe each other.

The fifth dimension, *Supportive Conditions* was split into two categories - relationships and structures. PLCA-R results indicate that *relationships* had an overall mean score of 2.99 (see Table 17) for all respondents. There were three subgroups that had a mean score of 3.00 or above: *campus administrator* (3.30), *middle school teachers* (3.06), and *high school teachers* (3.04). Interview data indicate:

• 1 of the 15 *elementary teachers* interviewed did not trust the principal;
• 2 of the 5 *middle school teachers* interviewed did not feel fully supported by their district administration;
• 1 of the 6 *high school teachers* interviewed did not have a good relationship with district administrators;
• 3 out of the 6 *principals* interviewed specifically talked about their relationship with district administrators;
• 1 out of the 4 *central office administrators* interviewed cited improved relationships throughout the implementation of a PLC; and
1 out of the 5 central office administrators cited contentious relationships in departments on the PLCA-R comments section.

PLCA-R results indicate that *structures* had an overall mean score of 2.97 (see Table 19) for all respondents. Further analysis indicates that two subgroups had mean scores of 3.00 (Agree) or above. The subgroups were *campus administrators* (3.23) and *middle school teachers* (3.04). Interview data indicate that the district employed three types of structures as they implemented a PLC. The district implemented collaborative meetings, added support personnel, and created a staff development structure.
Research Question Two

How did South Central ISD (SCISD) facilitate the change process?

The findings for Question Two on how the district facilitated the change process appear in this section. This study used three frames of change to analyze the facilitation of the change process. First, the researcher identified what *principles of change* (Hall & Hord, 2011) were evident. These principles are based on the longitudinal research agenda by Hall and Hord (2011). Second, data collected were analyzed to determine what *phase of the change process* best described the current state of the district. The phases of change are based on the work of Fullan (2007). Third, the researcher found the types of change (based on the work of Wells and Feun (2007)) the district implemented to facilitate the change process.

The first major section outlines the findings relevant to the ten *principles of change* (Hall & Hord, 2011). The second major section delineates the findings pertaining to the 14 critical success factors of the *phases of change process* (Fullan, 2007). The third and final major section examines the findings pertaining to the *types of change* (Wells & Feun, 2007) implemented by the district.

*Principles of Change*

Fullan (2008b) contends that changing culture is an essential element of any school improvement effort. Similarly, DuFour et al. (2008) claim that it is impossible for a school or district to develop the capacity to function as a PLC without undergoing profound cultural shifts. The findings relevant to the *principles of change*, as outlined in Hall and Hord (2011), are presented in this section. These principles of change are based on the long term research agenda by Hall and Hord (2011) and represent what they learned about the process of change. Table 2 lists the ten principles.
The following section identifies the findings pertaining to the ten change principles (Hall & Hord, 2011).

PLCA-R results and interview data were examined to answer research question two. In particular the researcher examined each PLCA-R item, identified key words associated with each principle of change (Hall & Hord, 2011), and matched PLCA-R items with their corresponding change principle. For example, item 26 states “professional development focuses on teaching and learning” (Olivier & Hipp, 2010, p. 34). Because this item asks respondents to rate whether the district’s staff development program focuses on teaching and learning, this item aligns with change principle one which states that change is about learning. Interview data also were examined to identify the presence of change principles. Table 23 lists the sources of evidence used to identify the presence of each change principle:
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Change Principle</th>
<th>Mean Score</th>
<th>Source of Evidence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Change Principle 1 - Change is learning- It’s as simple and complicated as that</td>
<td>2.96</td>
<td>24. A variety of opportunities and structures exist for collective learning through open dialogue.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2.99</td>
<td>25. The staff engage in dialogue that reflects a respect for diverse ideas that lead to continued inquiry.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2.88</td>
<td>27. School staff and stakeholders learn together and apply new knowledge to solve problems.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3.16</td>
<td>28. School staff is committed to programs that enhance learning (Olivier &amp; Hipp, 2010, p. 33).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>33. Staff members informally share ideas and suggestions for improving student learning.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36. Individual and teams have the opportunity to apply learning and share the results of their peers (Olivier &amp; Hipp, 2010, p. 34).</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Change Principle 2 - Change is a process, not an event</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Change Principle 3 - The school is the primary unit for change</td>
<td>3.13</td>
<td>38. Caring relationships exist among staff and students that are built on trust and respect.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2.94</td>
<td>47. Resource people provide expertise and support for continuous learning.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3.01</td>
<td>50. Communication systems promote a flow of</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
information among staff (Olivier & Hipp, 2010, p. 35).

**Interview data.**

**PLCA-R Items**

**Change Principle 4**
Organizations adopt change-Individuals implement change

**3.11**
18. Policies and programs are aligned to the school’s vision (Olivier & Hipp, 2010, p. 33).

**3.00**
36. Individuals and teams have the opportunity to apply learning and share the results of their peers (Olivier & Hipp, 2010, p. 34).

**Interview data.**

**Change Principle 5**
Interventions are the key to the success of the change process

**PLCA-R items**

**Change Principle 6**
Appropriate interventions reduce resistance to the change process

**2.83**
41. School staff and stakeholders exhibit a sustained and unified effort to embed change into the culture of the school (Olivier & Hipp, 2010, p. 34).

**Interview data.**

**Change Principle 7**
Administrator leadership is essential to long term change success

**PLCA-R item**

**Change Principle 8**
Facilitating change is a team effort

**3.12**
21. Staff members work together to seek knowledge, skills and strategies and apply this new learning to their work (Olivier & Hipp, 2010, p. 33).

**Interview data.**

**Change Principle 9**

**Interview data.**
Mandates can work

**Change Principle 10-**
The context influences the process of learning and change

*Interview data.*

*Change Principle 1*

*Change is learning- It's as simple and complicated as that*

According to Hall and Hord (2011) change is a process through which individuals within an organization gradually learn, adopt, and come to understand new ways of refining their craft. Central Office 4 indicated:

…at the heart of everything, we want optimized learning for everybody (Central Office 4, 2137-2140).

The researcher chose PLCA-R items 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 33, and 36 because they asked respondents to rate the district’s process or processes for the creation, and implementation of new learning to improve teaching. Table 24 illustrates the mean scores for items 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 33, and 36.
Table 24

**PLCA-R Mean Scores**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Elem Teachers</th>
<th>MS Teachers</th>
<th>HS Teachers</th>
<th>Campus Admin</th>
<th>Central Office</th>
<th>All</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>2.91</td>
<td><strong>3.06</strong></td>
<td>2.98</td>
<td><strong>3.21</strong></td>
<td>2.80</td>
<td>2.96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>2.97</td>
<td><strong>3.10</strong></td>
<td>2.95</td>
<td><strong>3.29</strong></td>
<td>2.40</td>
<td>2.99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26</td>
<td><strong>3.14</strong></td>
<td><strong>3.03</strong></td>
<td><strong>3.06</strong></td>
<td><strong>3.50</strong></td>
<td><strong>3.00</strong></td>
<td><strong>3.10</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27</td>
<td>2.87</td>
<td>2.89</td>
<td>2.87</td>
<td><strong>3.07</strong></td>
<td>2.80</td>
<td>2.88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28</td>
<td><strong>3.17</strong></td>
<td><strong>3.21</strong></td>
<td><strong>3.10</strong></td>
<td><strong>3.36</strong></td>
<td><strong>3.20</strong></td>
<td><strong>3.16</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>33</td>
<td><strong>3.08</strong></td>
<td><strong>3.23</strong></td>
<td><strong>3.11</strong></td>
<td><strong>3.21</strong></td>
<td>2.80</td>
<td><strong>3.12</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36</td>
<td>2.99</td>
<td><strong>3.08</strong></td>
<td>2.96</td>
<td><strong>3.07</strong></td>
<td>2.60</td>
<td><strong>3.00</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note:* Means Scores at or above 3.00 are bolded; Mean Score Range; 1.00-1.99= Strongly Disagree; 2.00-2.99= Disagree; 3.00-3.99= Agree; and 4.00-4.99= Strongly Agree.

aItem 24- A variety of opportunities and structures exist for collective learning through open dialogue. bItem 25- The staff engage in dialogue that reflects a respect for diverse ideas that lead to continued inquiry. cItem 26- Professional development focuses on teaching and learning. dItem 27- School staff and stakeholders learn together and apply new knowledge to solve problems. eItem 28- School staff is committed to programs that enhance learning (Olivier & Hipp, 2010, p. 33). fItem 33- Staff members informally share ideas and suggestions for improving student learning. gItem 36- Individuals and teams have the opportunity to apply learning and share the results of their peers (Olivier & Hipp, 2010, p. 34).

PLCA-R results indicate that the ratings for all subgroups on items 26 (3.10), 28 (3.16), 33 (3.12), and 36 (3.00) generated mean scores of 3.00 or above. Item 33 had four subgroups with mean scores for their ratings at 3.00 or above. The four subgroups were: *elementary teachers* (3.08), *middle school teachers* (3.23), *high school teachers* (3.11), and *campus administrators* (3.21). Items 24, 25, and 36 had two subgroups with mean scores rated at 3.00 or above. The subgroups for these items were: Item 24, *middle school teachers* (3.06) and *campus administrators* (3.21); Item 25, *middle school teachers* (3.10) and *campus administrators* (3.29); and Item 36, *middle school teachers* (3.08) and *campus administrators* (3.07).

Interview data indicate the extravaganza and collaborative meetings were used for staff learning. First, interview participants at the teacher, campus principal, and central office levels
cited the district’s implementation of a staff development event called the *Extravaganza*. During this event the professional staff members within the district present effective teaching strategies to their peers. Event participants have the opportunity to choose the sessions they want to attend.

Second, interview data indicate the district implemented both district and campus level collaborative meetings. Table 21 identifies the collaborative structures implemented across the district.

Table 21

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Meeting Time</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SCLC</td>
<td>Central Office</td>
<td>Monthly</td>
<td>Collaborative Structure to build capacity in Central Office and Campus Administrators</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Counselor Meetings</td>
<td>Central Office</td>
<td>Monthly</td>
<td>Central Office Contact person organizes meetings for district wide collaboration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Librarian Meetings</td>
<td>Central Office</td>
<td>Monthly</td>
<td>Central Office Contact person organizes meetings for district wide collaboration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Principal Meetings</td>
<td>Central Office</td>
<td>Monthly</td>
<td>Central Office Contact person organizes meetings for district wide collaboration</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*District Level: South Central Learning Community (SCLC)*

The South Central Learning Community (SCLC) is comprised of principals, assistant principals, facilitators, associate principals, district directors and coordinators. Interview data suggest that meetings times for the SCLC are considered the PLC Times at the district level. The district used its PLC Time at the district level (referred to as SCLC) to model for principals how to hold PLC meetings at their campuses. The following is an excerpt from an interview in which the central office administrator talks about the SCLC.
And so the South Central Learning Communities is our professional leaders and it’s our administrative leaders: it’s our principals, assistant principals, facilitators, we include all of the superintendent’s staff, and the directors in the district, and we come together once a month and we usually are driven by some piece of data that we’re looking at, whether it’s one set of scores or another, (state accountability report) or what not, and so we have some sort of a learning activity that goes along with that frequently, and then the campuses will take that back and they modify it for their campus and their teams there and so we’re hoping that they get a sense, and again, know what’s going on at the district level. For years we were so site-based oriented that we used to say that we had seventeen independent school districts that are elementary schools, right, I mean, each school really, kind of did their own thing and we’ve really tightened things up over the last few years and part of what’s helped us align all of that is through the learning community (Central Office 2, 209-239).

And so I will give you an example. We are data driven in our district but as we went to the different campuses being data driven is defined differently. Right? And so last year I have to say if we made an extraordinary amount of progress with that but again because I think that South Central Learning Community time that gives our principals time for them to learn about what does a real PLC look like (Central Office 4, 2333-2342).

The following excerpt is from the interview with Principal 1.

*Principal 1:* It's been directed by (superintendent) since he stepped in this district, doing our South Central Learning Communities. They were the ones who pretty much got everything off and running. He started those learning communities and it's filtered down to every campus.

*Researcher:* Oh ok. You're a part of the SCLC learning community, right?

*Principal 1:* All principals, assistant principals, facilitators, and department heads (Principal 1, 582-594).

In summary, the district established the SCLC for two reasons. First, the district wanted to establish a time when they could develop principals’ leadership. Second, the district wanted to model what conversations should look like so that principals could carry that learning over to the campus level.

*District Level: Counselor meetings*

Out of the 38 interviews conducted there were four support staff members interviewed. Of the four support staff, one counselor was interviewed. The following is an excerpt from the
counselor’s interview explaining the support that counselors across the district receive as part of the district’s collaborative structures.

*Researcher*: In central office is there a person that you guys report to for support and all those things, as counselors?

*Support Staff 3*: In central office we have our director of guidance and counseling.

*Researcher*: So the district has a director and this director oversees all the counselors?

*Support Staff 3*: She oversees all the counselors and we have monthly meetings.

*Researcher*: Those monthly meetings, are the agendas formal or informal?

*Support Staff 3*: Yes, formal. We have speakers that come in and talk to us. In fact, we just had one the day before yesterday. We had speakers from (local cities).

*Researcher*: Do counselors ever present in those, within the district? Have you presented?

*Support Staff 3*: No I haven’t but they do allow us the opportunity to.

*Researcher*: In terms of counselors, do you guys ever observe each other like go visit each other at different schools or things like that?

*Support Staff 3*: We have, whenever another counselor has something to share. For example, let’s say a bullying program and they’re gonna present something and they invite us if we want to go. See if we want to come and present it in our own campus and stuff like that. We all share ideas (Support Staff 3, 218-254).

Interview data indicate that the counselor meetings are a part of the systems of support provided by the district.

*District Level: Librarian meetings*

SCISD administrators changed the librarian’s role at the campus. The following excerpt explains the transformation of the librarian position to that of a *Library Media Specialist* at each campus.

*Researcher*: How about with yourself as a librarian? Do you get a chance to network with all the librarians from other...?
Support Staff 1: We do have a monthly meeting where all the librarians and our tech support attend. And then we meet with the techs and librarians together for an hour or so and then the librarians meet separately so I do have that. It’s from one to four, so the first hour is techs and librarians. The second part is just librarians together.

Researcher: What’s discussed in this meeting?

Support Staff 1: Well we have some new initiatives this year. They changed our library positions to library media specialists. That’s what we’re officially called. The libraries are information literacy centers. With the digital classrooms and things they’re teaching us each month, one new skill like (incomprehensible) iPads one month. They’re the new sky drives, whatever they’re calling it now, one month and then we are supposed to come back and share that information with our campus. And then also library issues, budgets, you know some of the different things, things like that that are just librarian things (Support Staff 1, 2676-2708).

This time is used to provide training and continue to move forward on initiatives to transform the libraries into Information Literacy Centers (ILCs).

District Level: Principal meetings

At SCISD the principals’ meetings is a structure considered the PLC Time for principals. According to campus principals that were interviewed, they feel the principals meeting has evolved with the transformation as seen in the excerpt that follows:

For example, you'd go to a principal meeting and what they would do is give you all the information that occurred at the board meeting; a run-down of the board meeting used to be a principals meeting. Now, a principal's meeting always has a learning piece, always has a . . . the board meeting is the smallest portion of the principal meeting now. It's like here's the information you could have gotten in minutes on the internet, so now let's go into the learning piece, the cooperative learning, the development of PLCs . . . they're constantly training, the staff development is embedded the sharing of knowledge, it's just a whole different purpose of meeting (Principal 2, 695-715).

The following excerpt from the interview with Central Office 2 on principal’s meetings describes how the meetings are organized

Well in the meetings once a month, that we have for the south central learning community, that's everybody in the morning so it's about one-hundred and twenty-five people if everybody's there, well in the afternoon the principals come back and they meet as a principal learning community (Central Office 2, 535-543).
The *principals’ meeting* is an example of a structure implemented by the district.

**Campus level: Collaborative meetings**

The next sections outline the structures implemented at the campus level. The structures include grade level meetings (PLC Time), and *Leaders Achieving Superior Educational Results* (LASER) Teams. Table 22 provides a synopsis of these structures.

Table 22

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Campus Level Collaborative Teams</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Name</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade Level Meetings (PLC Time)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LASER Team Meetings</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Campus level: Grade level meetings (PLC Time)**

While reviewing district documents the researcher discovered that campuses had included a *PLC Time* in their campus improvement plans (CIPs). CIPs are campus specific improvement plans that have to be revised, approved by central office, and the board of trustees. Throughout the interviews the researcher asked questions to uncover the purpose of the *PLC Time*. The following is an excerpt from an interview where a campus principal who explains the evolution of the term *grade level meeting*.

It (PLC Time) wasn’t immediately with the change in superintendent but it came shortly thereafter. We kind of started with it at the district level with our South Central Learning Community, the SCLC and then that kind of trickled down into that. Now instead of them being called grade level meetings, they’re called PLC meetings (Principal 4, 2060-2068).

Interview data suggest that the PLC Time was used as a structure for teachers, campus administrators, and district administrators to collaborate, plan, and learn. In this excerpt a central office administrator outlines expected conversations during PLC Times.
The academic and those teams get together and ensure that the conversations are taking place or strictly zoned in on student achievement, data, shared practices, best practices, and how do we enrich the program in what we're doing and how do we remediate when there's a need. So it's very purposeful. We establish norms. How those meetings are going to be held. And it's been a progression. And so, we're at the point where we have monthly professional learning communities with all their administrator staffs and we have monthly professional learning communities with our principals only. And so, we have structures that we organize here at the central administration and we model the behavior we expect to see at our campuses (Central Office 3, 864-894).

The following excerpt outlines an elementary teacher’s perception about what happens during a PLC meeting.

…sometimes we go over data especially like if they just…like the accelerated reader and (state assessment) testing. We do a lot of goal setting with accelerated reader so we talk about that. What are the kid’s goals and are they meeting them? And if they’ve just tested DCA (District Curriculum Assessment), which are like our benchmarks; we go over those results and discuss all that. We do our timelines; we talk about our timelines. Different grades are different because like for their grade, they’re all departmentalized. Like in kinder, they are all self-contained so they come in and…ok, this is what we’re gonna be doing for math next week, and talks to all the teachers. Ok, yea, can we do this instead? Yea, ok and the other one…ok, here’s what we’re gonna be doing for reading, and they share lesson plans. They don’t have that kind of luxury because they’re all different, but they do have lots of discussions about the kids (Elementary Teacher 12, 3513-3538).

The conversation on PLCs resonated across all levels of SCISD. Interview excerpts from elementary teachers, middle school teachers, and campus administrators follow:

Well the classroom teachers meet once a week but sometimes it depends on if there's an issue that needs to [be] dealt with, then we meet more than once a week. I know, with this reading intervention, with the facilitator and the other teacher that was teaching reading and myself, we met Monday and Tuesday during our conference period to plan some strategies of what would be taught and how it would be taught (Elementary Teacher 13, 4063-4074).

It's (PLC implementation) been directed by (superintendent) since he stepped in this district, doing our South Central Learning Communities. They were the ones who pretty much got everything off and running. He started those learning communities and it's filtered down to every campus (Principal 1, 582-589).

The following is an excerpt from the interview with Elementary Teacher 5.
Elementary Teacher 5: Each PLC, each grade level meets once a week for forty-five minutes.

Researcher: They meet once a week. Who's involved in?

Elementary Teacher 5: The principal, assistant principal, facilitator, and classroom teachers.

Researcher: And to your knowledge what's discussed in these meetings?

Elementary Teacher 5: Data. They're intended to be a time where the teachers could plan for the week and collaborate plan, vertically align and things like that but it's become, at our school at least, from what the teachers are telling me, just looking at data; data, data, data, just going over that (Elementary Teacher 2585-2603).

The following is an excerpt from the interview with Middle School Teacher 4.

Researcher: Ok, tell me a little bit more about your PLC.

Middle School Teacher 4: Well our PLCs used to meet like once a week but it would be like our facilitator or principal coming in to talk about whatever the topic was and I guess it was more just providing information. I don't know, to me a PLC is that we're actually, I don't know, it would be not so much a topic as much as planning, or you know…

Researcher: How much time would you recommend to give to the PLC time?

Middle School Teacher 4: I think it depends on the goal. I think it depends on what you're wanting the PLC to do.

Researcher: How long have you been having PLC meetings?

Middle School Teacher 4: Two years, I think this is the second year.

Researcher: And what brought upon that change? Who initiated the PLCs?

Middle School Teacher 4: I think it came down from the district. I think it came down from (superintendent), and said, you know…I think the previous principal, there was a lot of buzz words or things that would go and it was kind of like…previously, I don't know if there was a clear vision and clear mission so it was like kind of pulling a little bit from everywhere; let's try this, let's try that (Middle School Teacher 4, 1664-1698).

During the interview Central Office 4 shared their experience while conducting observations of PLC Times implementation,
I’m very impressed with our teachers. I’ll tell you one of the visits that we did I walked into a sixth grade PLC Time and they had their data and it was a team of three but they had their data and it was teachers. They looked at their data, they looked at their year at a glance and collectively they said “wow you really did great on that how did you get your kids to master that?” …And these are real conversations that our teachers were having. …And they looked at their timeline and they said you know these are the three, across all of our classrooms; these are the three areas that our kids just aren’t getting. We need to go back and reteach that (Central Office 4, 2813-2857).

In an interview, Central Office 3 indicates that the term PLC is a common term used across the district.

…keep in mind that we're using PLC as a common term and a common language. And I think that any transformation piece takes greater root and has a greater chance of success when you begin the – when you begin the transformational piece with the common language. Absent of a common language, and we don’t have a definition for what we're doing, right. And so, we focus a lot and then you can ask my principals and staff here in the District. I've talked a lot about the – hold on, we're going to do a – we're going to anchor here, because I think that we don’t have a common language. What does compliance mean versus commitment? And let's give some example to that. When people come in and they say, "Well, sorry, you're the principal. Whatever you want me to do." That's compliance and that's a – that's a green light to divorce myself from the commitment to this initiative. And to allow that to happen then you know that you simply have my compliance. So we have those conversations. And so, now the principals are looking for those kinds of things as they're working with their staffs, right. So we have a PLC centered around a common language (Central Office 3, 1284-1331).

PLC is a term used to describe systems where individuals meet to have structured conversations.

Creating the systems. I think creating the systems and the structures to ensure that the conversations can take place (Central Office 3, 1403-1408).

At the district level all divisions and departments operate as PLCs as indicated by the superintendent.

So our divisions, even our division leaders, lead their employees or our essential office staff, through Professional Learning Communities. Our deputy superintendent for transformation leads through a PLC concept (Superintendent, 510-519).

Central Office 2 further supports this in the following excerpt:

Well in the meetings once a month, that we have for the South Central Learning Community, that's everybody in the morning so it's about one-hundred and twenty-five
people if everybody's there, well in the afternoon the principals come back and they meet as a principal learning community (Central Office 2, 535-543).

_Campus level: Leaders Achieving Superior Educational Results (LASER) Team_

The following is an excerpt of a conversation with a central office administrator explaining why LASER Teams were established at the comprehensive high schools.

Originally last summer, we were trying to provide an extra period off for every department so that they can plan together and some of our departments are pretty big so to put all biology teachers the same period off, if not all the science department that same period, but we just couldn’t afford it. We had moved away from block scheduling already because of financial reasons and so we said we can’t do everybody, we can’t afford that but we can do some, and so let’s do some then. What if we had a team that helped, because we only have one instructional coach at each high school anyway and we have forty-six hundred kids at (SCISD High School), and so that’s what we decided to do. We created an extra layer there so that it represented each department, we had several representatives plus we have our special populations that are represented as well (Central Office 2, 392-417).

Well we created a structure that helped; we call them our LASER Teams. They’re essentially like our extra layer of PLC development and so they had to apply. We had fifteen members from each high school, they had an extra period off and they would come together during that time to look at school district data. We sent out support staff on those days at least once a week. They meet every day, we send out support staff at least once a week and then they spend two full days a month out on the campuses, each campus, supporting, and so that was really well, it worked very well and that’s what helped facilitate it too. It was because we built those relationships and we also gave them the time because we’re on traditional schedule now so our high schools are going from eight-fifteen in the morning to four-o’ five and so high schools have all that activity after and before school to try to get everybody together in one room at one time is very difficult for high school (Central Office 2, 356-384).

So with our LASER Teams that really allowed us an opportunity to start spreading the word and to start to really focus on this is what a PLC looks like (Central Office 4, 2514-2520).

The LASER Team is an example of a structure implemented at the district’s comprehensive high schools.

In summary, PLCA-R results indicate that items 26, 28, 33, and 36 each had an overall mean score of 3.00 or above (see Table 24); and items 24, 25, and 27 each had an overall mean
score below 3.00 (see Table 24). Meanwhile, interview data indicate the district implemented the extravaganza and collaborative meetings.

*Change Principle 2*

*Change is a process, not an event*

Hall and Hord (2011) assert that change does not happen as a result of a one-time meeting, instead it is a process that can take years and that there is no shortcut. According to the superintendent, SCISD has been engaged in PLC work for 6 years. The following is the interview excerpt to support this finding.

> So we have allowed that evolution to occur and we have assisted with that but now the framework for us is we begin this year, my sixth year (Superintendent, 244-250).

In the following excerpt the superintendent explains SCISD’s approach to change and understanding of the change process.

> With that, I think it has been an interesting ride. Somebody can say “Well, (superintendent), why didn’t you do this earlier?” I do not believe you can just say you are going to do PLC’s. I think you have to see the value of what that can bring and what that means to student achievement. Because I think I said it once and I will say it again. I do not believe in a pocket of excellence. What we are working for is a system of excellence (Superintendent, 326-345).

> As a result, everything comes into play with the fact that we have to be able to go at a rate of change that allows for it to not only catch but to become systemic and what we are about. Change for the sake of change just means more change. Nothing ever will come from that. We are just chasing rabbits or chasing windmills (Superintendent, 359-372).

Interview data indicate that teachers understand the importance of change but nevertheless view it as a challenge for the district. The following are excerpts from interviews with teachers.

- Some people are very hard to change. They don't want it to be different. They want everything the same. Why should I have to change? But sometimes change is really good. You have to do it, and he sort of made it to where you don't have an option, you're gonna have to change. And you have to because the curriculum we teach has changed, the testing we do has changed. I mean everything in our job basically is completely different. Now, like for myself, I had a principal once who told me that the greatest quality a
teacher could have is adaptability, because you're constantly gonna have to change (Elementary Teacher, 1, 586-602).

- Well I feel like he is trying to bring South Central…living here, being born here, being raised here, South Central tends to kind of hold back on change (Elementary Teacher 2, 4411-4415).

- I like the fact that he has brought on changes. I like the fact that he makes us go above and beyond, and he gives you that idea, that whole feeling of wanting to change and wanting to continue to learn. And I like the fact that he's bringing in new ideas like technology; something that scared a lot of people. All year I do science and I do math, so all year I had been doing BYOD, bring your own device, and that intimidated my grade level because it was like well how do you know they're not on Facebook, how do you know they're not on Instagram, it's like I told them that I trust them and because I'm monitoring and I like that he allows us to do things like that. Because I think that if it was just up to the teachers in the school, depending how old their teachers are; there's some campus that have teachers that don't want to consider even using technology because they hear about oh, they're gonna be on Facebook, They're gonna be on this, they're gonna be texting their parents and they're like let's just avoid that problem by not letting anyone do it. And I'm glad that this man does encourage you to try things differently (Elementary Teacher 7, 7905-7937).

- Well I think one of the challenges is getting so many schools in one school district to move forward. And I think one of the things we didn't have before, we didn't have PLCs, and now we do. I think it's hard to have so many people adjust to that change (Elementary Teacher 8, 1298-1305).

In summary interview data indicate that according to the superintendent, SCISD has been engaged in PLC work for 6 years. Also, district administrators and elementary teachers have an understanding of change. Four elementary teachers and the superintendent were cited on change.

*Change Principle 3*

*The school is the primary unit for change*

Hall and Hord (2011) contend that the school’s leaders and staff will make or break any change effort, regardless of who initiates the change. They go on to say that the school is a part of a district and must be supported at the district level when implementing change (Hall & Hord, 2011). Table 25 presents the mean scores for items 38, 47, 50, and 51.
Table 25

**PLCA-R Mean Scores for Principle 3: The school is the primary unit for change**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Elem Teachers</th>
<th>MS Teachers</th>
<th>HS Teachers</th>
<th>Campus Admin</th>
<th>Central Office</th>
<th>All</th>
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<tbody>
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<td>38</td>
<td>3.06</td>
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<td>3.43</td>
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<td>2.98</td>
<td>2.84</td>
<td>3.29</td>
<td>3.20</td>
<td>2.94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50</td>
<td>2.98</td>
<td>3.10</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>3.07</td>
<td>2.80</td>
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<td>2.96</td>
<td>2.93</td>
<td>2.93</td>
<td>2.80</td>
<td>2.93</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note: Means Scores at or above 3.00 are bolded; Mean Score Range; 1.00-1.99= Strongly Disagree; 2.00-2.99 = Disagree; 3.00-3.99= Agree; and 4.00-4.99= Strongly Agree.*

a Item 38- Caring relationships exist among staff and students that are built on trust and respect (Olivier & Hipp, 2010, p. 34). 
b Item 47- Resource people provide expertise and support for continuous learning. 
c Item 50- Communication systems promote a flow of information among staff. 
d Item 51- Communication systems promote a flow of information across the entire school community including: central office personnel, parents, and community members (Olivier & Hipp, 2010, p. 35).

PLCA-R results indicate that items 38 and 50 each had a mean score of 3.00 or above for all respondents (Item 38, 3.13 and Item 50, 3.01). Item 47 had two subgroups rated with a 3.00 and above -- *campus administrators* (3.29), and *central office* (3.20).

Interview data indicate the district created several positions at the district and campus levels. The following excerpt is from the interview with the superintendent.

I can tell you though that if we do not coach from the central office, if we do not assist in our system support to monitor our PLC progress, there will be those that are still prone to say ‘Well, maybe common collaborative planning time is not as important’ or ‘The development of norms in a certain grade level might be left to chance there as well’ when in fact it has to be highly, highly functionalized throughout the entire campus. But by that campus, by each area, by all campuses so our job as providing in the central office, *systems of support* is also assessed where we are at each individual campus in their PLC development (Superintendent, 213-243).

Campus and District level positions were created. The following listed in Table 26 are the positions created to provide coaching services.
The district created these positions to provide support to teachers, counselors, librarians, campus administrators, and central office administrators. The following sections examine each position created, based on the interview data. A section for each of the positions, deputy superintendent, associate principal, facilitator, and director for staff development, follows.

**Support personnel: Deputy Superintendent**

The first position the superintendent created was that of a deputy superintendent to oversee the district’s transformation. The deputy superintendent and the superintendent of curriculum and instruction play different roles in the district’s organizational structure. Figure 4.1 illustrates the organizational structure created to transform the district.
The following is an excerpt from the interview with Central Office 3 talking about the organizational structure in place to transform the district into a PLC.

…we have instructional facilitators at all of our campuses, and we now have associate principals at our high schools. And so all those things that deal with what we say the learning side of the house, that's my responsibility, and the leading side of the house, think of a Venn-diagram, that is deputy superintendent, that side, that's the leading side and I'm on the learning side. And so we work together, in concert, to make sure that we hit the leaders, all the principals etc., and then also on the learning side together (Central Office 3, 32-47).

When asked how the superintendent collaborated with central office administrators this was the response:

We meet every week, every other week as superintendent's staff, and off weeks is our deputy superintendent dates and one of the things we've done is we do regular updates
and presentations even to the superintendent staff or the deputy superintendent staff so any new proposals will come through updates on scores, where we're at, and so we spend the whole day on topics that pertain to other things in the district too but we focus a lot on that learning piece so if we have a benchmark exam, we call them district curriculum assessments right now. If we do that, then those results also get fed up line so that even the superintendent knows where are we at, how are we doing, what do we need to do to adjust and then we work together on that to execute whatever plans we come up with (Central Office 2, 176-198).

**Support personnel: Associate principal**

Data gathered via interviews suggest that the *associate principal* for teaching and learning position was created at SCISD to provide leadership and support for teachers at each of the comprehensive high schools across the district. The following excerpts from the interview with central office administrators provide more background on their role at the campus.

At our high schools in particular, we had instructional facilitators for many years; they were sort of pseudo administrators, and we did away with them for one year via attrition, and we decided we would add associate principals for teaching and learning, and that would be the number two person at each high school and they would focus on the learning, right, so leading and learning to help continue to work the transformational piece and work closely with my office in curriculum. And so we added the coaching, we've been studying the different coaching models and so we didn't even want to go back in even with the same title, especially at our comprehensive high school so we went in with instructional coaches and we actually sent them to smart-coaching training this year so that can really work to support the teachers, so literally like a coach; they're on the teacher’s side: I'm here to help you do better, I'm gonna work with you, I'm gonna teach you, I'm gonna be on the sidelines, I'm gonna help you disaggregate data; all of those things as opposed to being evaluative like (teacher evaluation system) (Central Office 2, 53-85).

But they also had their associate principals and their instructional coaches who were right in the trenches with teachers who were in their classrooms every day (Central Office 4, 2570-2576).

**Support personnel: Facilitator**

Much like the associate principal, the facilitator position has been established at the elementary schools and repurposed at the middle schools to be a support system for teachers.
The following excerpt provides a rationale for the facilitator position at the elementary and middle schools from the perspective of the central office administrator.

…now we have facilitators, we still call them instructional facilitators, at all of our middle schools and all of our elementary schools. The elementary schools, this is our fourth year for that, and we've always fostered that sort of coaching mentality and role since we started those. The middle schools have been a little bit in transition because they've had facilitators before so they already had some existing job responsibilities and its being tweaked a little bit every year, really as we've grown as a district to recognize that PLC development is not just something else we do, it's not an add on; It's our main strategy for school improvement. It's what we're all about because, you know, everything falls under that: there's the curriculum, there's the data piece, there's the accountability piece, so we use like the DuFour’s model; what do we expect students to know, and how do we know they're doing it, all of that good stuff all falls somewhere under that umbrella of a professional learning community (Central Office 2, 88-119).

The following are excerpts from teacher interviews. In the excerpts the teachers explain the role facilitators have at each campus.

*Elementary Teacher 1*: Yes, I've had teachers come and observe me.

*Researcher*: And what does that look like? Who sets those up?

*Elementary Teacher 1*: Usually the facilitator, they'll go and ask well can I go see so and so teacher. Yes, yes, they'll pull someone to watch their class so they can go in and watch that (Elementary Teacher 1, 1043-4051).

The following are additional excerpts regarding the role of facilitators. They are presented in a single quote format.

I've been observed by the principal and the assistant principal, and the facilitator (Elementary Teacher 1, 1084-1087).

We discuss them sometimes in the conference room and sometimes in one of the classrooms where the grade levels meet, and we meet with the instructional facilitator and we all discuss what are our successes, what are we aiming for, where are we going; that sort of thing. (Elementary Teacher 8, 1429-1438).

Personally, and I think speaking for some of the teachers, it (facilitator program) has impacted us a lot because we've gotten a lot more new ideas. You know it's real easy to tell a teacher well go to your room and figure it out. Ok, first of all, yes where am I gonna find the time to do that part plus my lesson, plus this, plus this. Well my facilitator now has been able to generate new ideas, bring in flashcards maybe she's seen somewhere
else, and say do you want these? Yes, send them. I have this new game for fractions you know, you throw the dice and the kids have to know the numerator, denominator. It’s like, do you like it? Oh, I love it. Different way to teach fractions instead of just going, this is the picture, so a lot of creativity has come in with this facilitator program that we have here (Elementary Teacher 11, 2913-2934).

…the facilitator would come in, she would talk about the ELPS (English Language Proficiency Standard), and then when they were trying to go through…sometimes it was on (data analysis software) using the system to get scores, some RTI (Response To Intervention), and sometimes it was just a topic (Secondary Teacher 6, 3399-3406).

Support personnel: Director for staff development

The position of director for staff development was created to oversee the district plan on staff development and was assigned by the superintendent to lead the district’s efforts to develop the PLC concept.

So as a staff development director for our district, she leads our PLC concept (Superintendent, 256-260).

The following excerpts are from the director for staff development. In these excerpts the Central Office 4 provides an explanation of their role in PLC development.

…and my role in that department was to help her implement PLCs around the district (Central Office 4, 2006-2009)

And by supporting and helping I mean getting resources together, making sure that we had a framework, looking of course at the four critical questions of the PLC and trying to implement those in everything we do. I am going to be starting, I have been in my position, my current position for two and a half years (Central Office 4, 2014-2026).

We have a very, we have a very succinct, a very systemic way of even creating our meeting calendars because like our first, most Wednesdays are booked with meetings but we have a PLC specifically for first and second year Principals and they get messages that first week of the month (Central Office 4, 2058-2069).

The second week of the month we move to an expansion of what our new Principal’s learned and we move to our South Central Learning Community…And that’s all the Administrators, Directors, Facilitators and an Assistant Principal from each campus come in and we talk about big concepts in the district that month…And then the third week we have our Principals’ meetings on Wednesdays, our Assistant Principal Academy on Thursday and on Fridays we have our Instructional Facilitators…But all of that is very methodical, you know we look at that month at a glance (Central Office 4, 2071-2096).
In summary, PLCA-R results indicate the following:

- Item 38: Caring relationships exist among staff and students that are built on trust and respect (Olivier & Hipp, 2010, p. 34) had an overall mean score of 3.13.
- Item 38 had four subgroups generating a mean score of 3.00 or above on this item; the subgroups are: elementary teachers (3.06), middle school teachers (3.20), high school teachers (3.17), and campus administrators (3.43).
- Item 50: Communication systems promote a flow of information among staff (Olivier & Hipp, 2010, p. 35) had an overall mean score of 3.01.
- Item 50 had three subgroups generating a mean score of 3.00 or above on this item; the subgroups are: middle school teachers (3.10), high school teachers (3.00), and campus administrators (3.07).

Meanwhile, interview data indicate the district created personnel positions to support teachers and campus administrators. The district created the following positions: deputy superintendent, associate principal, facilitator, and director for staff development.

*Change Principle 4*

*Organizations adopt change- Individuals implement change*

According to Hall and Hord (2011) when it comes to change, everyone wants to focus on policy, systems, and organizational factors; nevertheless change starts and ends at the individual level. Table 27 presents the respective mean scores from Items 18 and 36 of the PLCA-R for subgroups and all respondents.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Elem Teachers</th>
<th>MS Teachers</th>
<th>HS Teachers</th>
<th>Campus Admin</th>
<th>Central Office</th>
<th>All</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
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<td>18</td>
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<td>2.80</td>
<td>3.11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36</td>
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<td>3.03</td>
<td>3.06</td>
<td>3.50</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>3.10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note:* Means scores at or above 3.00 are bolded. Mean Score Range: 1.00–1.99= Strongly Disagree; 2.00–2.99= Disagree; 3.00–3.99= Agree; and 4.00–4.99= Strongly Agree.

*Item 18*- Policies and programs are aligned to the school’s vision (Olivier & Hipp, 2010, p. 33). *Item 36*- Individuals and teams have the opportunity to apply learning and share the results of their peers (Olivier & Hipp, 2010, p. 34).
PLCA-R results indicate that both items 18 (3.11) and 36 (3.10) had a mean score of 3.00 or above for all respondents. Item 18 had four subgroups with mean scores of 3.00 or above; these subgroups are: elementary teachers (3.08), middle school teachers (3.11), high school teachers (3.16), and campus administrators (3.50). All subgroups generated a mean score of 3.00 or above for Item 36.

Interview data indicate 2 elementary teachers, 1 middle school teacher, 1 high school teacher, 1 principal, and 1 central office administrator reported that staff members informally share ideas and have the opportunity to apply learning, and share results. The following are the interview excerpts.

Like I meet with the science teachers because I teach science and I teach math. So we all sit down and we discuss; where are you all at, where should you be. You should have been here already at this subject. Why are you not there? What's going on? We discuss how we teach things in our own classroom so we do discuss; this is what I saw, and as a whole the fourth graders came in weak with properties of matter. So we discuss what's coming in weak. The thing is we do realize everybody's teaching now. It took a long time but it finally made everybody realize that if you don't teach something in pre-k then we're gonna have trouble with the kinder kids. If you don't teach it in first grade that might be the last time they see it until third grade. A few years back, I would say the last two or three years, everybody finally bought into the fact that even if you're a pre-k teacher you are affecting their learning along the way and if you don't do it you're gonna create a gap. So these vertical team meetings have become really good. Nobody complains about them, well this is what you didn't do, but it's more of this is what I saw in this year's kids. And then we suggest, well how do you teach it. And we start discussing how everybody teaches it and it's funny because you can tell everybody to teach something but everybody's gonna teach it differently no matter what. And that's probably the most interesting part of being able to sit there and oh really you did that, that sounds interesting, and you know, everybody gets ideas from each other. So we talk about the strengths, we talk about the weaknesses when we make a plan of ok this is what we need to focus on. Focus on vocabulary all the time for science. So yea, it's very positive now, but it wasn't in the beginning (Elementary Teacher 7, 7437-7488).

We discuss what skills need to be met in every grade level because what we started to see and this was years ago, we started to see that we felt like we were teaching the same things every year. For some reason what somebody taught in third grade, they were already teaching it in first grade and a third grade teacher was still teaching it so we thought; we need to find a better way to teach it at this grade level because we don't need
to be teaching it again in third grade. We're supposed to be building on it, not re-teaching the same thing over and over. So we discuss how we want to approach the teaching of certain skills; the ones that are built upon like, say vocabulary, context clues, main idea, that is taught in first grade that build up. We want to build it up, not keep it the same, at the same level (Elementary Teacher 6, 6769-6792).

And at the same time while we're in the team, we can discuss what areas that we're stressing that particular week and try to carry on over to the other subjects. That's pretty easy when it comes to history, because history covers everything, world history. So I can incorporate math, I can incorporate science and since I kind of have a bent towards science, I stress quite a bit of science in here; that's just me. In other words, we cross teach. These crossings introduce certain areas (Middle School Teacher 1, 417-431).

I have total flexibility and how my guys teach, but again, I don’t dictate how they teach. I let them tell me how they want to teach. If I see something that’s glaringly wrong I’ll correct it, but for the most part these are the teachers that are in the trenches; they’re dealing with the curriculum material all the time with the different groups of students and so they’re pretty good. If you let teachers, especially I think we got pretty good teachers in our science department…you let teachers come up with how to present curriculum, usually they’re gonna get it right. So, as far as at this school, we are given a lot of freedom to do that. Our principal does not come and try to dictate how we do something; the systems do not either (High School Teacher 1, 670-690).

... a principals’ meeting always has a learning piece……the cooperative learning, the development of PLC s…they’re constantly training, the staff development is embedded, the sharing of knowledge, it’s just a whole different purpose of meeting (Principal 2, 701-715).

We meet every week, every other week as superintendent’s staff, and off weeks is our deputy superintendent dates and one of the things we’ve done is we do regular updates and presentations even to the superintendent staff or the deputy superintendent staff so any new proposals will come through updates on scores, where we’re at, and so we spend the whole day on topics that pertain to other things in the district too but we focus a lot on that learning piece so if we have a benchmark exam, we call them district curriculum assessments right now. If we do that, then those results also get fed up line so that even the superintendent knows where are we at, how are we doing, what do we need to do to adjust and then we work together on that to execute whatever plans we come up with (Central Office 2, 176-198).

In summary PLCA-R results indicate the following;

- Item 18- Policies and programs are aligned to the school’s vision (Olivier & Hipp, 2010, p. 33) had an overall mean score of 3.11.
- Item 18 had four subgroups with mean scores of 3.00 or above; the four subgroups are: elementary teachers (3.08), middle school teachers (3.11), high school teachers (3.16), and campus administrators (3.50).
• Item 36- Individuals and teams have the opportunity to apply learning and share the 
results of their peers (Olivier & Hipp, 2010, p. 34) had an overall mean score of 3.10.
• Item 36 had five subgroups with mean scores of 3.00 or above; the five subgroups are: 
elementary teachers (3.14), middle school teachers (3.03), high school teachers (3.06), 
campus administrators (3.50), and central office (3.10).

Meanwhile, interview data indicate the following staff members- 2 elementary teachers, 1 middle 
school teacher, 1 high school teacher, 1 principal, and 1 central office administrator -- reported 
that staff members informally share ideas and have the opportunity to apply learning, and share 
results.

*Change Principle 5*

*Interventions are the key to the success of the change process*

As individuals plan and engage in change, a focus on activities and events that can influence the change process is essential; these activities and events are known as *interventions* 
(Hall & Hord, 2011). Data analysis indicates SCISD implemented the following interventions;

• Structured conversations

• System of Support
  
  o System of Support 1: The Extravaganza (Staff Development)
  
  o System of Support 2: Collaborative Meetings
  
  o System of Support 3: Support Personnel

• Book Reads

• Surveys

• Organizational Health Instrument (OHI)

The following sections illustrate the findings for each intervention. Interventions are: structured 
conversations, system of support, book reads, surveys, and Organization Health Instrument 
(OHI). Interview and PLCA-R data are cited.
**Intervention: Structured conversations**

Interview data indicate that SCISD administrators made an effort to structure conversations during PLC Meetings. The following interview excerpt addresses this:

Those are called the professional learning community periods. The academic and those teams get together and ensure that the conversations are taking place or strictly zoned in on student achievement, data, shared practices, best practices, and how do we enrich the program in what we're doing and how do we remediate when there's a need. So it's very purposeful. We establish norms (Central Office 3, 861-894).

During the interview an elementary teacher identified the five question agenda implemented by the district to guide conversations as part of their PLC Meeting.

…they sat down with all the grade levels and reminded them of the questions; there's a form that they have to fill out every time, with questions on it about what are we doing or the success of the students and what strategies are we using, and so I know that they sat down and made sure that we understood the questions (Elementary Teacher 13, 4111-4121).

While conducting interviews the researcher discovered an agenda the district implemented to structure the conversations teachers and administrators had during their PLC Meetings (see Appendix N). Elementary Teacher13 provided a document with five questions to be answered during PLC meetings. The questions follow:

1. What do we want students to learn? What should each student know and be able to do as a result of each unit?
2. How will we know if they have learned? Are we monitoring each student’s learning on a timely basis?
3. What will we do if they don’t learn? What systemic process is in place to provide additional time and support for students who are experiencing difficulty?
4. What will we do if they already know it?
5. Are we doing all we can to prepare our students to be successful in the world of work and higher education?

Interview data suggest these five questions are part of a system the district has implemented to help guide conversations during PLC Time. According to central office administrators the PLC
Agenda is framed around the four critical questions from DuFour, DuFour, Eaker, and Many (2006) (see Appendix K).

…making sure that we had a framework, looking of course at the five critical questions of the PLC (Central Office 4, 2017-2022).

…our book study was Learning By Doing by DuFour; very basic but I think it’s excellent. So what we did was, every time, I made sure that we had new principals or facilitators come on board, it wasn’t just something we read one year and then dropped, so we bought more so that everybody has one then we would go back and refer to it because it has good rubrics and some good things in there, some self-evaluation tools, so those are some of the things that we’re building on (Central Office 2, 653-668).

System of support

The superintendent indicated during the interview that a System of Support is important in the implementation of a PLC. The following excerpt supports this;

I can tell you though that if we do not coach from the central office, if we do not assist in our system of support to monitor our PLC progress, there will be those that are still prone to say ‘Well, maybe common collaborative planning time is not as important’ or ‘The development of norms in a certain grade level might be left to chance there as well’ when in fact it has to be highly, highly functionalized throughout the entire campus. But by that campus, by each area, by all campuses so our job as providing in the central office, systems of support is also assessed where we are at each individual campus in their PLC development (Superintendent, 213-234).

The district implemented the following as systems of support; (1) staff development (The Extravaganza); (2) collaborative meetings at the district and campus levels; and (3) creation of support personnel positions.

System of Support 1: The Extravaganza

Interview participants at the teacher, campus principal, and central office levels cited the district’s implementation of a staff development event called the Extravaganza. During this event the professional staff members within the district present to their peers on effective teaching strategies. Event participants have the opportunity to choose which sessions they want to attend.
The following are excerpts from central office administrators, principals, and teacher interviews pertaining to their views of this event. The following are excerpts from interviews with Central Office Administrator 4, the originator of the Extravaganza for SCISD.

…we're having our District Extravaganza, every one of our employees will be learning on that Day (Central Office 4, 3615-3618).

….when I came up with Extravaganza, my principal friends that have known me for…they were like “Of course! Can’t just be District Day, has to be District Extravaganza.” Make it sound fun. But the other thing that we’re doing is that our sessions are all geared towards PBMAS (Performance Based Monitoring Assessment System) and data. Everything has to fall within those areas. The other piece though is that as a principal, I have my roster, I have all my sessions and I’m plugging them in and letting them know where they’re going to go and that’s powerful, because that allows you as a principal to say, “Here are all my third grade and fourth grade teachers. You’re going to the Math for fourth grade, you’re going to the Social Studies for fourth grade…” and so on. And you’re going to go to the data committee and when you have your PLC, this is what you need to do. So, I think that’s very powerful (Central Office 4, 3644-3668).

The following excerpt is from the interviews with principals 1 and 4. The principal explained their understanding of the Extravaganza event.

I think the staff development program for the teachers has been…they’ve really been able to drill down and target areas and provide different trainings for different areas of need for the department whether it’s short; they offer things that are short and sweet after school, an hour/hour and a half versus in the summer, they’ll have stuff that’s all day and they have incorporated and extravaganza the last two years I believe where teachers get to sign up for a day’s worth of trainings and I think some sessions were ninety minutes, some were a hundred and eighty minutes and that was the full day of sessions and I believe this year it’s going to be done a little bit differently. We’re going to have an opportunity to kind of put teachers where we feel they would benefit the most because maybe what I think you need is very different from what you want to attend, and so I think that we’re gonna have a little bit of a voice this as far as who will be attending what. I’m not a hundred percent sure on that but I think that we’ll get to…and it’s gonna be held on a different time of year this year, instead of October it’s going to be in August, so it’s going to be at the beginning of the year and they’re also gonna build in, the following day…it’s one full day and they’re also gonna do half day sessions because it seemed as though the ninety minute sessions were a little too rushed getting from the morning session to the second morning session so I think they’re just gonna stick to the one-hundred eighty minute sessions for this one and then there is a built in the following day. One of the issues that was brought up when we used to do this in October was that it was on a Monday, usually Columbus Day, the kids were out but we were here and then you come back and the kids are here and its back to work and so what staff development
has incorporated along with support from central administration is the following day is a
campus-based staff development, but half of that day is going to be sharing what
everybody learned at the extravaganza; that’s gonna be a good piece to have in there
(Principal 4, 1812-1870).

At the district we have the extravaganza where they try to meet the needs of all the
campuses based on the data they received (Principal 1, 373-375).

The following excerpts are from SCISD teachers. In the excerpts they explain their
understanding of the Extravaganza event.

Last year, we had an extravaganza day where there is a full day of staff development and
you signed up for the different courses that you wanted to attend (Elementary Teacher 10,
2606-2610).

Well you see, first thing is the extravaganza. The last two years it's been in October. And
it's a day that we have a workday for the teachers, but the kids are off and they have this
huge thing. This year they were talking about having it in one of the back-to-school days,
but every single person in the district goes to this and it's like little mini sessions, and you
pick. Oh, I want to do something on math, so you go to that room and hear about math for
an hour. Oh, I want to hear about data. I’ll go to that room (Elementary Teacher 12,
3574-3588).

Well, they provide training, I know at the administration building and you can always go
to training. And we have an extravaganza day, in the past it's been in the fall; Columbus
Day, it was that Monday and we have an in-service day and everyone went to classes that
they picked from a list. You would go online and you would pick the courses that you
wanted. They gave you a list of everything that was available, or you looked online as to
what you wanted to do (Elementary Teacher 13, 4178-4191).

Yea, Columbus Day so the kids are off. So this year it was October 8th and they call it the
“extravaganza” and all the teachers go to…we all have classes that we have to sign up for
and we sign up for classes a good two or three weeks in advance. Some teachers, for
example, like the bilingual teachers, might have to go to a specific workshop but
otherwise you pretty much choose things that you want to go and learn about. So some of
the things…you might learn about (incomprehensible) or you might learn about how to
incorporate technology in a classroom. It might be behavior management. All the classes
are different; hands on math, hands on science, and you go in and you're a student that
day. And the ones that are teaching you are teachers from the district and they're just
people who have done these things in the classroom; people that have experienced it. It's
not outsiders teaching us, it's our own teachers teaching others (Elementary Teacher 7,
7129-7156).

There has been some, this year we have that extravaganza in the month of October and
then from there it was carried on…there has been maybe two or three ladies that come
here to the school and they have gone a little bit further into detail of the sessions that were presented in that extravaganza (Elementary Teacher 4, 5669-5679).

Even though the staff enjoyed presenting teaching strategies during 10-minute presentations during Faculty Meetings, regular opportunities for collaborative learning (vertically aligned) is not available. The majority of staff learning new techniques is done during inservices at the beginning of the school year and during district-wide extravaganza trainings (Elementary Teachers, 162-173).

**System of Support 2: Collaborative Meetings**

The district implemented collaborative meetings at both district and campus levels.

Table 21 identifies the collaborative meetings implemented across the district.

Table 21

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<th>SCISD District Collaborative Meetings</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Name</strong></td>
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<td>Counselor Meetings</td>
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<td>Librarian Meetings</td>
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**District level: Collaborative Meetings**

**District level: South Central Learning Community (SCLC)**

The South Central Learning Community (SCLC) is comprised of principals, assistant principals, facilitators, associate principals, district directors and coordinators. The following is an excerpt from an interview where the central office administrator talks about the SCLC.

And so the South Central Learning Communities is our professional leaders and it’s our administrative leaders: it’s our principals, assistant principals, facilitators, we include all
of the superintendent’s staff, and the directors in the district, and we come together once a month and we usually are driven by some piece of data that we’re looking at, whether it’s one set of scores or another, (state accountability report) or what not, and so we have some sort of a learning activity that goes along with that frequently, and then the campuses will take that back and they modify it for their campus and their teams there and so we’re hoping that they get a sense, and again, know what’s going on at the district level. For years we were so site-based oriented that we used to say that we had seventeen independent school districts that are elementary schools, right, I mean, each school really, kind of did their own thing and we’ve really tightened things up over the last few years and part of what’s helped us align all of that is through the learning community (Central Office 2, 209-239).

Interview data suggest that meetings times for the SCLC is considered the PLC Time at the district level. The district used its PLC Time at the district level (referred to as SCLC) to model for principals on how to hold their PLC meetings at the campus. The following is an excerpt from the interview with Central Office 4.

And so I will give you an example. We are data driven in our District but as we went to the different campuses being data driven is defined differently. Right? And so last year I have to say if we made an extraordinary amount of progress with that but again because I think that South Central Learning Community time that gives our Principals time for them to learn about what does a real PLC look like (Central Office 4, 2333-2342).

The following excerpt is from the interview with Principal 1.

Principal 1: It's been directed by (superintendent) since he stepped in this district, doing our South Central Learning Communities. They were the ones who pretty much got everything off and running. He started those learning communities and it's filtered down to every campus.

Researcher: Oh ok. You're a part of the South Central Learning Community, right?

Principal 1: All principals, assistant principals, facilitators, and department heads (Principal 1, 582-594).

In summary, the district established the SCLC for two reasons. First, the district wanted to establish a time when they could develop principals’ leadership. Second, the district wanted to model what conversations should look like so that principals could carry that learning over to the campus level.
District level: Counselor meetings

Out of the 38 interviews conducted there four were with support staff members. Of the four support staff, one counselor was interviewed. The following is an excerpt from counselor’s interview; the participant is explaining the support counselors across the district receive as part of the district’s collaborative structures.

**Researcher:** In central office is there a person that you guys report to for support and all those things, as counselors?

**Support Staff 3:** In central office we have our director of guidance and counseling.

**Researcher:** So the district has a director and this director oversees all the counselors?

**Support Staff 3:** She oversees all the counselors and we have monthly meetings.

**Researcher:** Those monthly meetings, are the agendas formal or informal?

**Support Staff 3:** Yes, formal. We have speakers that come in and talk to us. In fact, we just had one the day before yesterday. We had speakers from (local cities).

**Researcher:** Do counselors ever present in those, within the district? Have you presented?

**Support Staff 3:** No I haven’t but they do allow us the opportunity to.

**Researcher:** In terms of counselors, do you guys ever observe each other like go visit each other at different schools or things like that?

**Support Staff 3:** We have, whenever another counselor has something to share. For example, let’s say a bullying program and they’re gonna present something and they invite us if we want to go. See if we want to come and present it in our own campus and stuff like that. We all share ideas (Support Staff 3, 218-254).

Interview data indicate that the counselor meetings are a part of the systems of support provided by the district.

District level: Librarian meetings

SCISD administrators changed the librarian’s role at the campus. The following excerpt explains the transformation of the librarian to that of a Library Media Specialist at each campus.
Researcher: How about with yourself as a librarian? Do you get a chance to network with all the librarians from other…?

Support Staff 1: We do have a monthly meeting where all the librarians and our tech support attend. And then we meet with the techs and librarians together for an hour or so and then the librarians meet separately so I do have that. It’s from one to four, so the first hour is techs and librarians. The second part is just librarians together.

Researcher: What’s discussed in this meeting?

Support Staff 1: Well we have some new initiatives this year. They changed our library positions to library media specialists. That’s what we’re officially called. The libraries are information literacy centers. With the digital classrooms and things they’re teaching us each month, one new skill like (incomprehensible) iPads one month. They’re the new sky drives, whatever they’re calling it now, one month and then we are supposed to come back and share that information with our campus. And then also library issues, budgets, you know some of the different things, things like that that are just librarian things (Support Staff 1, 2676-2708).

This time is used to provide training and continue to move forward on initiatives intended to transform the libraries into Information Literacy Centers (ILCs).

District level: Principal meetings

At SCISD the principals’ meetings is a structure considered the PLC Time for principals. According to the campus principals interviewed, the following excerpt explains how they feel the principals’ meeting has evolved with the transformation.

For example, you'd go to a principal meeting and what they would do is give you all the information that occurred at the board meeting; a run-down of the board meeting used to be a principals meeting. Now, a principals’ meeting always has a learning piece, always has a…the board meeting is the smallest portion of the principal meeting now. It's like here's the information you could have gotten in minutes on the internet, so now let's go into the learning piece, the cooperative learning, the development of PLC’s…they're constantly training, the staff development is embedded, the sharing of knowledge, it's just a whole different purpose of meeting (Principal 2, 695-715).

The following excerpt is taken from the interview with Central Office 2 on principals’ meetings.

Well in the meetings once a month, that we have for the South Central Learning Community, that's everybody in the morning so it's about one-hundred and twenty-five people if everybody's there, well in the afternoon the principals come back and they meet as a principal learning community (Central Office 2, 535-543).
The principals’ meeting is another example of a structure implemented by the district.

*Campus level: Collaborative meetings*

The next sections outline the structures implemented at the campus level. The structures include grade level meetings (PLC Time), and Leaders Achieving Superior Educational Results (LASER) Teams. Table 21 provides a synopsis of these structures.

Table 21

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<th>Campus Level Collaborative Teams</th>
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<tr>
<td>Name</td>
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<tr>
<td>Grade Level Meetings (PLC Time)</td>
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*Campus level: Grade level meetings (PLC Time)*

While reviewing district documents the researcher discovered that campuses included a PLC Time in their campus improvement plans (CIPs). CIPs are campus specific improvement plans that have to be revised each school year, approved by central office, and the board of trustees. Throughout the interviews the researcher asked questions to uncover the purpose of the PLC Time. The following is an interview excerpt from a campus principal who explains the evolution of the term grade level meeting.

It (PLC Time) wasn’t immediately with the change in superintendent but it came shortly thereafter. We kind of started with it at the district level with our South Central Learning Community, the SCLC and then that kind of trickled down into that. Now instead of them being called grade level meetings, they’re called PLC meetings (Principal 4, 2060-2068).

Interview data suggest that the PLC Time was used as a structure for teachers, campus administrators, and district administrators to collaborate, plan, and learn. In this excerpt, the central office administrator outlines expected conversations during PLC Times.
The academic and those teams get together and ensure that the conversations are taking
place are strictly zoned in on student achievement, data, shared practices, best practices,
and how do we enrich the program in what we're doing and how do we remediate when
there's a need. So it's very purposeful. We establish norms. How those meetings are
going to be held. And it's been a progression. And so, we're at the point where we have
monthly professional learning communities with all their administrator staffs and we
have monthly professional learning communities with our principals only. And so, we
have structures that we organize here at the central administration and we model the
behavior we expect to see at our campuses (Central Office 3, 864-894).

The following excerpt outlines an elementary teacher’s perception regarding what happens
during a PLC meeting.

…sometimes we go over data especially like if they just…like the accelerated reader and
(state assessment) testing. We do a lot of goal setting with accelerated reader so we talk
about that. What are the kid’s goals and are they meeting them? And if they’ve just tested
DCA (District Curriculum Assessment), which are like our benchmarks; we go over
those results and discuss all that. We do our timelines; we talk about our timelines.
Different grades are different because like for their grade, they’re all departmentalized.
Like in kinder, they are all self-contained so they come in and…ok, this is what we’re
gonna be doing for math next week, and talks to all the teachers. Ok, yea, can we do this
instead? Yea, ok and the other one…ok, here’s what we’re gonna be doing for reading,
and they share lesson plans. They don’t have that kind of luxury because they’re all
different, but they do have lots of discussions about the kids (Elementary Teacher 12,
3513-3538).

The conversation on PLCs resonated across all levels of SCISD. The following are interview
excerpts from elementary teachers, middle school teachers, and campus administrators.

Well the classroom teachers meet once a week but sometimes it depends on if there's an
issue that needs to deal with, then we meet more than once a week. I know, with this
reading intervention, with the facilitator and the other teacher that was teaching reading
and myself, we met Monday and Tuesday during our conference period to plan some
strategies of what would be taught and how it would be taught (Elementary Teacher 13,
4063-4074).

It's (PLC implementation) been directed by (superintendent) since he stepped in this
district, doing our South Central Learning Communities. They were the ones who pretty
much got everything off and running. He started those learning communities and it's
filtered down to every campus (Principal 1, 582-589).

The following is an excerpt from the interview with Elementary Teacher 5.
**Elementary Teacher 5:** Each PLC, each grade level meets once a week for forty-five minutes.

**Researcher:** They meet once a week. Who's involved in?

**Elementary Teacher 5:** The principal, assistant principal, facilitator, and classroom teachers.

**Researcher:** And to your knowledge what's discussed in these meetings?

**Elementary Teacher 5:** Data. They're intended to be a time where the teachers could plan for the week and collaborate plan, vertically align and things like that but it's become, at our school at least, from what the teachers are telling me, just looking at data; data, data, data, just going over that (Elementary Teacher 2585-2603).

The following is an excerpt from the interview with Middle School Teacher 4.

**Researcher:** Ok, tell me a little bit more about your PLC.

**Middle School Teacher 4:** Well our PLCs used to meet like once a week but it would be like our facilitator or principal coming in to talk about whatever the topic was and I guess it was more just providing information. I don't know, to me a PLC is that we're actually, I don't know, it would be not so much a topic as much as planning, or you know…

**Researcher:** How much time would you recommend to give to the PLC time?

**Middle School Teacher 4:** I think it depends on the goal. I think it depends on what you're wanting the PLC to do.

**Researcher:** How long have you been having PLC meetings?

**Middle School Teacher 4:** two years, I think this is the second year.

**Researcher:** And what brought upon that change? Who initiated the PLCs?

**Middle School Teacher 4:** I think it came down from the district. I think it came down from (superintendent), and said, you know…I think the previous principal, there was a lot of buzz words or things that would go and it was kind of like…previously, I don't know if there was a clear vision and clear mission so it was like kind of pulling a little bit from everywhere; let's try this, let's try that (Middle School Teacher 4, 1664-1698).

During the interview Central Office 4 told about their experience while conducting observations of PLC Times implementation:

I’m very impressed with our teachers. I’ll tell you one of the visits that we did I walked into a sixth grade PLC time and they had their data and it was a team of three but they
had their data and it was teachers. They looked at their data, they looked at their year at a glance and collectively they said “wow you really did great on that how you got your kids to master that?”

…And these are real conversations that our teachers were having.

…And they looked at their timeline and they said you know these are the three, across all of our classrooms; these are the three areas that our kids just aren’t getting. We need to go back and reteach that (Central Office 4, 2813-2857).

In the interview, Central Office 3 indicated that the term PLC is a common term used across the district.

…keep in mind that we're using PLC as a common term and a common language. And I think that any transformation piece takes greater root and has a greater chance of success when you begin the – when you begin the transformational piece with the common language. Absent of a common language, and we don’t have a definition for what we're doing, right. And so, we focus a lot and then you can ask my principals and staff here in the District. I've talked a lot about the – hold on, we're going to do a – we're going to anchor here, because I think that we don’t have a common language. What does compliance mean versus commitment? And let's give some example[s] to that. When people come in and they say, "Well, sorry, you're the principal. Whatever you want me to do." That's compliance and that's a – that's a green light to divorce myself from the commitment to this initiative. And to allow that to happen then you know that you simply have my compliance. So we have those conversations. And so, now the principals are looking for those kinds of things as they're working with their staffs, right. So we have a PLC centered around a common language (Central Office 3, 1284-1331).

PLC is a term used to describe systems where individuals meet to have structured conversations.

Creating the systems. I think creating the systems and the structures to ensure that the conversations can take place (Central Office 3, 1403-1408).

At the district level all divisions and departments operate as PLCs as indicated by the superintendent.

So our divisions, even our division leaders, lead their employees or our essential office staff, through Professional Learning Communities. Our deputy superintendent for transformation leads through a PLC concept (Superintendent, 510-519).

Central Office 2 further supports this finding in this excerpt.

Well in the meetings once a month, that we have for the South Central Learning Community, that's everybody in the morning so it's about one-hundred and twenty-five people if everybody's there, well in the afternoon the principals come back and they meet as a principal learning community (Central Office 2, 535-543).
Campus level: Leaders Achieving Superior Educational Results (LASER) Team

The following is an excerpt from a conversation with a central office administrator explaining why LASER Teams were established at the comprehensive high schools.

Originally last summer, we were trying to provide an extra period off for every department so that they can plan together and some of our departments are pretty big so to put all biology teachers the same period off, if not all the science department that same period, but we just couldn’t afford it. We had moved away from block scheduling already because of financial reasons and so we said we can’t do everybody, we can’t afford that but we can do some, and so let’s do some then. What if we had a team that helped, because we only have one instructional coach at each high school anyway and we have forty-six hundred kids at (SCISD High School), and so that’s what we decided to do. We created an extra layer there so that it represented each department, we had several representatives plus we have our special populations that are represented as well (Central Office 2, 392-417).

Well we created a structure that helped; we call them our LASER Teams. They’re essentially like our extra layer of PLC development and so they had to apply. We had fifteen members from each high school, they had an extra period off and they would come together during that time to look at school district data. We sent out support staff on those days at least once a week. They meet every day, we send out support staff at least once a week and then they spend two full days a month out on the campuses, each campus, supporting, and so that was really well, it worked very well and that’s what helped facilitate it too. It was because we built those relationships and we also gave them the time because we’re on traditional schedule now so our high schools are going from eight-fifteen in the morning to four-o’ five and so high schools have all that activity after and before school to try to get everybody together in one room at one time is very difficult for high school (Central Office 2, 356-384).

So with our LASER Teams that really allowed us an opportunity to start spreading the word and to start to really focus on this is what a PLC looks like (Central Office 4, 2514-2520).

The LASER Team is an example of a structure implemented at the district’s comprehensive high schools.
System of support 3: Support personnel

The district created four new positions intended to provide support. The following sections examine each position created, based on the interview data. The sections include deputy superintendent, associate principal, facilitator, and director for staff development.

Support personnel: Deputy superintendent

The first position created was that of a deputy superintendent to oversee the district’s transformation. The deputy superintendent works in collaboration with the superintendent of curriculum and instruction. Each one plays different roles in the district’s organizational structure. Figure 4.1 illustrates the organizational structure created to transform the district.

Figure 4.1
PLC Development Plan
The following is an excerpt from the interview with Central Office 3 indicating the organizational structure in place to transform the district into a PLC.

…we have instructional facilitators at all of our campuses, and we now have associate principals at our high schools. And so all those things that deal with what we say the learning side of the house, that's my responsibility, and the leading side of the house, think of a Venn-diagram, that is deputy superintendent, that side, that's the leading side and I'm on the learning side. And so we work together, in concert, to make sure that we hit the leaders, all the principals etc., and then also on the learning side together (Central Office 3, 32-47).

When asked how the superintendent collaborated with central office administrators this was the response:

We meet every week, every other week as superintendent's staff, and off weeks is our deputy superintendent dates and one of the things we've done is we do regular updates and presentations even to the superintendent staff or the deputy superintendent staff so any new proposals will come through updates on scores, where we're at, and so we spend the whole day on topics that pertain to other things in the district too but we focus a lot on that learning piece so if we have a benchmark exam, we call them district curriculum assessments right now. If we do that, then those results also get fed up line so that even the superintendent knows where are we at, how are we doing, what do we need to do to adjust and then we work together on that to execute whatever plans we come up with (Central Office 2, 176-198).

Support personnel: Associate principal

Data gathered via interviews suggest that the associate principal for teaching and learning position was created at SCISD to provide leadership and to support teachers at each of the comprehensive high schools across the district. The following excerpt from the interview with central office administrators provides more background on their role at the campus.

At our high schools in particular, we had instructional facilitators for many years; they were sort of pseudo administrators, and we did away with them for one year via attrition, and we decided we would add associate principals for teaching and learning, and that would be the number two person at each high school and they would focus on the learning, right, so leading and learning to help continue to work the transformational piece and work closely with my office in curriculum. And so we added the coaching, we've been studying the different coaching models and so we didn't even want to go back in even with the same title, especially at our comprehensive high schools so we went in with instructional coaches and we actually sent them to smart-coaching training this year
so that can really work to support the teachers, so literally like a coach; they're on the teachers’ side: I'm here to help you do better, I'm gonna work with you, I'm gonna teach you, I'm gonna be on the sidelines, I'm gonna help you disaggregate data; all of those things as opposed to being evaluative like (teacher evaluation system) (Central Office 2, 53-85).

But they also had their associate principals and their instructional coaches who were right in the trenches with teachers who were in their classrooms every day (Central Office 4, 2570-2576).

Support personnel: Facilitator

Much like the associate principal at the high school level, the facilitator position has been established at the elementary schools and repurposed at the middle schools to be a support system for teachers. The following excerpt provides a rationale for the facilitator position at the elementary and middle schools from the perspective of the central office administrator.

…now we have facilitators, we still call them instructional facilitators, at all of our middle schools and all of our elementary schools. The elementary schools, this is our fourth year for that, and we've always fostered that sort of coaching mentality and role since we started those. The middle schools have been a little bit in transition because they've had facilitators before so they already had some existing job responsibilities and its being tweaked a little bit every year, really as we've grown as a district to recognize that PLC development is not just something else we do, it's not an add on; it's our main strategy for school improvement. It's what we're all about because, you know, everything falls under that: there's the curriculum, there's the data piece, there's the accountability piece, so we use like the DuFour’s Model; what do we expect students to know, and how do we know they're doing it, all of that good stuff all falls somewhere under that umbrella of a professional learning community (Central Office 2, 88-119).

The following are excerpts from teacher interviews. In the excerpts the teachers explain the role facilitators have at each campus.

Elementary Teacher 1: Yes, I've had teachers come and observe me.

Researcher: And what does that look like? Who sets those up?

Elementary Teacher 1: Usually the facilitator, they'll go and ask well can I go see so and so teacher. Yes, yes, they'll pull someone to watch their class so they can go in and watch that (Elementary Teacher 1, 1043-4051).
The following are additional excerpts, presented in a single quote format, regarding the role of facilitators.

I've been observed by the principal and the assistant principal, and the facilitator (Elementary Teacher 1, 1084-1087).

We discuss them sometimes in the conference room and sometimes in one of the classrooms where the grade levels meet, and we meet with the instructional facilitator and we all discuss what are our successes, what are we aiming for, where are we going; that sort of thing (Elementary Teacher 8, 1429-1438).

Personally, and I think speaking for some of the teachers, it (facilitator program) has impacted us a lot because we've gotten a lot more new ideas. You know it's real easy to tell a teacher well go to your room and figure it out. Ok, first of all, yes where am I gonna find the time to do that part plus my lesson, plus this, plus this. Well my facilitator now has been able to generate new ideas, bring in flashcards maybe she's seen somewhere else, and say do you want these? Yes, send them. I have this new game for fractions you know, you throw the dice and the kids have to know the numerator, denominator. It's like, do you like it? Oh, I love it. Different way to teach fractions instead of just going, this is the picture, so a lot of creativity has come in with this facilitator program that we have here (Elementary Teacher 11, 2913-2934).

…the facilitator would come in, she would talk about the ELPS (English Language Proficiency Standard), and then when they were trying to go through…sometimes it was on (data analysis software) using the system to get scores, some RTI (Response To Intervention), and sometimes it was just a topic (Secondary Teacher 6, 3399-3406).

Support personnel: Director for staff development

The director for staff development position was created to oversee the district plan on staff development and was assigned by the superintendent to lead the district’s efforts to develop the PLC concept.

So as a staff development director for our district, she leads our PLC concept (Superintendent, 256-260).

The following excerpts are from the director for staff development. In these excerpts the Central Office 4 provides an explanation of their role in PLC development.

…my role in that department was to help her implement PLCs around the district (Central Office 4, 2006-2009).
And by supporting and helping I mean getting resources together, making sure that we had a framework, looking of course at the four critical questions of the PLC and trying to implement those in everything we do. I am going to be starting, I have been in my position, my current position for two and a half years (Central Office 4, 2014-2026).

We have a very, we have a very succinct, a very systemic way of even creating our meeting calendars because like our first, most Wednesdays are booked with meetings but we have a PLC specifically for first and second year Principals and they get messages that first week of the month (Central Office 4, 2058-2069).

The second week of the month we move to an expansion of what our new principals learned and we move to our South Central Learning Community…And that’s all the Administrators, Directors, Facilitators and an Assistant Principal from each campus come in and we talk about big concepts in the district that month…And then the third week we have our Principals’ Meetings on Wednesdays, our Assistant Principal Academy on Thursday and on Fridays we have our Instructional Facilitators…But all of that is very methodical, you know we look at that month at a glance (Central Office 4, 2071-2096).

*Intervention: Book reads*

According to Central Office 2, books read by campus and central office administrators were:


*Intervention: Surveys*

Interview data suggest SCISD employs the use of locally developed surveys to get input from all stakeholders, including students. The following are excerpts from interviews relating to this finding.

I guess he (superintendent) doesn't say this is what we're gonna do. He'll take a survey. We survey everything. He'll put out a survey, how did you like this, this year how did you like that this year? He always asks our opinion about it and tries to go by which ever has the best, I guess the highest opinion. Like the calendar, we all vote. The one that gets the most votes, that's the calendar we get. They'll send out a survey, how did you like health insurance that we have for this district? What would you change? What would you do differently? So I guess, asking our opinion and…kind of validates us (Elementary Teacher, 33-49).
Well I know last year they gave the students a survey as to how much technology they had in their home, how much they had in school because that was one of our focus here; our technology here at the district level. So they gave them a survey last year and the results turned out that actually this campus was one of the lowest in terms of technology at home; parents having technology, any type of access to technology so they used that information to drive what they needed to do (Elementary Teacher, 3050-3064).

**Intervention: Organizational health instrument**

According to Clark and Fairman (1983) *Organizational Health* is “an organization’s ability to function effectively, to cope adequately, to change appropriately, and to grow within (p.111). *Organizational Health (OHI)* consists of 10 key internal dimensions: Goal focus, Communication adequacy, Optimal power equalization, Resource utilization, Cohesiveness, Morale, Innovativeness, Autonomy, Adaptation and Problem-solving adequacy. SCISD administered this survey for the first time in the Spring of 2013. When the researcher was collecting data the district had just begun the process of reviewing the data gathered from the OHI with principals and central office staff.

What we have embarked on recently is organizational help with Dr. Marvin Fairman and we have really just started that. It started with our superintendent and the board and then it moved in to our executive units and also dealing with the principals and so we're just getting ready to start having our conferences on that, and so that's gonna be one way to gauge where we're at because it will look at our groups on a scale from dependent all the way to interdependent (Central Office 2, 155-168).

The researcher asked to view the results but the district declined to share data due to permission necessary from Organizational Health Diagnostic and Development Corporation, the developers of OHI. In the interview, the superintendent indicated he had used OHI in a previous district.

In summary, interview data indicate the district implemented the following interventions throughout the district: **structured conversations, a system of support, book reads, surveys, and the Organizational Health Instrument (OHI).** The system of support included the *extravaganza, collaborative meetings, and incorporated support personnel.*
Change Principle 6

Appropriate interventions reduce resistance to the change process

In most change efforts, individual resistance is a common occurrence (Hall & Hord, 2011). The level of resistance from individuals can even lead to the active sabotaging of change efforts (Hall & Hord, 2011). Central Office 3 expected resistance as the district engaged in change. The following is an excerpt the interview with Central Office 3:

…you're always going to have your negative – and that's okay too. There's room for that as well. Because – and I always preach this to the principals. I firmly believe that the pressure to change, when the pressure to change is greater than the resistance, there will be change. And right now, the pressure to change, the people that like PLCs is greater than the people that don’t. So guess what, we're going to have PLCs (Central Office 3, 1813-1828).

The PLCA-R had one item (Item 41) that asked respondents to determine whether school staff and stakeholders supported an effort to embed change into the school’s culture (see Appendix G). Table 28 presents the mean scores by subgroup for item 41 on the PLCA-R.

Table 28

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Elem Teachers</th>
<th>MS Teachers</th>
<th>HS Teachers</th>
<th>Campus Admin</th>
<th>Central Office</th>
<th>All</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>41</td>
<td>2.78</td>
<td>2.89</td>
<td>2.86</td>
<td>3.14</td>
<td>2.80</td>
<td>2.83</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Means Scores at or above 3.00 are bolded; Mean Score Range: 1.00-1.99= Strongly Disagree; 2.00-2.99= Disagree; 3.00-3.99= Agree; and 4.00-4.99= Strongly Agree.

aItem 41- School staff and stakeholders exhibit a sustained and unified effort to embed change into the culture of the school (Olivier & Hipp, 2010, p. 34).

PLCA-R results indicate that only the campus administrator subgroup had a mean score of 3.00 or above. The following excerpts were taken from the comments sections of the PLCA-R support this finding.

The vision is there, the will is there, the desire for improvement is there. But that's all it ever is. We don't do anything with it. Some teachers want change and are doing their part,
but these teachers need support and backing. That is usually not there (Elementary Teacher, 111-118).

We have a few sour grapes on our campus that try to change things yet the majority try and work together for the best interest of others/students (Elementary Teacher, 87-91).

One needs to remember not all new ideas are great and all change is not good. A variety of instruction techniques should be used as students have different learning styles. Many students need textbooks (Elementary Teacher, 891-897).

In summary, PLCA-R results indicate the following:

- Item 41- School staff and stakeholders exhibit a sustained and unified effort to embed change into the culture of the school (Olivier & Hipp, 2010, p. 34) had an overall mean score of 2.83.
- Item 41 had one subgroup that had a mean score of 3.00 or above, i.e., campus administrators (3.14).

Change Principle 7

Administrator leadership is essential to long-term change success

Administrators play an integral part in the implementation and long term support of the innovation (Hall & Hord, 2011). Interview data indicate that district administrators created and implemented two structures for current and upcoming principals: (1) assistant principal academies, and (2) principals’ institutes.

First, the assistant principal academy was developed to provide support for assistant principals. The following is from the interview with central office 4. She explains how the training topics are generated for the assistant principal academies.

So, then the other piece that we did is we asked our principals, “Tell me about your pressing items at the campus, specifically with your assistant principals?” At the end of the day when you’re needing to meet with parents because something happened on the campus, what would you have liked your assistants to be equipped with to avoid so much of that? …Chapter 37 was a big one, Title 9, Accountability and Effective Monitoring. By and far, the responses were a little different, but by and far that’s what they needed…We did another one with our sitting assistant principals at the time…comments they made is “Don’t you think about budget?” Or, “We don’t know a lot about budget and when I need to conduct an ARD” Odd questions, right? What does that mean? What does ARD stand for again? And special populations because a lot of our assistants are in
charge of 504 or Special Ed or whatever the case may be. So, we learned a lot about that and both groups had a lot of the same type of comments or same type of ideas on needs, so it worked out really well. But the assistant principal perspective was very interesting because… and rightfully so because if I’m an assistant and I have no experience with budget, as a principal what am I going to do (Central Office 4, 3460-3536)?

Second, the principals’ institute is a two-day event coordinated by central office where they model for principals what a PLC should look like. In this excerpt Central Office 2 explains the plans for the principals’ institute.

…still designing that but a lot of it, making sure that they are understanding the data, developing those monitoring pieces, really looking at our special populations, and we're looking into doing on day in June, I guess two days in August, we were hoping to kind of just do it like a workshop, put it all together but we're not gonna be able to get it all done this June so we'll have to split it up a little bit, but continuing to support their development as instructional leaders, making sure that they know what they need to going into this new era and keeping up with all the changes (Central Office 2, 607-623).

In summary, interview data indicate that district administrators created and implemented two structures for current and upcoming principals. The two structures are (1) assistant principal academies and (2) principals’ institutes.

Change Principle 8

Facilitating change is a team effort

In facilitating change, it is important to make sure that everyone involved in the change initiative is doing their part making the process of change less cumbersome (Hall & Hord, 2011). Item 21 on the PLCA-R asked respondents to rate the level which “staff members work together to seek knowledge, skills and strategies, and apply this new learning to their work” (Olivier & Hipp, 2010, pp. 33-35). Table 29 presents the mean scores for this item.
Table 29

**PLCA-R Mean Scores for Item 21**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Elem Teachers</th>
<th>MS Teachers</th>
<th>HS Teachers</th>
<th>Campus Admin</th>
<th>Central Office</th>
<th>All</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>3.10</td>
<td>3.15</td>
<td>3.11</td>
<td>3.43</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>3.12</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note:* Means Scores at or above 3.00 are bolded; Mean Score Range; 1.00-1.99= Strongly Disagree; 2.00-2.99= Disagree; 3.00-3.99= Agree; and 4.00-4.99= Strongly Agree.

aItem 21- Staff members work together to seek knowledge, skills and strategies and apply this new learning to their work (Olivier & Hipp, 2010, p. 33).

PLCA-R results indicate that all subgroups had a mean score of 3.00 or higher. PLCA-R results indicate that Item 21 had five groups with a mean score of 3.00 or above. Subgroups mean scores on this item were for *elementary teachers* (3.10), *middle school teachers* (3.15), *high school teachers* (3.11), *campus administrators* (3.43), and *central office* (3.00).

Interview data suggest that only core teachers and administrators are a part of the PLC at the campus level. According to interview data core teachers are English Language Arts, Mathematics, Science, and Social Studies teachers. Other teachers did not collaborate with core teachers. The following are excerpts from the comments section of the PLCA-R and from interviews that support this finding.

Elective classes are not viewed as equal to core subjects (Middle School Teacher, 85-86).

Core teachers work together yet leave out elective teachers in these processes (Middle School Teacher, 115-117).

Time, resources, facilities promote sharing among a team of the 5 core teachers, but not so much for other teachers. Communication systems are there, but often not utilized to max (Middle School Teacher, 278-283).

Currently, only core area teachers are participating members of PLCs (Principal 7, 2180-2181).
The following is an excerpt from an interview with a secondary teacher that taught an elective course.

*Researcher:* No? How about PLC? I saw through the campus improvement plan that some people had a PLC time; do you have…?

*Secondary Teacher 7:* No I don't. That to me, if I'm not getting confused here, is the core teachers are the ones that would have that extra time to plan together; they meet together.

*Researcher:* Do you think that's what they call the PLC?

*Secondary Teacher 7:* I think that's what they call it.

*Researcher:* Ok I just wanted to clarify because I know I interviewed another teacher from here and he mentioned it; he mentioned a LASER Team so that's why I wanted to see if you knew.

*Secondary Teacher 7:* It may be in the core area.

*Researcher:* What's the difference between…?

*Secondary Teacher 7:* The core area is your standard English, math, science, you know; the real courses that we need to make sure these kids…and our area is more of the technology usage. It's still a required class for graduation now, but we have a lot of electives that are not required and it's all based on who teaches what; based on your experience out in the job force (Secondary Teacher 7, 3833-3860).

The following excerpt is from an interview with a support staff member assigned to an elementary school but do not participate in PLC Meetings with the core area teachers.

*Support Staff 1:* It could happen in our, what they call, our PLCs’ learning communities that we have here. I don’t know what goes on in there; I’m not involved in those. I’ve asked to attend but I’ve been told that I’m not needed there. So that’s when they discuss scores, things like that. Look at the data, but I’m not involved those.

*Researcher:* Ok. How do you feel about not being involved?

*Support Staff 1:* I’ve asked to be involved. I think it’s important. I think as the one person, one of the few people on campus, who knows everyone’s curriculum- all the grade levels. I feel like if I had that data, if I had that information, if I was part of that planning, then I could make the library more of a curriculum aspect of our school; that’s not the right word, but I can use that information to make the library better, to better serve our students, to better serve our teachers.
Researcher: Are you thinking along the terms of alignment; things like that?

Support Staff 1: Absolutely. I have their (state standards). I have their year-at-a-glance documents that I try to do lesson plans that we do at the library according to those. However, since I don’t always know the data, I don’t know. Pretty much, after this many years of teaching, I know where the kids are gonna be lacking in skills, but without seeing our specific school data I can’t align what I’m doing as well as what they’re doing in the classroom as I would like.

Researcher: That kind of makes sense. Now I’m gonna shift over. So how often does the staff meet?

Support Staff 1: Each PLC, each grade level meets once a week for forty-five minutes.

Researcher: They meet once a week. Who’s involved in?

Support Staff 1: The principal, assistant principal, facilitator, and classroom teachers.

Researcher: And to your knowledge what’s discussed in these meetings?

Support Staff 1: Data. They’re intended to be a time where the teachers could plan for the week and collaborate plan, vertically align and things like that but it’s become, at our school at least, from what the teachers are telling me, just looking at data; data, data, data, just going over that (Support Staff 1, 536-599).

In summary, PLCA-R results indicate the following:

- Item 21 had an overall mean score of 3.12.
- Item 21 had five subgroups with a mean score of 3.00 or above. Subgroups and their mean scores are elementary teachers (3.10), middle school teachers (3.15), high school teachers (3.11), campus administrators (3.43), and central office (3.00).

Meanwhile, interview data indicate that only core teachers participated in the PLC meetings. Core teachers are those that teach in the subject areas of English Language Arts, Mathematics, Social Studies, and Science.

Change Principle 9

Mandates can work

According to Hall and Hord (2011) mandates can be used to provide clear priorities and to communicate expectations regarding the change initiative. Mandates work when they are
followed by administrative support and fail when they are used as a one-time event (Hall & Hord, 2011). In this case study, interview data indicate that the term mandate was not used, rather central office administrators and superintendent used the term non-negotiable.

We're passed – should I be having PLCs? Look, we're done. That's no longer a conversation. If you don't have PLC, that's a whole different personnel conversation, right? So, we're passed that. And we'll tell our new principals. That’s a non-negotiable anymore (Central Office 3, 1364-1374).

I can tell you that every leader in our district at this point understands it. It is a non-negotiable (Superintendent, 295-300).

The following interview excerpt presents an elementary teachers perception on how the superintendent implemented change in the district.

- Some people are very hard to change. They don't want it to be different. They want everything the same. Why should I have to change? But sometimes change is really good. You have to do it, and he (superintendent) sort of made it to where you don't have an option, you're gonna have to change. And you have to because the curriculum we teach has changed, the testing we do has changed. I mean everything in our job basically is completely different. Now, like for myself, I had a principal once who told me that the greatest quality a teacher could have is adaptability, because you're constantly gonna have to change (Elementary Teacher, 1, 586-602).

In summary, interview data indicate district administrators used the term non-negotiable in lieu of issue mandates.

*Change Principle 10*

*The context influences the process of learning and change*

The context, or environment, that the change initiative is being implemented within can have an impact on the learning and change process (Hall & Hord, 2011). During the interview, the superintendent noted that the context (school district) played a role in how changes in the district were approached. The following is the excerpt from the interview with him:

The thing about (South Central– South Central) has always been a good district in itself as Jim Collins points out in *Good to Great*. Therein was the big part of the enemy of
becoming a great school district. Because we are good means that we did not have to change much. We could keep doing the things we do.

So I would say that the rest of the world, the rest of the (region) passed us by. I looked at (school district), I looked at (school district), and I looked at some districts here. Around here that say ‘Wow, we – they never were focused on the good. They were always moving.’ What we have been able to do is say ‘How do we make for the most strategic point, place and time in the state, in the nation, and in the (region)?’

So my charge for us to really get the speed of change right or to embed that has been to take a slower approach that I have been used to having worked in inner city (large metropolitan area). There it is so critical mission, critical every single day, there are so many things. I do not know. I am not disparaging. In fact, I loved working there and I loved the fact that you impact 160,000 lives when you work in a district that big.

But when you come to a district like (SCISD), one of the things that we realized is that and we continue to realize let us make sure that everyone is ready. Let us make sure that they are prepared. Let us make sure that we have done the things that we need to do for successful implementation and fidelity to that implementation. I can tell you it has taken us a while. It has taken us a while, some people might say too long. I think we are right at the right speed (Superintendent, 824-879).

Interview data indicate that the superintendent analyzed the district to determine a plan to move the district through change. In the interview, the superintendent stated the he executed an entry plan to develop his approach to change. The following is the excerpt to support this finding.

On change, one of the things again and I have referenced Kotter, I believe why transformation efforts fail is seminal work for me with regards to what and how transformation should occur. So I used that quite a bit. I learned that obviously at the (university) when I was working on my doctorate at (university) in 1999 to 2001. I was a former middle school principal who understood that things were changing to the point where we had to have some variant of education and from what we had had or what I had had or any prior generation (Superintendent, 695-719).

I do understand that sometimes if change is necessary to be rapid, I call that my entry plan and what I call it is the ACES framework. I got that from a book that was part of my graduate study as well or actually post-graduate. I was just reading and I normally have the authors with me but I call it the ACES framework. A – C – E – S. Aces framework. How you enter an organization. You assimilate. There are three ways. You assimilate or you converge and evolve, that is the C, E. Or you shock the system. The only time that you shock the system should be when things are so drastically wrong and their impacting students in a negative way that you have to shock the system. So make no mistake. If I had to shock the system, I would have done that. Assimilation has served this nation well. But when this board hired me in I let them know, I will not come in to assimilate. I will come in to add value and grow together (Superintendent, 1013-1057).
In summary, interview data indicate that the superintendent analyzed the district to determine a plan for moving the district through change. In the interview, the superintendent talked about how he executed an entry plan to develop his approach to implement change.

The preceding major section examined the findings through Hord and Hall’s (2011) *ten principles of change*. The following is a summary of the major findings categorized by change principle.

**Change Principle 1 - Change is learning** - It’s as simple and complicated as that
- Items 26, 28, 33, and 36 each had a mean score of 3.00 or above (see Table 24);
- Items 24, 25, and 27 each had a mean score below 3.00 (see Table 24); and
- Interview data indicate the district implemented the extravaganza and collaborative meetings.

**Change Principle 2 - Change is a process, not an event**
- Interview data indicate that, according to the superintendent, SCISD has been engaged in PLC work for 6 years; and
- District administrators and 4 elementary teachers have an understanding of change.

**Change Principle 3 - The school is the primary unit for change**
- Item 38- Caring relationships exist among staff and students that are built on trust and respect (Olivier & Hipp, 2010, p. 34)- had an overall mean score of 3.13.
- Item 38 had four subgroups that each had a mean score of 3.00 or above: *elementary teachers* (3.06), *middle school teachers* (3.20), *high school teachers* (3.17), and *campus administrators* (3.43).
- Item 50- Communication systems promote a flow of information among staff (Olivier & Hipp, 2010, p. 35)- had an overall mean score of 3.01.
- Item 50 had three subgroups that each had a mean score of 3.00 or above; *middle school teachers* (3.10), *high school teachers* (3.00), and *campus administrators* (3.07)
- Interview data indicate the district created support personnel positions to support teachers and campus administrators; these positions were *deputy superintendent, associate principal, facilitator,* and *director for staff development.*

**Change Principle 4 - Organizations adopt change** - Individuals implement change
- Item 18- Policies and programs are aligned to the school’s vision (Olivier & Hipp, 2010, p. 33)- had an overall mean score of 3.11.
• Item 18 had four subgroups that each had a mean score 3.00 or above; elementary teachers (3.08), middle school teachers (3.11), high school teachers (3.16), and campus administrators (3.50).

• Item 36- Individuals and teams have the opportunity to apply learning and share the results of their peers (Olivier & Hipp, 2010, p. 34)- had an overall mean score of 3.10.

• Item 36 had five subgroups that each had a mean score of 3.00 or above; elementary teachers (3.14), middle school teachers (3.03), high school teachers (3.06), campus administrators (3.50), and central office (3.10).

• Interview data indicated 2 elementary teachers, 1 middle school teacher, 1 high school teacher, 1 principal, and 1 central office administrator cited that staff members informally share ideas and have the opportunity to apply learning, and share results.

Change Principle 5 - Interventions are the key to the success of the change process

• Interview data indicate the district implemented the following interventions throughout the district: structured conversations, a system of support, book reads, surveys, and the Organizational Health Instrument (OHI).

Change Principle 6 - Appropriate interventions reduce resistance to the change process

• Item 41- School staff and stakeholders exhibit a sustained and unified effort to embed change into the culture of the school (Olivier & Hipp, 2010, p. 34)- had an overall mean score of 2.83.

• Item 41 had one subgroup that had a mean score of 3.00 or above; campus administrators (3.14).

Change Principle 7 - Administrator leadership is essential to long term change success

• Interview data indicate that district administrators created and implemented two structures for current and aspiring principals. The two structures were (1) assistant principal academies and (2) principals’ institutes.

Change Principle 8 - Facilitating change is a team effort

• Item 21 - Staff members work together to seek knowledge, skills and strategies and apply this new learning to their work (Olivier & Hipp, 2010, p. 33)- had an overall mean score of 3.12.

• Item 21 had five groups that each had a mean score of 3.00 or above. The subgroup mean scores were elementary teachers (3.10), middle school teachers (3.15), high school teachers (3.11), campus administrators (3.43), and central office (3.00).

• Interview data indicate that only core teachers participated in the PLC meetings. Core teachers taught the subject areas of English Language Arts, Mathematics, Social Studies, and Science.
Change Principle 9 - Mandates can work

- Interview data indicate district administrators used the term non-negotiable in lieu of issuing mandates.

Change Principle 10 - The context influences the process of learning and change

- Interview data indicate that the superintendent analyzed the district in order to determine a plan for moving the district through change.

Finally, the next major section examines the findings through the lens of Fullan (2007) *phases of change* and Fullan (1990) 14 success factors.

**Change Process**

The researcher used the *phases of change* from Fullan (2007) to frame this part of the second research question. Fullan (2007) identified three broad phases to the change process, i.e., *initiation, implementation*, and *institutionalization*. *Initiation* consists of the process that leads to and includes a decision to adopt or proceed with a change (Fullan, 2007). *Implementation* involves the first experiences of attempting to put an idea or reform into practice (Fullan, 2007). *Institutionalization* refers to whether the change gets built in as an ongoing part of a system or disappears by way of a decision to discard or through attrition (Fullan, 2007).

Data collected were analyzed to determine what phase of the change process best described the current state of the district. The researcher used the 14 success factors cited in Fullan (1990). Fullan (1990) based the success factors on the work of Miles (1986). The success factors made available criteria that provided guidance in the determination of which phase of change best describes the current state of the district. Table 30 presents the 14 success factors categorized according to their pertinent phase of change.
Table 30

**Phases of change**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Initiation</th>
<th>Implementation</th>
<th>Institutionalization</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Linked to high profile needs</td>
<td>Orchestration</td>
<td>Embedding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A clear model</td>
<td>Shared control</td>
<td>Linked to instruction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strong advocate</td>
<td>Pressure and support</td>
<td>Widespread use</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Active initiation</td>
<td>Technical assistance</td>
<td>Removal of competing priorities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Rewards</td>
<td>Continuing assistance</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Findings are presented for each phase of change and then further analyzed by listing each critical success factor(s) associated with that phase as presented in Table 23.

The researcher examined and matched the PLCA-R items that provided data on the success factors. Table 31 delineates the PLCA-R items as they matched to a critical success factor(s).

Table 31

**Sources of Evidence used to determine phase of change**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Phase of Change</th>
<th>Success Factor</th>
<th>Source(s) of Evidence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Initiation</td>
<td>Linked to high profile needs</td>
<td>Interview data</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A clear model</td>
<td>Interview data</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A strong advocate</td>
<td>Interview data</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Active initiation</td>
<td>Interview data</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Orchestration</td>
<td>Interview data</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Shared control</td>
<td>PLCA-R Items 1-11, Interview data</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Pressure and support</td>
<td>Interview data</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Technical assistance</td>
<td>PLCA-R Item 48, Interview data</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Rewards</td>
<td>PLCA-R Item 40, Interview data</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Implementation</td>
<td>Embedding</td>
<td>PLCA-R Item 41, Interview data</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Linked to instruction</td>
<td>PLCA-R Item 33, Interview data</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Institutionalization</td>
<td>Widespread use</td>
<td>Interview data</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Removal of competing priorities</td>
<td>Interview data</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Continuing assistance</td>
<td>Interview data</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


*Initiation*

Fullan (2007) defines *initiation* as the process leading up to the implementation of a change. The *initiation* phase of the change process consists of four critical success factors: (1) *linked to a high profile need*; (2) *a clear model*, (3) *a strong advocate*, and (4) *active initiation* (Fullan, 1990; Hipp & Huffman, 2010c; Miles, 1986).

First, a change needs to be *linked to a high profile need* (Miles, 1986). In this case study, the superintendent cited the following:

The thing about (South Central– South Central) has always been a good district in itself as Jim Collins points out in Good to Great. Therein was the big part of the enemy of becoming a great school district. Because we are good means that we did not have to change much. We could keep doing the things we do. So I would say that the rest of the world, the rest of the (region) passed us by. I looked at (school district), I looked at (school district), and I looked at some districts here (Superintendent, 824-844).

The superintendent also tied the need for change as a means to improve student achievement across the district. The superintendent, in his interview, stated that the district needed to ensure that change efforts were embedded in the district’s culture. This interview excerpt supports this finding.

It (change) should be ingrained and it should be a part of who we are. Why? Because it allows for the focus that is necessary for our students to achieve at high levels (Superintendent, 500-507).

Second, *a clear model* must be communicated to staff to be able to initiate any type of change (Miles, 1986). Interview data indicate that 38 of the 38 individuals interviewed knew the district was engaged in PLC work. The following is an excerpt from the interview with the superintendent in which he explains his approach to PLC implementation. This is followed by some additional comments taken from interviews with central office personnel, principals and teachers.
I think when you look at how students learn; Are their gaps in data? Are there things that we need to look at? We have evolved as the PLC becoming a remedy for where we are moving forward so that we do not leave things to chance. So what we want to say is that from the standpoint of after my 65 interviews in an entry conference, I could tell we had several independent school districts within our own school district. Which again there is nothing wrong with that. If the data is consistent throughout the entire organization, I believe that a pocket of excellence is not something to be very proud of. I would rather be proud and that is what we are striving for, a system of that support. That is what this framework – the PLC framework allows us to do. (Superintendent, 90-136).

…really as we've grown as a district to recognize that PLC development is not just something else we do, it's not an add on. It's our main strategy for school improvement. It's what we're all about (Central Office 2, 103-108).

I think that the last few years when we've really focused on as a part of our transformational journey is to formalize a process of – professional learning community is now. The term professional learning community is a recent term that we used in the District…. we stay away from the word "pilot" in this District, because pilot means it's an opportunity to divorce yourself from the project after one year. Phasing is we've made a commitment and we're going to get to the point where it's full implementation. We're phasing it in allowing for people to come along in the journey (Central Office 3, 794-832).

The nice thing about PLCs is that the sharing component is very key and getting people to share only makes us all better (Principal 2, 751-755).

…he's implemented PLCs, and there's been more emphasis on that (High School Teacher 2, 574-576)

Well our PLCs used to meet like once a week but it would be like our facilitator or principal coming in to talk about whatever the topic was and I guess it was more just providing information. I don't know, to me a PLC is that we're actually, I don't know, it would be not so much a topic as much as planning, or you know… (Middle School Teacher 5, 1666-1675).

And I think one of the things we didn't have before, we didn't have PLCs, and now we do. I think it's hard to have so many people adjust to that change (Elementary Teacher 2, 1301-1305).

Interview evidence suggests that the term PLC was introduced to teachers, campus administrators, and central office.
Third, initiation of a change needs to have a strong advocate (Miles, 1986). Interview data indicate that the superintendent and central office administrators were strong advocates for the implementation of a PLC. These interview excerpts support this finding.

We have evolved as the PLC becoming a remedy for where we are moving forward so that we do not leave things to chance (Superintendent, 92-95).

…really as we've grown as a district to recognize that PLC development is not just something else we do, it's not an add on. It's our main strategy for school improvement. It's what we're all about (Central Office 2, 103-108).

I think that the last few years when we've really focused on as a part of our transformational journey is to formalize a process of – professional learning community is now. The term professional learning community is a recent term that we used in the District…. we stay away from the word "pilot" in this District, because pilot means it's an opportunity to divorce yourself from the project after one year. Phasing is we've made a commitment and we're going to get to the point where it's full implementation. We're phasing it in allowing for people to come along in the journey (Central Office 3, 794-832).

Interview data indicate that the superintendent along with central office administrators serve as strong advocates for implementation of a PLC.

Fourth, the initiation of a change is grounded on the staff’s engagement in activities that support the change (Miles, 1986). Interview data indicate that the superintendent and central office staff engaged in introductory activities to initiate the implementation of a PLC. In the following excerpt the superintendent explains how he initiated change at the central office and principal levels.

You have to guide individuals to know that these are some things that we can do. So if you follow Kotter’s framework on why transformation efforts fail, John Kotter, Harvard; there are eight things he says. You have to have quick wins early. So what is the low hanging fruit? One of the low hanging fruit items was that how do we start seeking common language in our educational delivery. So with that, the framework that spring after the first spring what we did was I gave the book, Learning by Doing, which is just your basic handbook. It is a basic handbook for them to assess, to determine whether they are with it or their own personal PLC’s or how do they have collaboration time for their teachers, how do they monitor their instruction, all the things that are there and basically the questions of the PLC.
So with that, it was not said “You are going to do this at the (High School) or you are going to do this at the (Middle School), you are going to do this at the (Elementary).” It was more “Here is a direction in which we can move. This is something we can come back to.” So the first year, many campuses said, ‘Hey, this is really neat. We were doing some of this but this gives us now more framework that we can take on or tighten up on and we can do those things.’ Other campuses it was a shock to their system. ‘That is not how we do things’ (Superintendent, 142-204).

The next section outlines the initiation of PLCs at the campus level from the teacher’s perspective. The following excerpt is from a middle school teacher’s interview. The teacher explains the training they experienced as administrators implemented PLC Time. Furthermore, the teacher explains, from their perspective, the evolution of the PLC Time at their campus.

*Researcher:* Ok. How is information shared with the staff here?

*Middle School Teacher 5:* Through faculty meetings; sometimes through email, sometimes through departments, and sometimes through our PLCs.

*Researcher:* Ok, tell me a little bit more about your PLC.

*Middle School Teacher 5:* Well our PLCs used to meet like once a week but it would be like our facilitator or principal coming in to talk about whatever the topic was and I guess it was more just providing information. I don't know, to me a PLC is that we're actually, I don't know, it would be not so much a topic as much as planning, or you know…

*Researcher:* How much time would you recommend to give to the PLC time?

*Middle School Teacher 5:* I think it depends on the goal. I think it depends on what you're wanting the PLC to do.

*Researcher:* How long have you been having PLC meetings?

*Middle School Teacher 5:* Two years, I think this is the second year.

*Researcher:* And what brought upon that change? Who initiated the PLCs?

*Middle School Teacher 5:* I think it came down from the district. I think it came down from superintendent, and said, you know…I think the previous principal, there was a lot of buzz words or things that would go and it was kind of like…previously, I don't know if there was a clear vision and clear mission so it was like kind of pulling a little bit from everywhere; let's try this, let's try that.

*Researcher:* And by that you're referring to the PLCs and basically things in general?
Middle School Teacher 5: Right.

Researcher: So were you ever given any type of training for your PLC?

Middle School Teacher 5: We did have a, during our staff development, that first year they came in and talked about like what a PLC would do, like how you establish your meeting rule. In other words, you will be there within five minutes of this, and that kind of... just about that.

Researcher: Who conducted that training?

Middle School Teacher 5: I want to say it was one of the district facilitators.

Researcher: Do you know which one?

Middle School Teacher 5: Maybe the one in charge of science.

Researcher: So basically your roll out for the PLCs were just that initial meeting on how to structure and then from there...

Middle School Teacher 5: It was like half a morning during our in-service days.

Researcher: Ok, and then after that have you had any follow through or anything like that?

Middle School Teacher 5: We just had, like I said, the facilitator would come in, she would talk about the (English Language Proficiency Standards), and then when they were trying to go through... sometimes it was on (Data Analysis Software) using the system to get scores, some RTI (Response To Intervention), and sometimes it was just a topic (Middle School Teacher 5, 1658-1735).

The next excerpt from Elementary Teacher 13 expresses how PLCs were introduced to the staff.

Researcher: Now, you mentioned that PLC time. Did you guys get any training or the implementation of PLC time, structure or anything like that?

Elementary Teacher 13: When they first introduced that label, PLC, there was an in-service training provided at the beginning of our school year to explain what it meant.

Researcher: Do you know who provided that training?

Elementary Teacher 13: I don't know if our principal did it; maybe our facilitator that between the principal and the facilitator they provided that training at the beginning of the school year. I don't remember if anyone came from the school district, like administration office to come and help us.
Researcher: So was it done locally here at the campus or was it done at the district level, in terms of the training?

Elementary Teacher 13: No, I think it was done here. I think they were trained, the principals and the facilitators, like before school started. They have in-service before we start and then we have in-service so I think they took what they had learned and then they were supposed to train us.

Researcher: Ok, and then after that, have you had any type of follow-up training?

Elementary Teacher 13: Every once in a while they'll do some little follow up training. (Elementary Teacher 13, 4075-4110).

In summary, the initiation phase of the change process (Fullan, 2007) consists of four critical success factors: linked to a high profile need; a clear model; a strong advocate; and, active initiation (Miles, 1986). Interview data indicate that central office did the following:

- central office linked the implementation of a PLC to a high profile need,
- outlined the PLC model as the improvement strategy,
- served as advocates for the change, and
- engaged staff in activities to implement the PLC.

Implementation

Implementation involves the first experiences of attempting to put an idea or reform into practice (Fullan, 2007). Implementation calls for the shift from the planning for project implementation to the experiencing and engaging in problem solving to continue progress (Fullan, 1989). Miles (1986) identified five success factors associated with the implementation phase of change: (1) orchestration, (2) shared control, (3) pressure and support, (4) technical assistance, and (5) rewards.

First, orchestration refers to the planned activities (Fullan, 1989; Miles, 1986) the district engaged in to initiate the implementation of a PLC. Interview data indicate that the district implemented a series of structures to engage the district in PLC work. The structures created included collaborative meetings (see Table 21 and 22) at the district and campus levels,
personnel positions to provide support at the district and campus levels (see Table 20), and staff development to build capacity at the teacher, campus administrator, and central office levels. Second, *shared control* refers to allowing different staff members to provide input on how the project implementation takes shape (Fullan, 1989; Miles, 1986). PLCA-R results indicate that Shared and Supportive Leadership had an overall mean score of 2.88 for all respondents (n=511). Mean scores for all respondents can be found in Table 9 on page 84.

PLCA-R items 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, and 11 focused on Shared and Supportive Leadership. Of the 11 items in this section, only item 11 had an overall mean score of 3.00 or above and all subgroups had a mean score of 3.00 or above. Table 32 presents the PLCA-R results for each of the 11 items focused on PLC Dimension 1.
Table 32

PLCA-R Mean Scores

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Elem Teachers</th>
<th>MS Teachers</th>
<th>HS Teachers</th>
<th>Campus Admin</th>
<th>Central Office</th>
<th>All</th>
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<td><strong>3.20</strong></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Note: Means Scores at or above 3.00 are bolded; Mean Score Range; 1.00-1.99= Strongly Disagree; 2.00-2.99= Disagree; 3.00-3.99= Agree; and 4.00-4.99= Strongly Agree.

*a* Item 1- Staff members are consistently involved in discussing and making decisions about most school issues; *b* Item 2- The principal incorporates advice from staff to make decisions; *c* Item 3- The staff have accessibility to key information; *d* Item 4- The principal is proactive and addresses areas where support is needed; *e* Item 5- Opportunities are provided for staff to initiate change; *f* Item 6- The principal shares responsibility and rewards for innovative actions; *g* Item 7- The principal participates democratically with staff sharing power and authority; *h* Item 8- Leadership is promoted and nurtured among staff; *i* Item 9- Decision-making takes place through committees and communication across grade and subject areas; *j* Item 10- Stakeholders assume shared responsibility and accountability for student learning without evidence of imposed power and authority; *k* Item 11- Staff members use multiple sources of data to make decisions about teaching and learning (Olivier & Hipp, 2010, p. 33).

Further analysis indicates that five subgroups had a 3.00 or above for item 11. Those subgroups are: elementary teachers (3.15); middle school teachers (3.29); high school teachers (3.20); campus administrators (3.29); and central office (3.00).

Interview data indicate that one elementary teacher, one high school teacher, one principal, and one central office administrator cited the use of different sources of data. The following are excerpts from interviews that support this finding:
A lot; sometimes we go over data especially like if they just…like the accelerated reader and (state assessment) testing. We do a lot of goal setting with accelerated reader so we talk about that. What are the kid's goals and are they meeting them? And if they've just tested DCA (District Curriculum Assessment), which are like our benchmarks; we go over those results and discuss all that. We do our timelines; we talk about our timelines (Elementary Teacher 12, 3513-3524).

Usually its test scores, so in the past it's been our unit exams. We keep all of our unit exams on (data analysis software) so we can analyze the data. We can look and we can see what concepts…it's usually pretty obvious with the data when you're looking at (data analysis software) and you can look and see…ok, all of the kids got these questions wrong, and you can look and you can see it usually has to do with one area. That will lead us to changing on how we do things. And then, we look secondarily at the state stuff like (state assessment), but it usually comes back the same every year for us. The (state assessment) test comes back with, you know, they have trouble with chemistry, they have trouble with the difficult part of biology, and so that usually tells us the same thing. Usually what we're doing, and we're doing this pretty good with two of my teams, one my the teams we're still working with…we're looking at the (data analysis software) and they're looking at the individual questions and seeing how those were presented and then going from there (High School Teacher 2, 657-685).

At the district we have the extravaganza where they try to meet the needs of all the campuses based on the data that we receive (Principal 1, 372-375).

…really as we've grown as a district to recognize that PLC development is not just something else we do, it's not an add on; It's our main strategy for school improvement. It's what we're all about because, you know, everything falls under that: there's the curriculum, there's the data piece, there's the accountability piece, so we use like the (incomprehensible) model; what do we expect students to know, and how do we know they're doing it, all of that good stuff all falls somewhere under that umbrella of a professional learning community (Central Office 2, 103-119).

Interview data focused on a central office administrator’s perspective on involving staff in decision-making follows:

…district this size not everybody can be at the table for every decision but we are gonna keep you involved and we are gonna have representation at the table and so that's one of the things that we've done. And we just get on a cycle like that so they're getting their updates; this is where we're at, this is what we're doing, and then we track what we say we're gonna do so we can stay on a timeline (Central Office 2, 591-602).

The following findings are excerpts from principals’ interviews in reference to decision-making at the campus and district levels.
A lot of times the curriculum decisions may come from the district level (Principal 2, 887-889).

Site-based decision teams, vertical teams, grade level teams; you have to establish those because if you don’t establish those then you make all the decisions yourself there’s not gonna be any buy in, but when it comes from them…and I’ll give you another example. Three weeks ago, we established those things for the next school year. Before I would assign them; you will serve on this, you will serve on that, because I knew what their strengths were. This year I said, you know what, you decide where you want to be at. All I require is that you are passionate, you are a voice for (SCLC Elementary School), and you have the best interest of students. Those are the three requirements. If you can fulfill those three requirements, then I expect you to be on two or more committees, and it went even better (Principal 1, 307-331).

I think that we have a good balance. I think that either one, one-hundred percent is not good. I think that we have the central office support and guidance in areas where it's needed, but then also as a campus we're given a lot of flexibility to make decisions based on what's best for our kids at our campus, so I kind of feel like we got a good mix (Principal 4, 1673-1679).

I feel like principals do have a very strong voice when it comes to making big district decisions and I think that, this is my third year as principal, but I do like we are heard when it comes to implementing certain things…do we want to, do we not want to, what is the cost benefit, and I feel like we have a good voice when it comes to big decisions we make (Principal 4, 1795-1805).

Similarly, high school teachers also voiced their opinions on shared decision-making at their respective schools. The following data are from the PLCA-R comments section for high school respondents.

We have a multiplicity of committees, but they seem more to distribute administrative tasks among the teaching staff than to give us any actual voice in decision-making (High School Teacher, 878-882).

Principal does not seem to invite teacher input. Many problems exist that can be fixed if principal asks for teacher input (High School Teacher, 885-888).

Middle School Teachers 1 and 2 illustrate their involvement in decision-making. This interview was conducted with both teachers at the same time. This arrangement was at their request due to scheduling. They both had conference at the same time, and were assigned to the same school.
**Researcher**: So if you were to rate your involvement in that decision-making between one and ten, how would you rate it?

**Middle School Teacher 1**: I’d rate it a one.

**Researcher**: A one?

**Middle School Teacher 1**: Probably less, probably a one is being generous. But from the principal level, I would rate it a five, maybe six. She tries her best to make adjustments.

**Middle School Teacher 2**: I’d say probably a two when it comes to the district level because they pretty much have that locked in, and see, under (superintendent) they had a whole bunch of curriculum specialist that they hired and then they made facilitators for all the schools now, and I know the one we have really works hard because she used to be a history teacher here, so she works hard. But some of the other[s] all they do is just take care of parties and like I say, some of these projects they come up with is to justify their own jobs. We had the teachers do this, we had this meeting, this is our professional communities learning type thing, then they have all the superintendents come in and say oh look at what they did and it’s all smoke and mirrors in that way (Middle School Teachers 1 and 2, 72-149).

The following interview excerpts are from the perspective of elementary teachers.

Even though our campus has a site based decision-making committee, members are afraid to voice their opinions (Elementary Teacher, 77-80)

Although committees are formed to discuss issues, the decisions of committees may be overturned by the principal. Key information that staff members proactively request was only available to facilitators, assistant principals or principals (Elementary Teacher, 95-101).

Most decisions are made by admin. When input is requested, we comply but our input is not included in the final draft. Instruction is state test-driven (Elementary Teacher, 140-144)!

Committees are in place to make decisions, but it truly doesn't work that way (Elementary Teacher, 128-130).

Elementary Teacher 5 explains how decisions are made at their campus.

**Researcher**: So let’s talk about here at the campus and then at the district. So from your perspective, how do decisions get made at the district level, and this is to your knowledge.
*Elementary Teacher 5:* Sometimes we just think that it’s just them that make up the decisions. I mean that they do not get any input, but I’m sure that there’s something that they go by— the administrators. It’s very rare that teachers have an input.

*Researcher:* How about here at the campus level, with your principal, how do decisions get made?

*Elementary Teacher 5:* It’s practically the administrators- the administration office.

*Researcher:* How would you rate your involvement in decision-making from first of all at the campus and then at the district level?

*Elementary Teacher 5:* Campus, if I was to rate it, between what?

*Researcher:* Let’s say one and ten.

*Elementary Teacher 5:* One and ten? Campus, maybe like a two.

*Researcher:* A two? Not being very high.

*Elementary Teacher 5:* Right. The district, I would keep it the same because I do not…

*Researcher:* Do you know of any other teacher that is involved or is it just across the board in decision-making?

*Elementary Teacher 5:* Here at the campus or the district?

*Researcher:* At the campus.

*Elementary Teacher 5:* Nope (Elementary Teacher 5, 5508-5545).

In summary, PLCA-R results indicated that Item 11 had an overall mean score of 3.20 and with all subgroups having mean scores for Item 11 of 3.00 or above. Further analysis indicates that *Dimension 1: Shared and Supportive Leadership* had an overall mean score of 2.88. Meanwhile, interview data indicate that 2 middle school teachers rated staff involvement in decision-making low, and 5 elementary teachers rated staff involvement in decision-making low.

Third, *pressure and support* refers to implementing strategies that force staff to implement change but at the same time is responsive to the differing needs of staff (Fullan, 1985,
Interview data indicate the superintendent and central office administrators reported the following:

…everything comes in to play with the fact that we have to be able to go at a rate of change that allows for it to not only catch but to become systemic and what we are about (Superintendent, 275-280).

I do not believe you can just say you are going to do PLC’s. I think you have to see the value of what that can bring and what that means to student achievement (Superintendent, 330-333).

It's a transformational journey now. Is everybody behind the initiative? Is everybody – was everybody sold on there from the onset. We had quite a barometer of it. We had, you know, we had a continuum where people were already doing it. It was just not called professional learning communities. People were already engaging in meaningful conversations. So there were some that were very far along in the process regardless of when we started. What we have done in the last few years is we formalized it and we said, ‘This is going to be an expectation and it's going to be a journey that we're going to get there.’ And so now, we are at the point in this District where we are focusing on what is happening in the PLCs not let’s create PLCs. And so, we've moved and we've progressed from let's create the PLC time to what is happening and how do we measure the success (Central Office 3, 913-948).

In summary, interview data indicate that the Superintendent and Central Office Administrator 3 commented on how they approached the implementation of change in the district.

Fourth, technical assistance refers to the utilization of staff and structures to provide support to build capacity (Fullan, 1989; Miles, 1986). Item 47 of the PLCA-R (see Appendix F) asks respondents to rate the expertise and support resource people provide for continuous learning (Olivier & Hipp, 2010). Table 33 presents the results from the PLCA-R.
Table 33

**PLCA-R Mean Scores for Item 47**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Elem Teachers</th>
<th>MS Teachers</th>
<th>HS Teachers</th>
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</tbody>
</table>

*Note: Means Scores at or above 3.00 are bolded; Mean Score Range; 1.00-1.99= Strongly Disagree; 2.00-2.99= Disagree; 3.00-3.99= Agree; and 4.00-4.99= Strongly Agree.*

*Item 47- Resource people provide expertise and support for continuous learning. (Olivier & Hipp, 2010, p. 35).*

In summary, PLCA-R data indicated that two subgroups had mean scores of 3.00 or above for Item 47. The two subgroups were *campus administrators* (3.29); and *central office* (3.20).

Fifth, *rewards* refer to establishing short term wins as the organization engages in change (Miles, 1986). Item 40 of the PLCA-R (see Appendix G) asks respondents to rate whether they agree that outstanding achievement is celebrated regularly at the school (Olivier & Hipp, 2010).

Table 34 presents the PLCA-R findings by subgroup.

Table 34

**PLCA-R Mean Scores for Item 40 by Subgroup**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
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*Note: Means Scores at or above 3.00 are bolded; Mean Score Range; 1.00-1.99= Strongly Disagree; 2.00-2.99= Disagree; 3.00-3.99= Agree; and 4.00-4.99= Strongly Agree.*

*Item 40- Outstanding achievement is recognized and celebrated regularly in our school (Olivier & Hipp, 2010, p. 34).*

PLCA-R results indicated the following mean scores: *middle school teachers* (3.12), *high school teachers* (3.22), *campus administrators* (3.43), and *overall* (3.07). In total, means for three subgroups and for overall respondents were at or above 3.00.
Interview data indicate that three teachers (an elementary, middle and high school teacher) reported informal celebrations were conducted at grade level meetings. The following are excerpts from those interviews that support this finding.

We discuss them sometimes in the conference room and sometimes in one of the classrooms where the grade levels meet, and we meet with the instructional facilitator. Sometimes it's the principal and the instructional facilitator and we all discuss what are our successes, what are we aiming for, where are we going; that sort of thing (Elementary Teacher 2, 1429-1438)

Well I know at every faculty meeting we have successes, and everybody stands up and says what they've had as success in between meetings (Middle School Teacher 3, 851-855).

Well that's all pretty much taken care of in our team meetings (High School Teacher 2, 1050-1051).

In summary, the implementation phase of the change process (Fullan, 2007) consists of five success factors: orchestration, shared control, pressure and support, technical assistance, and rewards (Miles, 1986). PLCA-R data indicate the following:

- Dimension 1: Shared and Supportive Leadership had an overall mean score of 2.88;
- Item 11 had an overall mean score of 3.20;
- All subgroups for item 11 had mean scores of 3.00 or above;
- Item 47 had overall mean score of 2.94
- Two subgroups had mean scores of 3.00 or above for item 47: campus administrators (3.29) and central office (3.20);
- Item 40 had an overall mean score of 3.07
- Three subgroups mean scores of 3.00 or above for item 40: middle school teachers (3.12), high school teachers (3.22), and campus administrators (3.43).

Interview data indicate:

- Superintendent and central office administrator commented on how they approached the implementation of change in the district;
- Two middle school teachers rated staff involvement in decision-making low; and
- Five elementary teachers rated staff involvement in decision-making low.
**Institutionalization**

*Institutionalization* refers to whether or not the change gets built in as an ongoing part of a system or culture (Fullan, 2007). Miles (1986) identified five critical success factors associated to the *institutionalization* phase of the change process. They are: (1) *embedding*, (2) *linked to instruction*, (3) *widespread use*, (4) *removal of competing priorities*, and (5) *continuing assistance*.

First, *embedding* refers to how the change effort has become a part of the district’s culture (Miles, 1986). Item 41 of the PLCA-R (see Appendix F) focuses on how staff members exhibit efforts to sustain and embed change into the culture of the school (Olivier & Hipp, 2010). Item 41 had an overall mean score of 2.83 (see Appendix F). Table 35 presents the means scores by subgroup for Item 41.

Table 35

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Elem Teachers</th>
<th>MS Teachers</th>
<th>HS Teachers</th>
<th>Campus Admin</th>
<th>Central Office</th>
<th>All</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>41</td>
<td>2.78</td>
<td>2.89</td>
<td>2.86</td>
<td><strong>3.14</strong></td>
<td>2.80</td>
<td>2.83</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note:* Means Scores at or above 3.00 are bolded; Mean Score Range; 1.00-1.99= Strongly Disagree; 2.00-2.99= Disagree; 3.00-3.99= Agree; and 4.00-4.99= Strongly Agree.

*a*Item 41- School staff and stakeholders exhibit a sustained and unified effort to embed change into the culture of the school (Olivier & Hipp, 2010, p. 34).

PLCA-R results indicated that the *campus administrator* subgroup was the only group with a mean score of 3.00 or above.

Interview data indicate that teachers understand the importance of change but nevertheless view it as a challenge for the district. The following are excerpts from teacher interviews.
Some people are very hard to change. They don't want it to be different. They want everything the same. Why should I have to change? But sometimes change is really good. You have to do it, and he sort of made it to where you don't have an option, you're gonna have to change. And you have to because the curriculum we teach has changed, the testing we do has changed. I mean everything in our job basically is completely different. Now, like for myself, I had a principal once who told me that the greatest quality a teacher could have is adaptability, because you're constantly gonna have to change (Elementary Teacher, 1, 586-602).

Well I feel like he is trying to bring South Central...living here, being born here, being raised here, South Central tends to kind of hold back on change (Elementary Teacher 2, 4411-4415).

I like the fact that he has brought on changes. I like the fact that he makes us go above and beyond, and he gives you that idea, that whole feeling of wanting to change and wanting to continue to learn. And I like the fact that he's bringing in new ideas like technology; something that scared a lot of people. All year I do science and I do math, so all year I had been doing BYOD, bring your own device, and that intimidated my grade level because it was like well how do you know they're not on Facebook, how do you know they're not on Instagram, it's like I told them that I trust them and because I'm monitoring and I like that he allows us to do things like that. Because I think that if it was just up to the teachers in the school, depending how old their teachers are; there's some campus that have teachers that don't want to consider even using technology because they here about oh, they're gonna be on Facebook, They're gonna be on this, they're gonna be texting their parents and they're like let's just avoid that problem by not letting anyone do it. And I'm glad that this man does encourage you to try things differently (Elementary Teacher 7, 7905-7937).

Well I think one of the challenges is getting so many schools in one school district to move forward. And I think one of the things we didn't have before, we didn't have PLCs, and now we do. I think it's hard to have so many people adjust to that change (Elementary Teacher 8, 1298-1305).

In summary, PLCA-R Item 41 had an overall mean score of 2.83; the campus administrator subgroup was the only group with a 3.00 or above (3.14) for this item. Interview data indicate that 4 elementary teachers shared that teachers understand the importance of change but nevertheless view it as a challenge for the district.

Second, linked to instruction refers to the change efforts’ impact on instruction (Miles, 1986). Item 33 of the PLCA-R (see Appendix F) refers to the staff members having the
opportunity to informally share ideas to improve student learning. Table 36 presents the findings for this item.

Table 36

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PLCA-R Mean Scores for Item 33</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Item</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Means Scores at or above 3.00 are bolded; Mean Score Range; 1.00-1.99= Strongly Disagree; 2.00-2.99= Disagree; 3.00-3.99= Agree; and 4.00-4.99= Strongly Agree.

*Item 33- Staff members informally share ideas and suggestions for improving student learning (Olivier & Hipp, 2010, p. 34).*

PLCA-R results indicate the four out of the five subgroups had a mean score of 3.00 and above. This item 33 had an overall mean score of 3.12 with four of the five subgroups generating mean scores of 3.00 or above.

In summary, PLCA-R results indicated that four out of the five subgroups mean scores of 3.00 or above for Item 33. This item had an overall mean score of 3.12 with four of the subgroups having mean scores of 3.00 or above: *elementary teachers* (3.08); *middle school teachers* (3.23); *high school teachers* (3.11); and *campus administrators* (3.21).

Third, *widespread use* refers to the use of the change efforts across the district (Fullan, 1989; Miles, 1986). In this study, indicators for this factor required evidence of district-wide implementation of a PLC. Interview data indicates that 38 out of 38 individuals interviewed knew the SCISD was implementing a PLC (See Table 3 p. 72). The following interview excerpts are from an elementary teacher, middle school teacher, high school teacher, campus administrator, central office, superintendent, and board member.

Elementary Teacher

The following is an excerpt from the interview with Elementary Teacher 5.
**Elementary Teacher 5:** Each PLC, each grade level meets once a week for forty-five minutes.

**Researcher:** They meet once a week. Who's involved in PLCs?

**Elementary Teacher 5:** The principal, assistant principal, facilitator, and classroom teachers.

**Researcher:** And to your knowledge what's discussed in these meetings?

**Elementary Teacher 5:** Data. They're intended to be a time where the teachers could plan for the week and collaborate plan, vertically align and things like that but it's become, at our school at least, from what the teachers are telling me, just looking at data; data, data, data, just going over that (Elementary Teacher 2585-2603).

**Middle School Teacher**

The following is an excerpt from the interview with Middle School Teacher 4.

**Researcher:** Ok, tell me a little bit more about your PLC.

**Middle School Teacher 4:** Well our PLCs used to meet like once a week but it would be like our facilitator or principal coming in to talk about whatever the topic was and I guess it was more just providing information. I don't know, to me a PLC is that we're actually, I don't know, it would be not so much a topic as much as planning, or you know…

**Researcher:** How much time would you recommend to give to the PLC time?

**Middle School Teacher 4:** I think it depends on the goal. I think it depends on what you're wanting the PLC to do.

**Researcher:** How long have you been having PLC meetings?

**Middle School Teacher 4:** Two years, I think this is the second year.

**Researcher:** And what brought upon that change? Who initiated the PLCs?

**Middle School Teacher 4:** I think it came down from the district. I think it came down from (superintendent), and said, you know…I think the previous principal, there was a lot of buzz words or things that would go and it was kind of like…previously, I don't know if there was a clear vision and clear mission so it was like kind of pulling a little bit from everywhere; let's try this, let's try that (Middle School Teacher 4, 1664-1698).

**High School Teacher**
…so he's made some structural changes there. And he's implemented PLCs, and there's
been more emphasis on that (High School Teacher 2, 573-576).

Campus Administrator

It (PLC Time) wasn’t immediately with the change in superintendent but it came shortly
thereafter. We kind of started with it at the district level with our South Central Learning
Community, the SCLC and then that kind of trickled down into that. Now instead of them
being called grade level meetings, they’re called PLC meetings (Principal 4, 2060-2068).

Central Office

During the interview Central Office 4 shared an experience that occurred while conducting
observations of PLC Times implementation,

I’m very impressed with our teachers. I’ll tell you one of the visits that we did I walked
into a sixth grade PLC Time and they had their data and it was a team of three but they
had their data and it was teachers. They looked at their data, they looked at their year at a
glance and collectively they said ‘wow you really did great on that how did you get your
kids to master that?’
…And these are real conversations that our teachers were having.
…And they looked at their timeline and they said you know these are the three, across all
of our classrooms; these are the three areas that our kids just aren’t getting. We need to
going back and reteach that (Central Office 4, 2813-2857).

Superintendent

At the district Level all divisions and departments operate as PLCs according to the
superintendent. So our divisions, even our division leaders, lead their employees or our
essential office staff, through Professional Learning Communities. Our deputy
superintendent for transformation leads through a PLC concept (Superintendent, 510-
519).

School Board Member

When our new superintendent came (superintendent’s name) and he began talking about
professional learning communities and PLCs. I think that frankly, all of the board
members were wondering just what is the superintendent talking about. So I made a
concerted effort to visit, to be in the room when some of the were taking place. So my
perspective is influenced by those visits and what I hear. We now talk about it so openly
and frequently.... My perspective of it is that it is a very intentional effort to involve
individuals from various levels and give me them the opportunity to work together
(School Board Member 1, 332-345).
Fourth, removal of competing priorities refers to the importance of the implementation of change effort in comparison to other initiatives in the district (Fullan, 1989; Miles, 1986). In the interview with Central Office 4, the administrator made reference to a one-page document outlining the district’s transformation journey for 2012-2015. (see Appendix M) A total of 17 initiatives were outlined in the one page document.

Fifth, continuing assistance refers to the district’s commitment to the success of the change efforts (Fullan, 1989; Miles, 1986). Interview data indicate that the district is committed to the implementation of a PLC. The following interview excerpt supports this finding.

…we stay away from the word ‘pilot’ in this District, because pilot means it's an opportunity to divorce yourself from the project after one year. Phasing is we've made a commitment and we're going to get to the point where it's full implementation. We're phasing it in allowing for people to come along in the journey (Central Office 3, 819-832).

The institutionalization phase of the change process (Fullan, 2007) consists of five success factors: (1) embedding, (2) linked to instruction, (3) widespread use, (4) removal of competing priorities, and (5) continuing assistance (Miles, 1986). PLCA-R data indicate that Item 41 (see Appendix F) had an overall mean score of 2.83 (see Table 35). In terms of change efforts being linked to instruction, PLCA-R Item 33 (see Appendix G) had an overall mean score of 3.12 (see Table 27).

The following section presents a summary of findings on the phases of change - initiation, implementation, and institutionalization (Fullan, 2007). The findings are presented by phase of change and evidence for each of the 14 critical success factors associated with the phases (Fullan, 1990; Miles, 1986).

Initiation

- (Linked to high profile needs) central office linked the implementation of a PLC to a high profile need; central office:
(A clear model) outlined the PLC model as the improvement strategy;  
(A strong advocate) served as advocates for the change; and  
(Active initiation) engaged staff in activities to implement the PLC.

Implementation

• (Orchestration) District implemented collaborative meetings (see Table 21 and 22) at the district and campus levels;  
• (Orchestration) Personnel positions to provide support at the district and campus levels were created (see Table 20);  
• (Orchestration) Staff development to build capacity at the teacher, campus administrator, and central office levels was organized and delivered;  
• (Shared Control) Item 11 had an overall mean score of 3.20;  
• (Shared Control) For Item 11, all subgroup had mean scores of 3.00 or above;  
• (Shared Control) Overall Dimension 1: Shared and Supportive Leadership had a mean score of 2.88;  
• (Shared Control) 2 middle school teachers rated staff involvement in decision-making low;  
• (Shared Control) 5 elementary teachers rated staff involvement in decision-making low;  
• (Pressure and Support) Superintendent and central office administrator commented on how they approached the implementation of change in the district;  
• (Technical Assistance) Item 47 had an overall mean score of 2.94;  
• (Technical Assistance) Item 47 had two subgroups with mean scores of 3.00 or above; campus administrators (3.29); and central office (3.20);  
• (Rewards) Item 40 had an overall mean score of 3.07;  
• (Rewards) Item 40 had 3 subgroups with mean scores of 3.00 or above; middle school teachers (3.12), high school teachers (3.22), and campus administrators (3.43); and  
• (Rewards) Interview data indicate that an elementary, middle and high school teacher reported that informal celebrations at grade level meetings were conducted.

Institutionalization

• (Embedding) PLCA-R Item 41 had an overall mean score of 2.83;  
• (Embedding) Campus administrator subgroup was the only group with a 3.00 or above (3.14) for item 41;  
• (Embedding) Interview data indicate that 4 elementary teachers reported that teachers understand the importance of change but nevertheless view it as a challenge for the district;  
• (Linked to Instruction) The overall mean score of 3.12 for Item 33;  
• (Linked to Instruction) PLCA-R results for Item 33 indicate four subgroups had mean scores of 3.00 or above; elementary teachers (3.08); middle school teachers (3.23); high school teachers (3.11); and campus administrators (3.21);
• (Widespread Use) Interview data report that staff members from the teacher, campus administrator and central office, and superintendent levels had knowledge of the district implementation of a PLC;
• (Removal of Competing Priorities) A total of 17 initiatives were outlined on the transformation journey; and
• (Continuing Assistance) Interview data indicate that the district is committed to the implementation of a PLC.

**Types of Change**

Wells and Feun (2007) frame change around two types of change; structural and cultural. Structural changes refer to the phenomenon occurring as new policies and programs are implemented as a part of school improvement efforts (Wells & Feun, 2007). On the other hand, cultural changes represent the deeper level of changes in human behavior within a school, such as a deeper analysis of how educators approach teaching and learning (Wells & Feun, 2007).

**Structural**

Structural changes refer to the phenomenon occurring as new policies and programs are implemented as a part of school improvement efforts (Wells & Feun, 2007). Structures refers to the systems used to allow staff members to come together to work and learn without infringing on their personal time (Hipp & Huffman, 2010b). *Structures* “include systems (i.e., communication and technology) and resources (i.e., personnel, facilities, time, fiscal, and materials) to enable staff to meet and examine practices and student outcomes (Hipp & Huffman, 2010c, p. 13).

PLCA-R results indicate that *Dimension 5: Supportive Conditions- Structures* had an overall mean score of 2.97 (see Table 8). There were two subgroups with mean scores of 3.00 or higher: *middle school teachers* (3.04), and *campus administrators* (3.23). Meanwhile, interview data indicate evidence of 12 structures established in SCISD. Table 37 illustrates each of the 12 structures followed by the type of change it represents.
Table 37

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Change</th>
<th>Tool and/or Structure</th>
<th>Type of Change</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SBDM</td>
<td>Structural</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PLC Meetings</td>
<td>Structural</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DEIC</td>
<td>Structural</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extravaganza</td>
<td>Structural</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Additional Support Personnel</td>
<td>Structural</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collaborative Meetings</td>
<td>Structural</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>System of Support</td>
<td>Structural</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Surveys</td>
<td>Structural</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OHI</td>
<td>Structural</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PLC Agenda</td>
<td>Structural</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assistant Principal Academies</td>
<td>Structural</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Principals’ Institute</td>
<td>Structural</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Cultural

The PLCA-R had two items pertaining to cultural changes. The following are the two items and their respective mean scores from the PLCA-R. Item 39 of the PLCA-R (see Appendix F) asks respondents to rate whether a culture of trust and respect exists to take risks (Olivier & Hipp, 2010). Item 41 of the PLCA-R (see Appendix G) asks whether or not staff members exhibit a sustained effort to embed change in the district’s culture (Olivier & Hipp, 2010).

Table 38 presents the mean scores related to items 39, and 41, respectively.

Table 38

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PLCA-R Mean Scores for Items 39 and 41</th>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Elem Teachers</th>
<th>MS Teachers</th>
<th>HS Teachers</th>
<th>Campus Admin</th>
<th>Central Office</th>
<th>All</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>39</td>
<td>2.85</td>
<td><strong>3.01</strong></td>
<td>2.93</td>
<td><strong>3.36</strong></td>
<td>2.60</td>
<td>2.92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>41</td>
<td>2.78</td>
<td>2.89</td>
<td>2.86</td>
<td><strong>3.14</strong></td>
<td>2.80</td>
<td>2.83</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Means Scores at or above 3.00 are bolded; Mean Score Range; 1.00-1.99=...
Strongly Disagree; 2.00-2.99= Disagree; 3.00-3.99= Agree; and 4.00-4.99= Strongly Agree.

\(^a\)Item 39- A culture of trust and respect exists for taking risks (Olivier & Hipp, 2010, p. 34). \(^b\)Item 41- School staff and stakeholders exhibit a sustained and unified effort to embed change into the culture of the school (Olivier & Hipp, 2010, p. 34).

PLCA-R results indicate that on Item 39 the following subgroups had mean scores of 3.00 or above: middle school teachers (3.01) and campus administrators (3.36). PLCA-R results for Item 41 indicate the following subgroup had a mean score of 3.00 or above: campus administrators (3.14).

The teacher interview protocol (see Appendix G) had one question that asked whether or not teachers felt supported by district administrators. Interview data indicate there were teachers that felt supported by the district and not campus administrators and vice versa. The question from the Teacher Interview Protocol (see Appendix H) is:

Do you feel that you are supported from the central office/campus administrators? Could you give me an example of how you are or are not supported (Ostmeyer, 2003)?

Interview data indicate there were teachers that did not feel supported from campus and district administrators. Table 39 summarizes the results.
### Teacher Perceptions of Support

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Role</th>
<th>District Admin.</th>
<th>Campus Admin.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Elementary Teacher 1</td>
<td>Supported</td>
<td>Supported</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elementary Teacher 2</td>
<td>Did Not Indicate</td>
<td>Did Not Indicate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elementary Teacher 3</td>
<td>Not Supported</td>
<td>Did Not Indicate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elementary Teacher 4</td>
<td>Not Supported</td>
<td>Not Supported</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elementary Teacher 5</td>
<td>Supported</td>
<td>Supported</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elementary Teacher 6</td>
<td>Supported</td>
<td>Did Not Indicate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elementary Teacher 7</td>
<td>Supported</td>
<td>Not Supported</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elementary Teacher 8</td>
<td>Supported</td>
<td>Supported</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elementary Teacher 9</td>
<td>Did Not Indicate</td>
<td>Did Not Indicate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elementary Teacher 10</td>
<td>Supported</td>
<td>Supported</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elementary Teacher 11-12</td>
<td>Did Not Indicate</td>
<td>Did Not Indicate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elementary Teacher 13</td>
<td>Supported</td>
<td>Supported</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elementary Teacher 14-15</td>
<td>Supported</td>
<td>Supported</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MS Teacher 1</td>
<td>Supported</td>
<td>Supported</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MS Teacher 2-3</td>
<td>Not Supported</td>
<td>Supported</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MS Teacher 4</td>
<td>Supported</td>
<td>Supported</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MS Teacher 5</td>
<td>Not Supported</td>
<td>Supported</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HS Teacher 1</td>
<td>Not Supported</td>
<td>Supported</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HS Teacher 2</td>
<td>Supported</td>
<td>Supported</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HS Teacher 3</td>
<td>Supported</td>
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<tr>
<td>HS Teacher 4</td>
<td>Supported</td>
<td>Supported</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HS Teacher 5</td>
<td>Did Not Indicate</td>
<td>Did Not Indicate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HS Teacher 6</td>
<td>Did Not Indicate</td>
<td>Did Not Indicate</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Interview data indicate that 8 of the 15 elementary teachers interviewed felt supported by district administration, and six felt supported by campus administrators. The following are excerpts from two elementary teachers’ interviews where they felt supported by district administration.

I think I feel a lot more supported by the district now that (superintendent) came in because years ago it was like we didn't exist. That's how we felt; we didn't exist in this district. If you heard about something, you were the last one to hear about it. You would see something in the paper; they wouldn't even ask us, they wouldn't include us, that's how we felt (Elementary Teacher 6, 6953-6963).

I think for the most part. I see them out in the real world, and they know you; some of them, they're making a point of being on campus and getting to know people better, and that's a good feeling, that they actually recognize you when you're out in the real world.
and not at school all the time. And you see each other, and they may not remember your name, but they kind of sort of remember where you work, and what you do, and that’s nice to know (Elementary Teacher 13, 4302-4315).

In the following excerpt from an interview with another elementary teacher, she did not feel supported after the campus had undergone a change in campus administration.

No. We've had a change and it just feels like all the rules that we had are gone (Elementary Teacher 7, 7834-7836).

Interview data indicate out of the five middle school teachers interviewed three did not feel supported by district administration, and five felt supported by campus administrators. The following is an excerpt from the interview with middle school teachers 1 and 2.

*Researcher:* Do you guys feel supported by your district administration?

*Middle School Teacher 2:* Our district administration? I would say it’s about fifty-five percent, maybe sixty percent. It’s hard to gauge when you talk about district because what we feel is from the principal, and see, and it filters down through her, you know, the hierarchy and all that stuff.

*Researcher:* So do you guys feel supported by your campus administration?

*Middle School Teacher 1:* Oh yea, no doubt.

*Middle School Teacher 2:* I mean, there are some things when it comes to discipline or some other things you find real quick, ok there’s some limitations because of what the district is doing, so they can’t help you in certain ways or certain things in that, so their hand[s] are as tied as ours are (Middle School Teachers 1 and 2, 472-492).

The teacher interview protocol (see Appendix H) had one question that asked whether or not teachers trusted administrators. Interview data indicate there were teachers that did not trust administrators. The question from the Teacher Interview Protocol (see Appendix H) is:

How is collegiality and trust built at the district/campus levels? (Ostmeyer, 2003)

Interview data indicate that four middle school teachers and one elementary teacher cited issues of trust.
Most of them, like in every group, there's campus administrators I don't trust (Middle School Teacher 1, 2396-2398).

I do not trust the principal because I think she holds grudges. I think if we were to say something she would go ahead and she would remember that (Elementary Teacher 6, 6953-6963).

Yea, there are administrators up there that I can disagree with. I mean, I can say, that's not right, and they don't think anything of it; they appreciate my opinion. They do what they have to do, and that's ok. Then there are administrators that you can't say anything to but a yes or a no sir. And those, they don't build teamwork (Middle School Teacher 1, 2406-2415).

Every teacher has been threatened in some sort of way. ‘I'll get even’ are usually the last words out [of] her mouth when we disagree with her. Dept heads come into my room to check my boards to make sure I have (State Standards) and Objectives written correctly! Or, to make sure I am teaching what they want me teach instead of what the data tells me to teach. If my results are not the same as hers then I am not teaching correctly. --Often my results are better than hers, but I am still in the wrong. I have received as many as 182 emails in a two-day period. Teacher meetings are all touchy/feely: no one talks to us about the issues (Data Analysis Software) has made data easy to access. EXCEPT we are not allowed to use that data. Our data is chosen; and we are told what to think and what to do. Even when we gather data and use it to show a problem, we come under criticism because that is not what admin wants us to do. I am told what to teach; how long to teach a topic; and sent to the principal's office when I try to teach what the data tells me my kids need. This administration is not about excellence; it is about being the boss - having the power (Middle School Teacher 2, 242-275).

The following excerpts from the PLCA-R comments section of a Middle School Teacher’s survey illustrates their lack of trust in both district and campus administrators.

Even though there is a lot of data out there on our students, (Middle School) teacher access is limited according to admin agenda. In our departments and in our teams, admin bring us situations that need solutions. We are given one choice; we are required to approve it. This is true even in our SBDM (Site-Based Decision-making) meeting. If we do not comply we are severely criticized and singled out for negative attention. Personally, I feel like (Middle School) and our school district [is] run by thugs with billy clubs (Middle School Teacher, 33-46).

In summary, PLCA-R results indicate that Dimension 5: Supportive Conditions-Structures had an overall mean score of 2.97. Further analysis indicates that interview data verify that the district has implemented 11 structures since the appointment of the current
superintendent (see Table 39). There were two items on the PLCA-R pertaining to culture; Item 39 had an overall mean score of 2.92, and Item 41 had an overall mean score of 2.83. Additionally, interview data indicate there were five out of the 26 teachers interviewed that did not feel supported by district administrators and two out of these 26 teachers did not feel supported by campus administrators.

**Summary of Findings for Question Two**

Research question two focused on how SCISD facilitated the change process. The findings for question two were framed around three different aspects associated with change; *principles of change* (Hall & Hord, 2011), *phases of change* (Fullan, 2007), and the different types of change (Wells & Feun, 2007).

*Principles of change*

The following is a summary of the major findings categorized by each of the *ten principles of change* (Hall & Hord, 2011).

**Change Principle 1** - Change is learning- It’s as simple and complicated as that

- Items 26, 28, 33, and 36 each had mean scores of 3.00 or above (see Table 24);
- Items 24, 25, and 27 each had mean scores below a 3.00 (see Table 24); and
- Interview data indicated the district implemented the extravaganza and collaborative meetings.

**Change Principle 2** - Change is a process, not an event

- Interview data indicated that, according to the superintendent, SCISD has been engaged in PLC work for 6 years; and
- District administrators and 4 elementary teachers have an understanding of change.

**Change Principle 3** - The school is the primary unit for change

- Item 38- Caring relationships exist among staff and students that are built on trust and respect (Olivier & Hipp, 2010, p. 34) had an overall mean score of 3.13.
- Four subgroups had mean scores of 3.00 or above on Item 38: *elementary teachers* (3.06), *middle school teachers* (3.20), *high school teachers* (3.17), and *campus administrators* (3.43).
- Item 50- Communication systems promote a flow of information among staff (Olivier & Hipp, 2010, p. 35) had an overall mean score of 3.01.
- Three subgroups had mean scores of 3.00 or above on Item 50: middle school teachers (3.10), high school teachers (3.00), and campus administrators (3.07)
- Interview data indicated the district created personnel positions to support teachers and campus administrators: deputy superintendent, associate principal, facilitator, and director for staff development.

Change Principle 4- Organizations adopt change- Individuals implement change

- Item 18- Policies and programs are aligned to the school’s vision (Olivier & Hipp, 2010, p. 33) had an overall mean score of 3.11.
- Four subgroups each had mean scores of 3.00 or above on Item 18: elementary teachers (3.08), middle school teachers (3.11), high school teachers (3.16), and campus administrators (3.50).
- Item 36- Individuals and teams have the opportunity to apply learning and share the results of their peers (Olivier & Hipp, 2010, p. 34) had an overall mean score of 3.10.
- Five subgroups each had mean scores with a 3.00 or above on Item 36: elementary teachers (3.14), middle school teachers (3.03), high school teachers (3.06), campus administrators (3.50), and central office (3.10).
- Interview data indicated the following staff members 2 elementary teachers, 1 middle school teacher, 1 high school teacher, 1 principal, and 1 central office administrator reported that staff members informally share ideas and have the opportunity to apply learning, and share results.

Change Principle 5- Interventions are the key to the success of the change process

- Interview data indicated the district implemented the following interventions throughout the district: structured conversations, a system of support, book reads, surveys, and the organizational health instrument (OHI).

Change Principle 6- Appropriate interventions reduce resistance to the change process

- Item 41- School staff and stakeholders exhibit a sustained and unified effort to embed change into the culture of the school (Olivier & Hipp, 2010, p. 34) had an overall mean score of 2.83.
- One subgroup had a mean score of 3.00 or above on Item 41: campus administrators (3.14).

Change Principle 7- Administrator leadership is essential to long term change success

- Interview data indicated that district administrators created and implemented two structures for current and upcoming principals: (1) assistant principal academies, and (2) principals’ institutes.
Change Principle 8- Facilitating change is a team effort

- Item 21 had an overall mean score of 3.12.
- Five subgroups each had mean scores of 3.00 or above on Item 21: elementary teachers (3.10), middle school teachers (3.15), high school teachers (3.11), campus administrators (3.43), and central office (3.00).
- Interview data indicated that only core teachers participated in the PLC meetings. Core teachers taught in the following subject areas: English Language Arts, Mathematics, Social Studies, and Science.

Change Principle 9- Mandates can work

- Interview data indicated district administrators used the term non-negotiable in lieu of issue mandates.

Change Principle 10- The context influences the process of learning and change

- Interview data indicated that the superintendent analyzed the district to determine a plan for moving the district through change.

Phases of change

The following is a summary of major findings of each phase of change - initiation, implementation, and institutionalization (Fullan, 2007). The findings are presented by phase of change and matched to each of the 14 critical success factors associated with the phases (Fullan, 1990; Miles, 1986).

Initiation

- (Linked to high profile needs) Central office linked the implementation of a PLC to a high profile need, when they:
- (A clear model) outlined the PLC model as the improvement strategy;
- (A strong advocate) served as advocates for the change; and
- (Active initiation) engaged staff in activities to implement the PLC.

Implementation

- (Orchestration) District implemented collaborative meetings (see Table 21 and 22) at the district and campus levels;
- (Orchestration) Personnel positions to provide support at the district and campus levels (see Table 20) were created;
- (Orchestration) Staff development to build capacity at the teacher, campus administrator, and central office levels was planned and delivered;
(Shared Control) Item 11 had an overall mean score of 3.20;
(Shared Control) All subgroups for Item 11 had mean scores of 3.00 or above;
(Shared Control) Overall Dimension 1: Shared and Supportive Leadership had an overall mean score of 2.88;
(Shared Control) 2 middle school teachers rated staff involvement in decision-making low;
(Shared Control) 5 elementary teachers rated staff involvement in decision-making low;
(Pressure and Support) Superintendent and central office administrator commented on how they approached the implementation of change in the district;
(Technical Assistance) Item 47 had an overall mean score of 2.94;
(Technical Assistance) Item 47 had two subgroups with mean scores of 3.00 or above: campus administrators (3.29); and central office (3.20);
(Rewards) Item 40 had an overall mean score of 3.07;
(Rewards) Item 40 had 3 subgroups each with mean scores of 3.00 or above: middle school teachers (3.12), high school teachers (3.22), and campus administrators (3.43); and
(Rewards) Interview data indicated that an elementary, middle and high school teacher reported that informal celebrations at grade level meetings were conducted.

Institutionalization

(Embedding) PLCA-R results for Item 41 had an overall mean score of 2.83;
(Embedding) Campus administrator subgroup was the only group with a mean score of 3.00 or above (3.14) for Item 41.
(Embedding) Interview data indicated that 4 elementary teachers shared that teachers understand the importance of change but nevertheless view it as a challenge for the district.
(Linked to Instruction) Item 33 had an overall mean score of 3.12.
(Linked to Instruction) PLCA-R results for Item 33 indicated four subgroups each had a mean score of 3.00 or above: elementary teachers (3.08); middle school teachers (3.23); high school teachers (3.11); and campus administrators (3.21).
(Widespread Use) Interview data showed that staff members from the teacher, campus administrator and central office, and superintendent levels had knowledge of the district implementation of a PLC.
(Removal of Competing Priorities) A total of 17 initiatives were outlined on the transformation journey.
(Continuing Assistance) Interview data suggested that the district is committed to the implementation of a PLC.

Types of change

The following is a summary of major findings on the types of change (Wells & Feun, 2007) implemented at SCISD. In summary, PLCA-R results indicated that Dimension 5:
Supportive Conditions-Structures had an overall mean score of 2.97. Further analysis indicated that interview data reveal that the district implemented 11 structures since the appointment of the current superintendent (see Table 39). There were two items pertaining to culture. Item 39 on the PLCA-R each had a mean score of 2.92, and Item 41 had a mean score of 2.83. Additionally, interview data showed there was five of the 26 teachers interviewed that did not feel supported by district administrators and two of the 26 teachers that did not feel supported by campus administrators. In the next section the findings for question three are presented.
Research Question Three

How has the implementation of a PLC influenced student achievement?

Question three examined how the implementation of a PLC influenced student achievement in the district. Huffman and Hipp (2003) contend that student achievement is not the focus of a PLC, but rather the result of teachers collaborating to improve student learning. Student achievement scores were examined from 2002-2013. The year 2007 served as a baseline year because the current superintendent was appointed in July of 2008. The superintendent engaged the district in PLC work after his appointment. The following sections examined student percent passing rates, enrollment numbers between grades 3-11, enrollment numbers for grades 3-11 by ethnicity, and the percent of students administered a state assessment. Table 40 presents state assessment passing rates by subject area at SCISD from 2003-2011.

Table 40

Percent passing rate by subject

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>R</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>W</th>
<th>SS</th>
<th>S</th>
<th>All</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2003</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>91</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>91</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

District change 2007-2011: +1, +9, +0, +8, +14, +6

Note: R - Reading; M - Mathematics; W - Writing; SS - Social Studies; S - Science, All - All subjects; Numbers in bold indicates PLC implementation years.


State Assessment results indicate that during the years 2007, 2008, 2009, 2010, and 2011 the following changes in student passing rates on state assessments were recorded: Reading/
Language Arts (+1), Mathematics (+9), Writing (+0), Social Studies (+8), Science (+14), and Overall (+6) (Texas Education Agency, 2007, 2008, 2009, 2010a, 2011).

Table 41 indicates the enrollment for grades 3-11 and the percent of students that were administered state assessments at SCISD during 2007, 2008, 2009, 2010, and 2011.

Table 41

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>All Students Grades 3-11</th>
<th>% All Students Tested</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>11,591</td>
<td>97.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>11,747</td>
<td>98.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>11,811</td>
<td>98.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>11,878</td>
<td>98.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>12,014</td>
<td>98.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

District change 2007-2011: +423 +1.4


Table 41 indicates that SCISD, during the years 2007, 2008, 2009, 2010, and 2011, the district had an increase in student enrollment of 423 students. Furthermore, the percentage of students administered a state assessment increased by 1.4%.

Table 42 indicates the enrollment changes for grades 3-11 from 2007-2011 categorized by ethnicity and economically disadvantaged.

Table 42

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>African American</th>
<th>Hispanic</th>
<th>White</th>
<th>Economically Disadvantaged</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>10,247</td>
<td>1,131</td>
<td>8,082</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>10,416</td>
<td>1,109</td>
<td>8,465</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>10,525</td>
<td>1,066</td>
<td>8,497</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>10,583</td>
<td>1,078</td>
<td>8,675</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>10,921</td>
<td>871</td>
<td>8,789</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

District change 2007-2011: +1 +674 -260 +707


Table 43 illustrates the percent of passing rates for state assessments by ethnicity; African-American, Hispanic, and White.

Table 43

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>All Students</th>
<th>African American</th>
<th>Hispanic</th>
<th>White</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>83</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

District change 2007-2011: +6 +6 +7 +1


Student achievement data indicate that passing rates for all students increased by 6% from 2007-2011. Further analysis indicates that the gap in passing rates between Hispanics (64%) and White (82%) students was 18% in 2007. In 2011 the gap in passing rates between Hispanics (71%) and White (83%) students had decreased by 6%.
Table 44

Table 44 presents the percent of passing on state assessments for economically disadvantaged and all students.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>All Students</th>
<th>Economically Disadvantaged</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

District change
2007-2011 +6 +7

State assessment data indicates that the economically disadvantaged group increased the percent of student’s passing the state assessment by 7% from 2007-2011.

New accountability system

In 2012 the state transitioned into a new accountability system for school districts. The new accountability system included the administration of a new state assessment focused on fewer standards, aligned to college readiness standards, and addressing broad and deep ideas (Texas Education Agency, 2010b).

Table 45 presents the passing rates for 2012 and 2013 by the subject areas of reading, mathematics, writing, social studies, and science.

Table 45

Percent passing on new state assessment by subject for all students

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>R</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>W</th>
<th>SS</th>
<th>S</th>
<th>All</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Difference</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>+3</td>
<td>-9</td>
<td>-6</td>
<td>-3</td>
<td>-1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: R - Reading; M - Mathematics; W - Writing; SS - Social Studies; S - Science, All - All subjects

(Texas Education Agency, 2012, 2013)
The difference in passing rates for all students is as follows; Reading/Language Arts (0), Mathematics (+3), Writing (-9), Social Studies (-6), Science (-3), and all subjects (-1).

Table 46 illustrates the passing rates under the new assessment by ethnicity for 2012 and 2013.

Table 46

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>All Students</th>
<th>African American</th>
<th>Hispanic</th>
<th>White</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Difference</td>
<td>-1</td>
<td>+4</td>
<td>-1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Texas Education Agency, 2012, 2013)

The difference in passing rates for all students and by ethnicity is as follows; all students (-1), African American (+4), Hispanics (-1), White (-1).

Summary of Findings for Question Three

Question three examined student achievement scores by subject area, ethnicity, economically disadvantaged, enrollment numbers, and the percent of students tested in 2007, 2008, 2009, 2010, 2011, 2012, and 2013. For comparison purposes 2007 data served as a baseline year because the superintendent was appointed in July of 2008. Another finding is that the district along with the rest of the state experienced a change in accountability system and the implementation of a more rigorous state assessment. The results for years 2012 and 2013 were presented separately in different tables.

Chapter Summary

This chapter identified findings from data collected for this case study of SCISD. The findings were organized by research question. Research question one outlined the findings from the data collected relevant to the five dimensions of a PLC. Research question two uncovered
how the district approached the change process. Research question three examined the impact PLC work had in student achievement.

Chapter 5 presents an overview of the study that consists of an introduction, statement of the problem, description of the study, and a summary of findings. The summary of findings is organized by research question. The conclusions and discussion sections presents conclusions derived from the findings. Implications for practice and recommendations for future studies are listed.
CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSIONS, DISCUSSION, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduction

The heart of this study was determining what influence SCISD’s transformation into a PLC had on the district’s culture. Changing culture or what Huffman and Hipp (2003) refers to as reculturing requires for districts to engage in activities that promote the development of the PLC. Activities may include common meeting times, addition of personnel to provide support to teachers and/or administrators, and staff development on instructional planning. For the purpose of this case study, the term PLC work referred to activities and/or actions taken by school district faculty and staff that supported the development of a PLC (Nelson, 2009). Defining this term is important because the data analysis uncovered actions and activities in which the district engaged as they worked to develop the PLC. Nelson (2009) examined the term PLC work and found that schools engage in activities that support, or stall the implementation of a PLC.

Chapter 5 presents the conclusions, discussion, and recommendations sections. The first section includes this introduction, statement of the problem, and a description of the study. The summary of findings section presents a review of the findings discussed in Chapter 4. The conclusion and discussion section presents the reader with the conclusions derived from the findings and connects to the literature on PLCs. The final two sections are the implications from this study and recommendations for future studies.

Statement of the Problem

As the idea and implementation of PLCs has spread, the original intent of creating communities of professionals coming together to work collaboratively for the benefit of improved student learning and achievement is rapidly being lost (DuFour, 2004; Hargreaves, 2007). Even though the term has gained notoriety within the field of education, it has veered
away from its original intent of creating cultures where teachers collaborate for the benefit of improving student learning (Hargreaves, 2007). PLCs are becoming add on programs where teachers meet for the sake of meeting (Hargreaves, 2007; Hord et al., 2010).

**Description of the Study**

The overarching question in this study was; what influence does the implementation of a PLC have in one school district’s culture. Therefore, data were gathered and analyzed to address the following sub-questions.

1. What dimensions of a PLC are evident in this school district?
2. How did South Central ISD (SCISD) facilitate the change process?
3. How has the implementation of a PLC influenced student achievement?

The methodology employed in this study was a Type 2 single-case study. *Sources of evidence* used in this case study were: (1) archival records, (2) interviews, (3) survey, (4) documents, and (5) direct observations (Yin, 2009).

The following is a synopsis of the data collected from the five different sources of evidence. First, the researcher collected archival records from the personnel office in SCISD to identify current staff members that had been employed for the past ten years. Other archival records used by the researcher were student achievement reports provided by the state education agency. Second, purposive samples of participants were selected for interviews. In total, 38 interviews were conducted. Interviews were conducted with 1 superintendent and 1 board member, 4 central office administrators, 6 principals, 15 elementary teachers (PK-5th), 5 middle school teachers (6th-8th), and 6 high school teachers (9th-12th). In total, 37 interviews were conducted in person at the staff members’ assigned campus and/or office, and one interview was conducted via phone.
Third, an online version of the Professional Learning Community Assessment-Revised (PLCA-R) was made available to all faculty and staff in SCISD. The PLCA-R is a questionnaire that measures staff perceptions of school practices related to the dimensions of a PLC (Olivier & Hipp, 2010). The tool has been tested and confirmed for internal consistency (Olivier & Hipp, 2010). The following are the Cronbach Alpha reliability coefficients for factored subscales (n=1209): Shared and Supportive Leadership (.94); Shared Values and Vision (.92); Collective Learning and Application (.91); Shared Personal Practice (.87); Supportive Conditions–Relationships (.82); Supportive Conditions–Structures (.88); and a one-factor solution (.97) (Cormier et al., 2009; Olivier & Hipp, 2010).

The PLCA-R measures the perceptions of staff as they relate to five dimensions of a PLC. Respondents use a 4-point scale to indicate the degree to which they agree or disagree with each statement (Olivier & Hipp, 2010). Dianne F. Olivier developed the online version of the PLCA-R. Access to the online version is available through an agreement with the Southwest Educational Development Laboratory (SEDL). Out of the 1401 participants offered the opportunity to complete the PLCA-R, 511 responded to the online survey, yielding a 38% response rate. Descriptive statistics were used to analyze PLCA-R results. According to (Olivier & Hipp, 2010), descriptive statistics is the preferred statistical method when analyzing data collected from the PLCA-R. Descriptive statistics allow researchers to summarize large amounts of data into a few indices in order to formulate conclusions about a given population. This statistical method uses measures of central tendency or average scores of a group of scores. The mean score is the most common measure of central tendency. Due to the manner in which it is computed, a mean score represents every participant’s score (Vogt, 2007).
In this case study, data sets were analyzed to determine mean sores for each dimension of a PLC. The results were organized into four categories; 1.00-1.99 (Strongly Disagree); 2.00-2.99 (Disagree); 3.00-3.99 (Agree); and 4.00-4.99 (Strongly Agree). According to SEDL (2010), a mean score of 3.00 or higher represents a general consensus with the dimension among respondents. Because all participants’ scores are included in the calculation of mean scores (Vogt, 2007), the researcher interpreted mean scores of 2.99 or 2.97 as close to becoming 3.00 thus, demonstrating a general consensus that a dimension is evident.

Fourth, documentation identified as relevant to answer the research questions was collected throughout the months of May-August 2013. Documents such as the campus improvement plans and the district improvement plans were reviewed. Other documents collected included emails, meeting agendas, and campus schedules.

Fifth, direct observations were conducted when the researcher visited the different schools around the district. During the observations, the researcher recorded notes and then converted them to fieldnotes (Emerson et al., 1995). The fieldnotes were then uploaded to Ethnograph 6.0 (E6) software and analyzed. E6 is data analysis software that assists researchers in compiling and organizing qualitative data.

Summary of Findings

This section presents a summary of findings based on data collected. The findings are presented by research question. Research question one identified which dimensions of a PLC are evident in the district (What dimensions of a PLC are evident in this school district?). The second research question focused on how the district facilitated the change process (How did South Central ISD (SCISD) facilitate the change process?). The third research question
examined what influence PLC work had on student achievement (How has the implementation of a PLC influenced student achievement?).

**Research Question One**

**What dimensions of a PLC are evident in this school district?**

Research question one uncovered how evident each dimension of a PLC was within the context of one school district. The researcher collected data using the PLCA-R and interviews to identify evidence related to each of the five dimensions of a PLC: (1) shared and supportive leadership; (2) shared values and vision; (3) collective learning and application; (4) shared personal practice; and (5) supportive conditions (Hord, 1997, 2004a). Two types of supportive conditions have been identified, i.e., relationships and structures (Hord, 2004a).

The summary of findings initially presents findings by dimension and then by a review of results overall. When referring to findings from the PLCA-R, the item number and mean score have been included. Olivier and Hipp (2010) designed the PLCA-R items to connect to each of the distinct dimensions.

- **Dimension 1: Shared and Supportive Leadership**
  - PLCA-R data indicate an overall mean score of 2.88 (see Table 9).
  - Two subgroups had mean scores of 3.00 or above; campus administrators (3.20) and middle school teachers (3.00).
  - Interview data indicate that each school has an SBDM process and the district has a DEIC.
  - Item 11 - Staff members use multiple sources of data to make decisions about teaching and learning – generated an overall mean score of 3.20.

- **Dimension 2: Shared Values and Vision**
  - PLCA-R data indicate an overall mean score of 2.99 (see Table 11).
  - Three subgroups had mean scores of 3.00 or above; campus administrators (3.40), middle school teachers (3.04), and high school teachers (3.00).
  - Item 14 - Staff members share visions for school improvement that have an undeviating focus on student learning – had an overall mean score of 3.02.
  - Item 15 - Decisions are made in alignment with the school’s values and vision – earned an overall mean score of 3.10.
o Item 18 - Policies and programs are aligned to the school’s vision – had an overall mean score of 3.11.
 o Item 20 - Data are used to prioritize actions to reach a shared vision – generated an overall mean score of 3.14.

- **Dimension 3: Collective Learning and Application**
  o PLCA-R data indicate an overall mean score of 3.06 (see Table 13).
  o Interview data indicate that elementary, middle and high school teachers believed the district provided an adequate staff development program.
  o Interview data indicate the district implemented the *Extravaganza* as a staff development structure.
  o Six subgroups had mean scores of 3.00 or above; all teachers, counselors, and librarians (3.05), campus administrators (3.34), elementary teachers (3.06), middle school teachers (3.12), high school teachers (3.01), and all respondents (3.06).
  o Item 21 - Staff members work together to seek knowledge, skills and strategies and apply this new learning to their work – had a mean score of 3.1.
  o Item 22 - Collegial relationships exist among staff members that reflect commitment to school improvement efforts – produced a mean score of 3.04.
  o Item 23 - Staff members plan and work together to search for solutions to address diverse student needs – generated a mean score of 3.12.
  o Item 26 - Professional development focuses on teaching and learning – received a mean score of 3.10.
  o Item 28 - School staff members are committed to programs that enhance learning – produced a mean score of 3.16.
  o Item 29 - Staff members collaboratively analyze multiple sources of data to assess the effectiveness of instructional practices – received a mean score of 3.14.
  o Item 30 - Staff members collaboratively analyze student work to improve teaching and learning had a mean score of 3.09.

- **Dimension 4: Shared Personal Practice**
  o PLCA-R data indicate an overall mean score of 2.90 (see Table 15).
  o One subgroup had a mean score of 3.00 or above; campus administrators (3.00).
  o Item 33 - Staff members informally share ideas and suggestions for improving student learning – received a mean score of 3.12.
  o Item 36 - Individual and teams have the opportunity to apply learning and share the results of their practices – had a mean score of 3.00.

- **Dimension 5: Supportive Conditions**
  o Relationships
    - PLCA-R data indicate a mean score of 2.99 (see Table 17).
    - Three subgroups had a mean score of 3.00 or above; campus administrators (3.30), middle school teachers (3.06), and high school teachers (3.04).
- Item 38 - Caring relationships exist among staff and students that are built on trust and respect – produced a mean score of 3.13.
- Item 40 - Outstanding achievement is recognized and celebrated regularly in our school – received a mean score of 3.07.
- Item 42 - Relationships among staff members support honest and respectful examination of data to enhance teaching and learning – earned a mean score of 3.01.

- **Structures**
  - PLCA-R data indicate an overall mean score of 2.97 (see Table 1).
  - Interview data indicate that the district implemented three forms of structures: fostered collaborative meetings, added personnel to provide support, and created a staff development structure.
  - Item 46 - Appropriate technology and instructional materials are available to staff – produced a mean score of 3.00.
  - Item 48 - The school facility is clean, attractive and inviting – received a mean score of 3.15.
  - Item 49 - The proximity of grade level and department personnel allows for ease in collaborating with colleagues – had a mean score of 3.05.
  - Item 50 - Communication systems promote a flow of information among staff – earned a mean score of 3.01.
  - Item 52 - Data are organized and made available to provide easy access to staff members - generated a mean score of 3.06.

- **Overall findings**
  - Campus administrators subgroup rated all dimensions a 3.00 or above.
  - Item 11 - Staff members use multiple sources of data to make decisions about teaching and learning – had a mean score of 3.20.
  - Item 20 - Data are used to prioritize actions to reach a shared vision – earned a mean score of 3.14.
  - Item 29 - Staff members collaboratively analyze multiple sources of data to assess the effectiveness of instructional practices – received a mean score of 3.14.
  - Item 41 - School staff and stakeholders exhibit a sustained and unified effort to embed change into the culture of the school – produced a mean score of 2.83.
  - Core teacher are the only participants in PLCs.

Therefore, data collected suggest that all five dimensions of a PLC were in the latter stages of development. The following presents the overall mean scores for all PLCA-R respondents:

- **Dimension 1 – Shared and Supportive Leadership (2.88)**

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• Dimension 2 - Shared Values and Vision (2.99)
• Dimension 3 - Collective Learning and Application (3.06)
• Dimension 4 – Shared Personal Practice (2.90)
• Dimension 5 – Supportive Conditions
  • Relationships (2.99)
  • Structures (2.97)

Dimension 3 was the only dimension with a mean score of 3.00 or above, thus indicating a general consensus of this dimension. Survey data indicates that Dimensions 1, 2, 4, and 5 are in the latter stages of development.
Research Question Two

How did South Central ISD (SCISD) facilitate the change process?

Research question two presents the findings on how the district facilitated the change process. The findings for question two were framed around three aspects associated with change: (1) principles of change (Hall & Hord, 2011), (2) phases of change (Fullan, 2007), and (3) the different types of change (Wells & Feun, 2007). First, the researcher identified what principles of change (Hall & Hord, 2011) were evident. These principles are founded on the Hall and Hord’s (2011) longitudinal research agenda. Second, data collected were analyzed to determine what phase of the change process described the current state of the district. The phases of change is based on the work of Fullan (2007). Third, the researcher uncovered the types of change, based on the work of Wells and Feun (2007), the district implemented in order to facilitate the change process.

Principles of Change

First, this is the presentation of findings relevant to the principles of change outlined in Hall and Hord (2011). Table 2 lists the ten principles.
The following is the summary of findings relevant to the *principles of change* (Hall & Hord, 2011). The PLCA-R results and interview data were examined to answer research question two. Specifically, the researcher examined each PLCA-R item, identified key words associated with each *principle of change* (Hall & Hord, 2011), and matched PLCA-R items with their corresponding *change principle*. For example, item 26 states “professional development focuses on teaching and learning” (Olivier & Hipp, 2010, p. 34). Because this item asks respondents to rate whether the district’s staff development program focuses on teaching and learning, it matches change principle one which states that change is about learning. Interview data were also examined to identify which change principles are evident. When referring to findings from the PLCA-R, the item number and mean score have been included.

*Principles of Change*

- Change Principle 1: Change is learning- It’s as simple and complicated as that.
  - Item 24. A variety of opportunities and structures exist for collective learning through open dialogue (2.96 overall mean score).

(Hall & Hord, 2011, p. iv)
o Item 25. The staff engage in dialogue that reflects a respect for diverse ideas that lead to continued inquiry (2.99 overall mean score).

o Item 26. Professional development focuses on teaching and learning (3.10 overall mean score).

o Item 27. School staff and stakeholders learn together and apply new knowledge to solve problems (2.88 overall mean score).

o Item 28. School staff is committed to programs that enhance learning (3.16 overall mean score).

o Item 33. Staff members informally share ideas and suggestions for improving student learning (3.12 overall mean score).

o Item 36. Individuals and teams have the opportunity to apply learning and share the results of their practices (3.00 overall mean score).

o District implemented the extravaganza

o District established collaborative meetings (SCLC, counselor meetings, librarian meetings, principals’ meetings, grade level meetings, and LASER Teams).

- Change Principle 2: Change is a process, not an event.
  o Superintendent acknowledged in interview that change is a process.
  o Central office administrators 2 and 3 implied understanding that change is a process.
  o 4 Elementary teachers acknowledged in interviews that change is a process.

- Change Principle 3: The school is the primary unit for change.
  o Item 38. Caring relationships exist among staff and students that are built on trust and respect (3.13 overall mean score).
  o Item 47. Resource people provide expertise and support for continuous learning (2.94 overall mean score).
  o Item 50. Communication systems promote a flow of information among staff (3.01 overall mean score).
  o Central office added and/or repurposed positions to provide support (deputy superintendent, associate principal, facilitator, director for staff development).

- Change Principle 4: Organizations adopt change- Individuals implement change.
  o Item 18. Policies and programs are aligned to the school’s vision (3.11 overall mean score).
  o Item 36. Individuals and teams have the opportunity to apply learning and share the results of their practice (3.00 overall mean score).

- Change Principle 5: Interventions are the key to the success of the change process.
  o Interview data indicate that central office implemented interventions to assist in change.
Central office structures the type of conversations teachers and staff have in PLC meetings.

- Central office implemented a system of support (extravaganza, collaborative meetings, and added support personnel).
- District implemented book reads.
- District used locally developed survey to get input from stakeholders.
- In 2013, district administered the Organizational Health Instrument (OHI).

- Change Principle 6: Appropriate interventions reduce resistance to the change process.
  - Item 41. School staff and stakeholders exhibit a sustained and unified effort to embed change into the culture of the school (2.83 overall mean score).
  - Central office administrators were aware of resistance to engaging in change.

- Change Principle 7: Administrator leadership is essential to long term change success.
  - District implemented Principal and Assistant Principal Academies to build capacity.

- Change Principle 8: Facilitating change is a team effort.
  - Item 21. Staff members work together to seek knowledge, skills and strategies and apply this new learning to their work (3.12 overall mean score).
  - PLC membership only consists of core teachers.

- Change Principle 9: Mandates can work.
  - Central office administrators created a need for change before making participation in PLCs a non-negotiable.

- Change Principle 10: The context influences the process of learning and change.
  - Superintendent was aware of the context of district before formulating entry plan (Hall & Hord, 2011, p. iv; Olivier & Hipp, 2010, pp. 33-35).

**Phases of Change**

Second, this section presents the findings relevant to the phases of change (Fullan, 2007). Fullan (2007) identified three broad phases to the change process: *initiation, implementation*, and *institutionalization*. *Initiation* consists of the process that leads to and includes a decision to adopt or proceed with a change (Fullan, 2007). *Implementation* involves the first experiences of
attempting to put an idea or reform into practice (Fullan, 2007). *Institutionalization* refers to whether the change gets built in as an ongoing part of a system or disappears by way of a decision to discard or through attrition (Fullan, 2007). Fullan (1990) cited 14 success factors across the three *phases of change*. The 14 success factors are based on the work of Miles (1986). Table 30 presents the 14 success factors associated with the *phases of change* (Fullan, 1990; Miles, 1986).

Table 30

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Phases of change</th>
<th>Initiation</th>
<th>Implementation</th>
<th>Institutionalization</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Linked to high profile needs</td>
<td>1. Orchestration</td>
<td>1. Embedding</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. A clear model</td>
<td>2. Shared control</td>
<td>2. Linked to instruction</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Strong advocate</td>
<td>3. Pressure and support</td>
<td>3. Widespread use</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5. Rewards</td>
<td>5. Continuing assistance</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Miles, 1986)

The following is a summary of findings from this study on the *phases of change*: initiation, implementation, and institutionalization.

**Initiation**

Data gathered provided evidence for 4 out of 4 success factors at the initiation phase.

1. Linked to high profile needs
   a) Central office linked the implementation of a PLC to a high profile need
   b) Superintendent and central office wanted to ensure changes were ingrained in the district’s culture
2. A clear model
   a) Superintendent and central office administrators indicated that PLC was their school improvement strategy.
3. Strong advocate
   a) Superintendent and central office administrators were strong advocates for the implementation of the PLC.
4. Active initiation
   a) Superintendent and central office administration engaged the district in activities to initiate the PLC (PLC Meetings, hired support staff, conducted book readings).
Implementation

Data gathered provided evidence for 5 out of 5 success factors at the implementation phase.

1. Orchestration
   a) The district implemented structures (collaborative meetings, staff development, and hired support personnel).

2. Shared control
   a) 2.88 was the mean score for all respondents in Dimension 1 – Shared and Supportive Leadership.
   b) Middle school teachers (3.00) and campus administrators (3.20) were the two subgroups with a 3.00 or above.

3. Pressure and support
   a) Superintendent and central office administrators used positive pressure to engage stakeholders in PLC work.

4. Technical assistance
   a) Item 47- Resource people provide expertise and support for continuous learning (2.94 overall mean score).
   b) Superintendent created system of support.

5. Rewards
   a) Item 40- Outstanding achievement is recognized and celebrated regularly in our school (3.07 overall mean score).

Institutionalization

Data gathered provided evidence for 4 out of 5 success factors at the institutionalization phase: linked to instruction, widespread use, and continuing assistance.

1. Embedding
   a. Item 41- School staff and stakeholders exhibit a sustained and unified effort to embed change into the culture of the school (2.83 overall mean score).
   b. Interview data indicate that 4 elementary teachers reported that teachers understand the importance of change but nevertheless view it as a challenge for the district.

2. Linked to instruction
   a. Item 33- Staff members informally share ideas and suggestions for improving student learning (3.12 overall mean score).

3. Widespread use
   a. Interview data report that staff members from the teacher, campus administrator and central office, superintendent, and school board levels had knowledge of the district implementation of a PLC.

4. Removal of competing priorities
   a. Documentation provided by central office 4 indicates that PLC implementation is 1 of 17 active initiatives in the district.
5. Continuing assistance
   a. Interview data indicate that the district is committed to the implementation of a PLC.

**Types of Change**

The last analysis for research question two focused on the types of change indicated in the finding from this study (Wells & Feun, 2007). Wells and Feun (2007) frame change around two types of change, i.e., structural and cultural. Structural changes refer to the phenomenon occurring as new policies and programs are implemented as part of school improvement efforts (Wells & Feun, 2007). On the other hand, cultural changes represent the deeper level changes in human behavior within a school, such as a deeper analysis of how educators approach teaching and learning (Wells & Feun, 2007). Table 37 illustrates a list of tools and/or structures established in SCISD and includes the type of change each represents.

Table 37

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tool and/or Structure</th>
<th>Type of Change</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SBDM</td>
<td>Structural</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PLC Meetings</td>
<td>Structural</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DEIC</td>
<td>Structural</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extravaganza</td>
<td>Structural</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Additional Support Personnel</td>
<td>Structural</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All Collaborative Team Meetings</td>
<td>Structural</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>System of Support</td>
<td>Structural</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Surveys</td>
<td>Structural</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OHI</td>
<td>Structural</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PLC Agenda</td>
<td>Structural</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Principal’s Institute</td>
<td>Structural</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assistant Principal Academies</td>
<td>Structural</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Structural Changes
  - 12 structural changes were implemented.

- Cultural Changes
  - Only middle school teachers and campus administrators (agreed) there was a culture of trust and respect
Only campus administrators (agreed) there is a sustained effort to embed change into the district’s culture
- 8 out of 15 elementary teachers felt supported by district administrators
- 6 out of 15 elementary teachers felt supported by campus administrators
- 3 out of 5 middle school teachers felt supported by district administrators
- 5 out of 5 middle school teachers felt supported by campus administrators
- 3 out of 6 high school teachers felt supported by district administrators
- 4 out of 6 high school teachers felt supported by campus administrators

In summary, research question two was addressed through the findings on how the district facilitated the change process. The findings for question two were organized around three frameworks: (1) principles of change (Hall & Hord, 2011), (2) phases of change (Fullan, 2007), and (3) the different types of change (Wells & Feun, 2007). Each framework is essential in examining how the SCISD facilitated the change process.

First, the researcher identified evidence for each of the ten principles of change (Hall & Hord, 2011). Collectively these principles represent predictable aspects of change that have been observed repeatedly throughout Hall and Hord’s research agenda on change (Hall & Hord, 2011). Finding evidence of each of these principles further supports the point made by Evans et al. (2012) suggesting that “a firm grounding in change theory can provide educational leaders with an opportunity to orchestrate meaningful organizational improvements” (p.154).

Second, data collected were analyzed to determine what phase of the change process describes the current state of the district. The phases of change is based on the work of Fullan (2007). Data gathered suggest that 4 out of 4 success factors at the initiation phase are evident, and 5 out of 5 success factors at the implementation phase are evident. Additionally, data gathered suggest that only 4 out of 5 success factors at the institutionalization phase are evident. The three success factors in evidence for this phase were: linked to instruction, widespread use, and continuing assistance.
Third, the data gathered in this study uncovered two types of changes; structural and cultural. First, according to Wells and Feun (2007) structural changes represent changes to policies and/or practices. Cuban (1990) refers to this type of change as first-order changes. In this case study interview data found that SCISD administration implemented 12 district and campus level structural changes across the district to facilitate the change process.

Second, Wells and Feun (2007) indicate that cultural changes represent the deeper level changes in human behavior within a school, such as a deeper analysis of how educators approach teaching and learning. Cuban (1990) identified second-order change, as change that alters the way that an organization is put organized and new goals, structures, and roles, and transforms familiar ways of performing duties into novel solutions. Data collected disclosed 12 different structural changes that served as the vehicle for change in the district’s culture to one that supports culture of collaboration and culture of learning (see conclusion 4, p. 294-299).
Research Question Three

How has the implementation of a PLC influenced student achievement?

Research question three examined how the implementation of a PLC influenced student achievement in the district. The following is summary of data collected during the research study is based on the review of archival data.

- In 2012 the district transitioned into a new accountability system that incorporated a more rigorous state assessment.
- From 2007-2011 enrollment increased by 423 students and student participation on the state assessments increased by 1.4%.
- From 2007-2011 the Hispanic population in the district increased by 674 students.
- From 2007-2011 the economically disadvantaged population increased by 707 students.
- From 2007-2011 passing rates increased among Hispanic (7%), African American (6%), and Economically Disadvantaged (7%) student populations.

In summary, changes noted to student achievement scores from 2007-2011. State assessment results indicate a 6% increase in passing rates among all demographics from 2007-2011. Archival data suggest an increase in passing rates in the following demographic groups: Hispanic (+7%), African American (+6%), and economically disadvantaged students (+7%), respectively. Furthermore, archival data indicates SCISD experienced an increase of 423 students in district enrollment from 2007-2011. In 2012, the district transitioned through a change in standardized assessments and a new state accountability system. Throughout the change in state assessment and accountability systems, SCISD met state accountability requirements under both systems.
Conclusions and Discussion

This section presents the conclusions and discussion based on data collected and presented by research question. Research question one identified which dimensions of a PLC are evident in the district (What dimensions of a PLC are evident in this school district?). The second research question focused on how the district facilitated the change process (How did South Central ISD (SCISD) facilitate the change process?). The third research question examined what influence PLC work had on student achievement (How has the implementation of a PLC influenced student achievement?). Finally, the overarching question examines what influence the implementation of a PLC had in the school district’s culture (What influence does the implementation of a PLC have in one school district’s culture?).
Research Question One
What dimensions of a PLC are evident in this school district?

Conclusion 1
PLC work influenced the development of Hord’s 5 dimensions of a PLC to varying degrees.

Research question one aimed at finding what dimensions of a PLC exist within the school district’s culture. Data from the PLCA-R were used to identify each of the five dimensions evident in a PLC. Figure 5.1 is a representation of data collected from the PLCA-R.

Figure 5.1

![Mean Scores by Dimension](image)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dimension</th>
<th>Mean Score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Shared and Supportive Leadership</td>
<td>2.88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shared Values and Vision</td>
<td>2.99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collective Learning and Application</td>
<td>3.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shared Personal Practice</td>
<td>2.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supportive Conditions - Relationships</td>
<td>2.99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supportive Conditions - Structures</td>
<td>2.97</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Mean Score Range; 1.00-1.99= Strongly Disagree; 2.00-2.99= Disagree; 3.00-3.99= Agree; and 4.00-4.99 Strongly Agree.

Respondents used a 4 point scale to indicate the degree to which they agree or disagree with each statement. Data sets were analyzed to determine mean scores for each dimension. The results were sorted into four categories; 1.00-1.99 (Strongly Disagree); 2.00-2.99 (Disagree); 3.00-3.99 (Agree); and, 4.00-4.99 (Strongly Agree). According to SEDL (2010) a mean score of
3.00 or higher represents a general consensus with the dimension. Because participants’ scores are included in the calculation of mean scores, mean scores of 2.99 or 2.97 as in this case study, are close to becoming 3.00 (Vogt, 2007). Thus, the researcher can interpret mean scores of 2.99 and 2.97 as close to demonstrating a general consensus that the dimension is evident.

Data collected from interviews and documents suggests that PLC work influenced the development of each dimension of a PLC at SCISD to varying degrees. The term PLC work refers to activities and/or actions taken by school district faculty and staff that support the development of a PLC (Nelson, 2009). Examples of PLC work in SCISD included: collaborative meetings, staff development structures, and added support personnel.

The following presents the conclusions and discussion for each of the five dimensions of a PLC. To support conclusions, data from the PLCA-R are presented in parenthesis. The following pieces of information are included: (item number(s); subgroup(s); and mean score). The subgroups include: all teachers, counselors, and librarians (n=489); elementary teachers (n=262); middle school teachers (n=110); high school teachers (n=121); campus administrators (n=14); central office (n=5); and all (n=511). Interview data and documents are used to support the PLCA-R findings

**Dimension 1: Shared and supportive leadership**

Dimension 1, Shared and Supportive Leadership, had an overall mean score of 2.88. This dimension had the lowest mean score. This finding suggests there is a lack of consistency across the district and campuses with regards to shared leadership. Data collected revealed two major findings; (1) issues with shared leadership, (2) and widespread use of site-based decision-making (SBDM).
First, survey data suggested there was a lack of shared decision-making at the campus level, and interview data revealed that 31% of the teachers interviewed believed that decisions at the campus level were made with little teacher input (item 1; all respondents; 2.79) (Olivier & Hipp, 2010, p. 32). Survey findings also suggested central office administrators, k-12 teachers counselors and librarians, and campus administrators felt that not all principals shared power and authority (item 7; all respondents; 2.73) (Olivier & Hipp, 2010, p. 32). Findings suggest the district encountered issues on shared leadership at the principal level during the implementation of a PLC.

The literature on shared leadership contends that the landscape of leadership has drastically changed and it is no longer enough for building principals to be managers; they must be willing and able to embrace shared leadership (Horton & Martin, 2013). Without principals being willing to surrender their power and engage in leadership that involves staff input and the sharing of power and authority, there is no PLC (Hord, 2004a). Moller (2006) found that the ability of the principal to provide supportive conditions to encourage shared decision making was a major factor in the development of a PLC.

Second, data collected evidenced widespread use of site-based decision making (SBDM) at the campus and district levels. Interview data revealed that the superintendent acknowledged the use of SBDM’s had been deeply rooted in the school district’s culture even before he was hired as the superintendent. Huffman (2003a) stated that the implementation of SBDM’s can vary and is contingent on the principals’ understanding of the concept.

These findings present a dichotomy. On one end, interview data revealed evidence of active SBDMs across the district. The literature on SBDMs indicates they are structures that promote shared leadership (Huffman, 2003a). On the other end, the PLCA-R survey data
suggest that only middle school teachers (items 1-11; middle school teachers; 3.00) and campus administrators (items 1-11; campus administrators; 3.20) agreed that shared and supportive leadership was a common practice in the district (Olivier & Hipp, 2010, p. 32). Thus, central office (n=5), elementary teachers (n=262), and high school teachers (n=121) disagreed that principals shared power. In total, 76% of the 511 survey respondents disagreed that principals shared power. Therefore, this finding suggests there is a lack of consistency across the district and campuses with regards to shared leadership at the principal level. Eaker et al. (2002) suggests that how teachers are viewed is a cultural shift that takes place as organizations engage in PLC work. In traditional schools, administrators are viewed as being in leadership positions and teachers are considered the followers (Eaker et al., 2002). This is a crucial finding in the development of shared leadership in the district because the literature on shared leadership indicates that the principal plays a key role in its development (Hipp & Huffman, 2010b).

**Dimension 2: Shared values and vision**

Survey data collected revealed that the second dimension, Shared Values and Vision had a mean score of 2.99. Interview data indicated that teachers and administrators could not recite the school district’s mission and vision verbatim, but they knew where to find it and cited activities associated with its revision. Survey data indicated the following:

- Item 14. Staff members share visions for school improvement that have an undeviating focus on student learning (3.02 mean score for all respondents).

- Item 15. Decisions are made in alignment with the school’s values and vision (3.10 mean score for all respondents).

- Item 18. Policies and programs are aligned to the school’s vision (3.11 mean score for all respondents).

- Item 20. Data are used to prioritize actions to reach a shared vision (3.14 mean score for all respondents) (Olivier & Hipp, 2010, p. 32).
Thus, data collected demonstrate that teachers, staff, and administrators in SCISD have created a school vision based on common values and beliefs (Huffman & Hipp, 2003). Even though teachers, staff, and administrators could not recite the school district’s vision statement, their focus on and understanding of the district’s vision for PLC implementation was evident. For example, teachers noted the following in interviews:

They have a committee that goes in and works on that. It’s made up of people from the community, students from the high school, parents, teachers, school board members, and the superintendent staff. And they all work on that together; it’s collaborative. And then they bring it to the district committee, which is us, and we look at it and give our input on…that’s great or maybe we need to change this (Elementary Teacher 1, 771-783).

Together as a campus. We developed our vision statement and we developed our mission statement (Elementary Teacher 8, 1380-1383).

The literature argues that a shared vision is not a statement that lies on a piece of paper on the wall or a declared endeavor by the school leader; it is a collective effort that takes time to develop (Hipp & Huffman, 2010b; Huffman & Hipp, 2003). DuFour and Eaker (1998) further notes that the difference between an ordinary school and a PLC is its collective commitment to a shared vision. Furthermore, this shared vision is “embedded in the hearts and minds of people throughout the school” (DuFour & Eaker, 1998, p. 25).

**Dimension 3: Collective learning and application**

The third PLC dimension, Collective Learning and Application was the dimension most evident with a mean score of 3.06. Data analyzed uncovered staff learning as a central theme in the district’s change efforts. These efforts were evident from the classroom to the superintendent’s office. Fullan (2007) asserts that in implementing change one should assume that a lack of capacity is the initial problem. Operating from this standpoint, the superintendent assumed that building capacity amongst all staff across the district should begin the change
efforts. Thus, the district implemented the following collaborative and staff development structures: (1) extravaganza and (2) collaborative meetings.

1) The Extravaganza

SCISD implemented a district-wide event called the Extravaganza across to promote teacher learning and application. The Extravaganza is an annual event. The Extravaganza, as a structure, provides opportunities for teachers within the district to present on successful teaching strategies and for attendees to choose which session(s) to attend. Central office personnel put the schedule together and approve sessions to be presented. The structure is similar to that of educational conferences. Interview data suggest that teachers found the extravaganza beneficial to their professional development.

…we have an extravaganza day, in the past it's been in the fall; Columbus Day, it was that Monday and we have an in-service day and everyone went to classes that they picked from a list. You would go online and you would pick the courses that you wanted. They gave you a list of everything that was available, or you looked online as to what you wanted to do (Elementary Teacher 13, 4180-4191).

In the years past, we’ve been sent to a lot of in-services, but now the in-services are held inside the school district and they’re held by teachers who have worked a good idea and very successful with it. And those are very informative (Middle School Teacher 3, 1452-1460).

We decide which ones we want to attend. Everybody decides which one they want to attend, but mostly everybody sticks to their content area (High School Teacher 5, 271-275).

At the district we have the extravaganza where they try to meet the needs of all the campuses based on the data they we receive (Principal 1, 372-375).

These excerpts from teacher and principal interviews indicate that teachers felt empowered because they choose which session(s) to attend, therefore finding the learning relevant to their work. This practice demonstrates central office administration’s understanding of providing autonomy in teacher learning. Researchers suggest that teachers have “accumulated a foundation
of experiences, knowledge, skills, interests, and competence; they are most interested in learning subjects that have immediate relevance to their jobs” (Annenberg Institute for School Reform, 2004, p. 4). Thus, administration’s understanding of what motivates adults to learn enhances professional development and helps the district become a community of learners (Zepeda, 1999).

Annenberg Institute for School Reform (2004) goes on to state:

The PLC approach is grounded in adult learning theory and evidences several characteristics important to adult learners. For example, as autonomous and self-directed adults, professional educators need to be involved in the planning and evaluation of their instruction, and they often reject prescriptions by others for their learning. In addition, adults have accumulated a foundation of experiences, knowledge, skills, interests, and competence; they are most interested in learning subjects that have immediate relevance to their jobs or personal lives. Like learners of all ages, adults need to see the results of their efforts and to get feedback about progress toward their goals (p. 4).

The literature supports the use of adult learning theory in PLC implementation. When adults feel that learning is relevant and applicable to their work, motivation to learn improves (Wlodkowski, 2008).

2) Collaborative Meetings

According to DuFour et al. (2008), collaboration in a PLC “is a systemic process in which teachers work together, interdependently, to analyze and impact professional practice in order to improve results for their students, their team, and their school” (p.16). Pounder (1998) maintains that collaboration counters the effects of teachers working in isolation by allowing them to share responsibility on student success, learn from one another, discuss teaching and learning practices, and provide autonomy in applying innovative teaching practices.

In the data collected for this study, teachers, staff, and administrators across the district mentioned the use of grade level meetings. Grade Level Meetings were part of a systemized collaborative meeting structure implemented across the district to ensure teachers, administrators, and support staff collaborated. SCISD administrators, teachers, and staff used the
following three terms synonymously: *PLC Time*, *PLC Meetings*, and *Grade Level Meetings*.

These terms refer to the scheduled time where professionals met to collaborate, discuss student learning, data, and instructional strategies. SCISD’s implementation of *grade level meetings* is supported by Hord et al. (2010). They contend that the use of grade level teams is the best way to create a venue, in which, teachers and administrators can come together to discuss specific student needs and appropriate instructional strategies to better serve students (Hord et al., 2010).

Table 47 presents a summary of the collaborative structures the district implemented.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Meeting Time</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>South Central Learning Community (SCLC)</td>
<td>Central Office</td>
<td>Monthly</td>
<td>Collaborative Structure to build capacity in Central Office and Campus Administrators</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Counselor Meetings</td>
<td>Central Office</td>
<td>Monthly</td>
<td>Central Office Contact person organizes meetings for district wide collaboration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Librarian Meetings</td>
<td>Central Office</td>
<td>Monthly</td>
<td>Central Office Contact person organizes meetings for district wide collaboration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Principal Meetings</td>
<td>Central Office</td>
<td>Monthly</td>
<td>Central Office Contact person organizes meetings for district wide collaboration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade Level Meetings (PLC Time)</td>
<td>Campus</td>
<td>Varies</td>
<td>Campus Level Collaborative Structure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LASER Team*</td>
<td>High Schools</td>
<td>Varies</td>
<td>Assist in collaborative efforts at High Schools</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note: Leader’s Achieving Superior Educational Results (LASER) Teams consist of a member from each department at the comprehensive high schools. LASER Teams include up to 15 members that meet daily and monthly with district support staff to collaborate.*

Interview data revealed that *PLC Meetings* occurred at all levels of the district. Incorporating structures, such as *PLC Meetings*, across the district corresponds to the literature on PLC implementation (Hord & Roussin, 2013; Hord et al., 2010).
**Dimension 4: Shared personal practice**

The fourth dimension, *shared personal practice*, was identified as having limited success at SCISD with a mean score of 2.90. Data collected suggest that scheduling often hinders the development of a structure to have teachers observe each other. Both teachers and administrators cited this in their interviews. Interview data suggested that teachers were willing and wanted to observe other teachers teach. This qualitative finding corresponds with survey data that indicate respondents *agreed* that they had an opportunity to informally “share ideas and suggestions for improving student learning” (item 33; all respondents; 3.12) (Olivier & Hipp, 2010, p. 34). Furthermore, survey data indicated that respondents *agreed* that “individuals and teams have the opportunity to apply learning and share results of their practices” (item 36; all respondents; 3.00) (Olivier & Hipp, 2010, p. 34). This is aligned with the literature on PLC implementation that indicates this dimension is limited in high functioning PLCs and is usually the last dimension to develop (Morrissey, 2000).

**Dimension 5: Supportive conditions**

The fifth dimension, *Supportive Conditions* yielded an overall mean score of 2.99 on the PLCA-R. Developing supportive structures, including a collaborative environment, has been described as “the single most important factor” for successful school improvement” and “the first order of business” for those seeking to enhance the effectiveness of their PLC work (Eastwood & Louis, 1992, p. 215). Hord (1997, 2004a) divided this dimension into two categories, i.e., relationships and structures.

**Dimension 5: Supportive conditions - Relationships**

PLCA-R results indicate that this subset of Dimension 5 yielded a mean score of a 2.99. *Relationships* refers to the collegial relationships that include positive educator attitudes, widely
shared vision or sense of purpose, norms of continuous critical inquiry and improvement, respect, trust, and positive, caring relationships (Morrissey, 2000). Data collected indicated the following in reference to relationships:

- Item 38. Caring relationships exist among staff and students that are built on trust and respect (3.13 mean score for all respondents).

- Item 40. Outstanding achievement is recognized and celebrated regularly in our school (3.07 mean score for all respondents).

- Item 42. Relationships among staff members support honest and respectful examination of data to enhance teaching and learning (3.01 mean score for all respondents) (Olivier & Hipp, 2010, p. 34).

PLCA-R results indicated that item 39, which refers to respondents rating whether “a culture of trust and respect exists for taking risks” (Olivier & Hipp, 2010, p. 34) yielded a mean score of 2.92 (item 39; all; 2.92). Interview data suggested that half the teachers interviewed trusted their campus and district administrators; two secondary teachers cited they trusted their campus administrators, but not district administrators. Elementary teachers, librarians, and counselors felt more supported by district administrators than campus administrators. One elementary teacher reported that she did not trust campus administration, but trusted district administration. On the other hand, secondary teachers, librarians, and counselors noted they felt more supported by campus administrators than central office administrators. Therefore, findings suggest that trust is an issue amongst teachers and administrators at the district and campus levels. Nevertheless, they agreed that collegial relationships exist between staff and students (item 38; all; 3.13) and relationships amongst staff members supported the examination of data to enhance student learning (item 42; all; 3.01). Thus, SCISD teachers indicated that collegial relationships exist between teachers and students, teachers and staff, while relationships vary amongst teacher and administrators.
Trust is an important element in relationships and overall PLC implementation (Louis, 2008). Thus, without creating a culture of trust change efforts will have little effect in the development of a PLC (Hipp & Huffman, 2010c; Huffman & Hipp, 2003). According to Tschannen-Moran (2004) trust is “one’s willingness to be vulnerable to another based on the confidence that the other is benevolent, honest, open, reliable, and competent” (p.17). According to Lencioni (2002), the type of trust relevant to team building refers to having “the confidence among team members that their peers’ intentions are good, and that there is no reason to be protective or careful around the group” (p.195).

Dimension 5: Supportive conditions - Structures

PLCA-R results indicate that this subset of Dimension 5 yielded a mean score of a 2.97. Structures refers to the systems used to allow staff members to come together to work and learn without infringing on their personal time (Hipp & Huffman, 2010b). Data collected from in-depth interviews indicated that the district implemented the following structures: (1) collaborative meetings at the district and campus levels, (2) added support personnel, and (3) a staff development structure. The following sections examine these three structures.

1) Collaborative Team Meetings

First, findings suggested that the implementation of collaborative structures across the district were planned as part of systematic approach to changing how teachers and administrators plan their instruction to improve student learning. Furthermore, evidence suggested that district administrators created structures at the district level to ensure that teachers, facilitators, librarians, counselors, assistant principals, and principals were being provided technical assistance relevant to their role at the campus. Annenberg Institute for School Reform (2004) contends that structural conditions are necessary to build a frame that allows PLCs to operate
effectively. These structures include regular and substantial time to meet and talk, close physical proximity among members, and a regular space to hold group meetings. Table 47 presents a list of the different collaborative meetings the district implemented.

Table 47

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SCISD Collaborative Team Meetings</th>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Meeting Time</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>South Central Learning Community (SCLC) Counselor Meetings</td>
<td>Central Office</td>
<td>Monthly</td>
<td>Collaborative Structure to build capacity in Central Office and Campus Administrators</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Librarian Meetings</td>
<td>Central Office</td>
<td>Monthly</td>
<td>Central Office Contact person organizes meetings for district wide collaboration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Principal Meetings</td>
<td>Central Office</td>
<td>Monthly</td>
<td>Central Office Contact person organizes meetings for district wide collaboration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade Level Meetings (PLC Time)</td>
<td>Campus</td>
<td>Varies</td>
<td>Campus Level Collaborative Structure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LASER Team</td>
<td>High Schools</td>
<td>Varies</td>
<td>Assist in collaborative efforts at High Schools</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Leader’s Achieving Superior Educational Results (LASER) Teams consist of a member from each department at the comprehensive high schools. LASER Teams include up to 15 members that meet daily and monthly with district support staff to collaborate.

Even though meeting times were scheduled for professionals to collaborate across the district, getting together does not ensure the right type of conversations happen (Talbert, 2010). The SCISD approached this issue by repurposing collaborative meetings and structuring conversations.

First, SCISD central office administrators and coordinators provided technical assistance, and more importantly, they designated a learning portion to every PLC meeting. The purpose of PLC meetings was form a part of a larger plan to build capacity at all levels, not to address administrative tasks. DuFour et al. (2008) recommends that district administrators shift the format of administrative meetings from the traditional focus on managerial tasks to addressing
leadership issues that impact professional growth and student learning. In the following interview excerpt Principal 2 explained the change in how meetings are conducted once the district shifted to the learning approach.

For example, you'd go to a principal meeting and what they would do is give you all the information that occurred at the board meeting; a run-down of the board meeting used to be a principals’ meeting. Now, a principals’ meeting always has a learning piece, always has a…the board meeting is the smallest portion of the principal meeting now. It's like here's the information you could have gotten in minutes on the internet, so now let's go into the learning piece, the cooperative learning, the development of PLCs…they're constantly training, the staff development is embedded, the sharing of knowledge, it's just a whole different purpose of meeting (Principal 2, 695-715).

Second, district administrators structured conversations during PLC meetings. Changing the conversations in an organization can have an impact on an organization’s culture and day-to-day work (Kegan & Lahey, 2001; Perkins, 2003). Nelson (2009) found that even though sustained dialogue amongst teachers is essential in PLC work, it is the nature of the dialogue that transforms teacher learning to improve student learning. District administrators addressed this issue by drafting a set of questions to serve as a framework for conducting meetings at the campus and district levels (see Appendix M) and modeling for principals how to conduct meetings. The questions are:

6. What do we want students to learn? What should each student know and be able to do as a result of each unit?
7. How will we know if they have learned? Are we monitoring each student’s learning on a timely basis?
8. What will we do if they don’t learn? What systemic process is in place to provide additional time and support for students who are experiencing difficulty?
9. What will we do if they already know it?
10. Are we doing all we can to prepare our students to be successful in the world of work and higher education?

Interview data suggest these five questions were part of the system the district has implemented to help guide conversations during PLC Meetings. According to central office administrators the
PLC Agenda is framed around the five critical questions from DuFour et al. (2006) (see Appendix M).

2) Support personnel

The district added four different types of support positions to help guide the implementation of change efforts. At the central office level, the district designated one assistant superintendent to oversee the transformation efforts with the assistance of a director of staff development. At the campus level, facilitators were added to each elementary and middle school in the district. At the comprehensive high schools associate principals. The addition of the assistant superintendent responsible for transformation efforts, facilitators, associate principals, and LASER Teams congregating during PLC Meetings created a line of communication focused on staff learning to improve student learning that stretched from the classroom to central office. Hipp and Huffman (2010a) support the addition of central office support personnel.

3) Staff Development Structure

The district implemented a district-wide staff development event called the Extravaganza. This annual event served as a time to provide teachers and administrators a venue to showcase their knowledge or learn new strategies to improve student learning. Teachers and campus and central office administrators recognized the Extravaganza as a structure that provided them with opportunities to build capacity for PLC work. The following interview excerpts are from two teachers and a principal in reference to the Extravaganza.

- …we have an all-day in-service where you go to sessions and you go into things that relate to whatever you’re teaching (Elementary Teacher 6, 6798-6800).
- At the district we have the extravaganza where they try to meet the needs of all the campuses based on the data they we receive (Principal 1, 372-375).
…we had an extravaganza day where there is a full day of staff development and you signed up for the different courses that you wanted to attend (Elementary Teacher 10, 2606-2609).

In summary, the data analyzed suggested that each of the dimensions of a PLC were evident in varying degrees across the district. Both PLCA-R and interview data were identified to support this conclusion. The following are the PLCA-R results by dimension:

- Dimension 1 – Shared and Supportive Leadership (2.88)
- Dimension 2 - Shared Values and Vision (2.99)
- Dimension 3 - Collective Learning and Application (3.06)
- Dimension 4 – Shared Personal Practice (2.90)
- Dimension 5 – Supportive Conditions (2.99)
  Relationships (2.99)
  Structures (2.97)

Data collected suggested that PLC work influenced the level (mean score) of each PLC dimension. The term PLC work refers to activities and/or actions taken by school district faculty and staff that support the development of a PLC (Nelson, 2009). Examples of PLC work include: collaborative meetings, staff development structure, and added support personnel. The district established a system of collaborative meetings to ensure teachers had a designated time to discuss instructional data and make the necessary adjustments to classroom instruction. The Extravaganza was established as a venue that allowed teachers to share knowledge and learn new strategies to improve student learning. Finally, the district added support personnel at the district level to provide support to teachers, campus administrators, and professional support personnel at the campuses.
Research Question Two
How did South Central ISD (SCISD) facilitate the change process?

Conclusion 2
SCISD is at the implementation phase of the change process.

Fullan (2007) identified three broad phases to the change process: initiation, implementation, and institutionalization. Initiation consists of the process that leads to and includes a decision to adopt or proceed with a change (Fullan, 2007). Implementation involves the first experiences of attempting to put an idea or reform into practice (Fullan, 2007). Institutionalization refers to whether the change gets built in as an ongoing part of a system or disappears by way of a decision to discard or through attrition (Fullan, 2007).

The researcher used the 14 success factors cited in Fullan (1990). The success factors offered criteria that provided guidance in the determination of which phase of change best describes the current state of the district. Fullan (1990) based the success factors on the work of Miles (1986). Table 30 presents the 14 success factors categorized according to their pertinent phase of change.

Table 30

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Phases of change</th>
<th>Initiation</th>
<th>Implementation</th>
<th>Institutionalization</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Linked to high profile needs</td>
<td>1. Orchestration</td>
<td>1. Embedding</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. A clear model</td>
<td>2. Shared control</td>
<td>2. Linked to instruction</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Strong advocate</td>
<td>3. Pressure and support</td>
<td>3. Widespread use</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5. Rewards</td>
<td>5. Continuing assistance</td>
<td>(Miles. 1986)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. Success factors in bold indicate evident in district

Data collected showed evidence of 4 out of 4 success factors at the initiation phase, 5 out of 5 success factors at the implementation phase, and 4 out of 5 success factors at the
*institutionalization* phase. Therefore, data collected indicates that SCISD is at the

*implementation* phase of the change process. The collected data revealed that only 4 out of 5 success factors were evident in this phase. Fullan (2007) notes that for change to become ingrained in the existing culture it can take from five to eight years. According to the superintendent, SCISD had been engaged in PLC work for the past six years.
Conclusion 3
The Superintendent played a key role in PLC implementation through his understanding and use of a change model.

Superintendent’s Background

The superintendent in this case study had a background experience in change theory and used these theories to guide the district’s decision-making process. Evans et al. (2012) emphasized the importance of grounding change in theory, because it provides leaders with a comprehensive structure to view organizational evolution and suggests appropriate options to positively impact the process. During his interview, the superintendent indicated having previous experience in district-wide PLC implementation in different districts.

I guess on PLC, the concept of a Professional Learning Community, one of the things was my background in (previous school district). Let me start off with (previous school district). I was the Assistant Superintendent for the (previous school district) Learning Community so that in itself, the concept of PLC’s was ingrained. That was something that we did so we have a system of implementation of a Professional Learning Community ……What that was, it was much targeted, it was very systemic, and it was something that we enjoyed. I was only there a year or a year and a half. Then I was in previous school district we began the concept, and we became more structured in our approach. In other words, everywhere I have been, we have been in a situation where we were moving into more structure, more assistance, and more system of support from the central office (Superintendent, 19-68).

During the interview, the superintendent acknowledged that his background on change theory was a result of his doctoral work. The following is an excerpt on this topic from the interview.

On change, one of the things again and I have referenced Kotter, I believe why transformation efforts fail is seminal work for me with regards to what and how transformation should occur. So I used that quite a bit. I learned that obviously at the (university) when I was working on my doctorate at (university) in 1999 to 2001 (Superintendent, 695-708).

The superintendent cited the work of Kotter (2010) as his foundation for implementing change. Thus, interview data suggested that the superintendent had a foundation in change theory and experience in district-wide PLC implementation at the central office level in two other districts.
The literature suggests when district leaders have a foundation in change theory, the change efforts will be more successful (Evans et al., 2012).

Interview data indicated that the superintendent analyzed the district to determine a plan to move the district through change. Upon appointment, the superintendent executed what he called an entry plan. The entry plan (see Appendix M) consisted of conducting open-ended interviews with key central office administrators, principals, and school board members. In total, he conducted 65 interviews and found that SCISD had an established culture of pride, but a fragmented system that contributed to different schools operating independently. In the interview, the superintendent stated the following on this topic:

I could tell we had several independent school districts within our own school district. Which again there is nothing wrong with that. If the data is consistent throughout the entire organization, I believe that a pocket of excellence is not something to be very proud of. I would rather be proud and that is what we are striving for [as] a system (Superintendent, 115-131).

Bennis (2009) contends that it is essential for leaders to understand and master the context that surrounds them. He further asserts that the “first step toward change is to refuse to be deployed by others and to choose to deploy yourself (Bennis, 2009, p. 31). In this case study, the superintendent applied a strategy (entry plan) to help him understand the context and then used it as a starting point to initiate change.

Superintendent’s approach to change

Talbert (2010) suggests that even if leaders have a research-based approach to PLC implementation, their approaches can differ. Talbert outlined two strategies - bureaucratic strategy and professional strategy. First, a bureaucratic strategy encompasses a mandate approach driven by directives, implementation checklists, and sanctions to leverage change (Talbert, 2010). Second, a professional strategy links change to leader modeling, use of
decision making structures, and feedback to engender change (Talbert, 2010). The superintendent SCISD employed a professional strategy. The following excerpt presents the superintendent’s approach to moving staff through change:

But when you come to a district like SCISD, one of the things that we realized is that and we continue to realize let us make sure that everyone is ready. Let us make sure that they are prepared. Let us make sure that we have done the things that we need to do for successful implementation and fidelity to that implementation. I can tell you it has taken us a while. It has taken us a while, some people might say too long. I think we are right at the right speed (Superintendent, 876-897).

The superintendent believed in creating the conditions for change by presenting a case for change rather than by issuing directives to staff, even if it meant that change would take longer to initiate. In the interview, the superintendent acknowledged the change process for the district had taken a long time to develop. This aligns with Fullan (2007) who noted that for change to become ingrained in the existing culture can take from five to eight years. The SCISD was in the sixth year of PLC work. Nevertheless, the superintendent’s focus was on setting up sustainable structures to ensure changes were entrenched in the district’s culture rather than rapidly moving through superficial change efforts. In his interview, he stated, “I do not believe in a pocket of excellence. What we are working for is a system of excellence” (Superintendent, 340-345).

**Role of Central office in PLC Implementation**

Horton and Martin (2013) contend that support for PLC implementation at the district level is essential in successful development of a PLC. Building the capacity for change in a school district begins when central office administrators create a space to review research and engage in conversations on change (Hurley, 2006). More precisely, Horton and Martin (2013) asserted that district leaders must be willing to work diligently to develop a clear and focused understanding for change to occur. Data collected in this study indicated that central office administrators played a key role in the development of the PLC. The superintendent intended to
have central office administrators serve as resource people that assisted in building capacity at all levels of the district. The superintendent stated:

I can tell you though that if we do not coach from the central office, if we do not assist in our system support to monitor our PLC progress, there will be those that are still prone to say ‘Well, maybe common collaborative planning time is not as important’ or ‘The development of norms in a certain grade level might be left to chance there as well’ when in fact it has to be highly, highly functionalized throughout the entire campus. But by that campus, by each area, by all campuses so our job as providing in the central office, systems of support is also assessed where we are at each individual campus in their PLC development (Superintendent, 213-243).

Central office administrators acknowledged in their interviews that the district implemented a structure to create a line of support from the classroom to central office (see Figure 4.1). The district created two separate but overlapping categories of support positions: one for learning and one for leadership.

The assistant superintendent for curriculum and instruction had responsibility for overseeing the learning category. This category worked with the facilitators at the elementary and middle schools and the LASER Teams at the comprehensive high schools. In the interview, the assistant superintendent for curriculum and instruction said:

…all those things that deal with what we say the learning side of the house, that’s my responsibility, and the leading side of the house, think of a Venn-diagram, that is (deputy superintendent for transformation), that side, that’s the leading side and I’m on the learning side. And so we work together in concert to make sure that we hit the leaders, all the principals etc., and then also on the learning side together (Central Office 2, 35-47).

In terms of coaching for staff, this was the assistant superintendent’s comment:

…we actually sent them to smart-coaching training this year so that can really work to support the teachers, so literally like a coach; they’re on the teachers side: I’m here to help you do better, I’m gonna work with you, I’m gonna teach you, I’m gonna be on the sidelines, I’m gonna help you desegregate data; all of those things as opposed to being evaluative like (formal teacher evaluation tool) (Central Office 2, 75-85).

Data collected for this study demonstrated a clear line of communication and collaboration in the learning category. The line goes from the classroom teacher, to the central office coordinator,
the assistant superintendent for curriculum and instruction, and finally to the superintendent. Interview data indicated that communication and collaboration occurred during **PLC Meetings**. The role of central office administrators is to plan, coordinate, and present at these meetings. The assistant superintendent for curriculum and instruction said that every **PLC Meeting** included a learning portion. The intent of this practice is to build capacity.

…so we spend the whole day on topics that pertain to other things in the district too but we focus a lot on that learning piece so if we have a benchmark exam, we call them district curriculum assessments right now. If we do that, then those results also get fed up line so that even the superintendent knows where are we at, how are we doing, what do we need to do to adjust and then we work together on that to execute whatever plans we come up with (Central Office 2, 186-198).

The leading category is similar in approach except this line of communication and collaboration goes from the classroom, to principals, to central office, to deputy superintendent, and finally to the superintendent. The central office administrator in charge of this category is the deputy superintendent of transformation and learning and collaboration happens at their designated **PLC Meetings**. Principal 3 cited in interview that:

Now, a principal's meeting always has a learning piece, always has a…the board meeting is the smallest portion of the principal meeting now. It's like here's the information you could have gotten in minutes on the internet, so now let's go into the learning piece, the cooperative learning, the development of PLC s…they're constantly training, the staff development is embedded, the sharing of knowledge, it's just a whole different purpose of meeting (Principal 3, 701-715).

DuFour et al. (2008) indicated that it is imperative for central office to create a clear line of communication to ensure that initiatives are verbalized effectively and in one voice. Survey findings here suggested that respondents agreed that “communications systems promote a flow of information among staff members” (item 50; all respondents; 3.01) (Olivier & Hipp, 2010, p. 35). Furthermore, survey respondents agreed that collective learning and application existed within the context of the district (items 21-30; all respondents; 3.06).
Research Question Three
How has the implementation of a PLC influenced student achievement?

Conclusion 4
Archival data noted changes in student achievement scores throughout PLC implementation.

Standardized accountability has been a large part of education the past couple of decades (Padilla, 2004). Richmond and Manokore (2010) found that teachers participating in PLC Meetings over a five year period developed strategies to modify instruction, thus meeting student accountability goals set by the district. SCISD survey results indicated that teachers collaboratively analyzed multiple sources of data to assess the effectiveness of instructional practices (item 29; all; 3.14). Further analysis of mean scores by teacher sub-groups indicates the following: elementary teachers (3.15); middle school teachers (3.20); and high school teachers (3.05). Interview data further supports the survey results. The following are excerpts from teachers on their use of different sources of data to assess the effectiveness of instructional practices (Olivier & Hipp, 2010).

A lot; sometimes we go over data especially like if they just...like the accelerated reader and (state assessment) testing. We do a lot of goal setting with accelerated reader so we talk about that. What are the kid's goals and are they meeting them? And if they've just tested DCA (District Curriculum Assessment), which are like our benchmarks; we go over those results and discuss all that. We do our timelines; we talk about our timelines (Elementary Teacher 12, 3513-3524).

Usually its test scores, so in the past it's been our unit exams. We keep all of our unit exams on (data analysis software) so we can analyze the data. We can look and we can see what concepts...it's usually pretty obvious with the data when you're looking at (data analysis software) and you can look and see...ok, all of the kids got these questions wrong, and you can look and you can see it usually has to do with one area. That will lead us to changing on how we do things. And then, we look secondarily at the state stuff like (state assessment), but it usually comes back the same every year for us. The (state assessment) test come back with, you know, they have trouble with chemistry, they have trouble with the difficult part of biology, and so that usually tells us the same thing. Usually what we're doing, and we're doing this pretty good with two of my teams, one my the teams we're still working with...we're looking at the (data analysis software) data
and they're looking at the individual questions and seeing how those were presented and then going from there (High School Teacher, 657-685).

Additionally, survey data indicated that staff members collaboratively analyzed student work to improve teaching and learning (item 30; all; 3.09) (Olivier & Hipp, 2010). Interview indicated that teachers discussed, evaluated, and adjusted their instruction during PLC meetings:

…sometimes we go over data especially like if they just…like the accelerated reader and (state assessment) testing. We do a lot of goal setting with accelerated reader so we talk about that. What are the kids’ goals and are they meeting them? And if they’ve just tested DCA (District Curriculum Assessment), which are like our benchmarks; we go over those results and discuss all that. We do our timelines; we talk about our timelines. Different grades are different because like for their grade, they’re all departmentalized. Like in kinder, they are all self-contained so they come in and…ok, this is what we’re gonna be doing for math next week, and talks to all the teachers. Ok, yea, can we do this instead? Yea, ok and the other one…ok, here’s what we’re gonna be doing for reading, and they share lesson plans. They don’t have that kind of luxury because they’re all different, but they do have lots of discussions about the kids (Elementary Teacher 12, 3513-3538).

They're (PLC Meetings) intended to be a time where the teachers could plan for the week and collaborate plan, vertically align and things like that but it's become, at our school at least, from what the teachers are telling me, just looking at data; data, data, data, just going over that (Elementary Teacher 2585-2603).

The findings in this case study support the literature of PLCs as a structure that builds staff capacity for learning and change (Hord, 2004a; Hord & Roussin, 2013; Hord et al., 2010).

Moreover, this study documents changes in student passing rates in state assessments during the six years the district engaged in PLC work, from 2007-2013. In 2012 and 2013, the state adopted a more rigorous state assessment that focused on college readiness and implemented a new state accountability system for public schools. The following are the six observations noted in SCISD’s passing rates on state assessments.


  Archival data noted the following changes in passing rates in grades 3-11 on state assessments from 2007-2011; Reading (+1); Mathematics (+9); Writing (+0); Social
Studies (+8); Science (+14); and all subjects (+6). The all subjects category consists of students that passed all subjects. Science, Mathematics, and Social Studies realized the highest increases in passing rates from 2007-2011.

- **Observation 2** – Overall passing rates increased in different ethnic groups and for the economically disadvantaged students in years 2007, 2008, 2009, 2010, and 2011.

  Archival data indicates that from 2007-2011 passing rates in states assessments noted the following changes for these ethnic groups; African American (+6); Hispanic (+7); and White(+1).


  Archival data indicates that from 2007-2011 passing rates in states assessments noted a 7% increase in students categorized as economically disadvantaged.

- **Observation 4** – Enrollment increased from 2007 - 2011.

  Archival data indicates that enrollment increased in grades 3-11 by 432 students from 2007-2011.

- **Observation 5** – Number of students participating in the state assessment program increased from 2007 - 2011.

  Archival data noted a 1.4% increase in students participating in the state assessment program.

- **Observation 6** – SCISD met accountability requirements in both versions of the state systems.


In summary, the literature regarding PLCs’ impact on student achievement is limited; nevertheless, the existing literature indicates that PLCs have influenced student achievement (Abrego & Pankake, 2011; Hipp et al., 2008; Huggins et al., 2011). Data collected in this case study suggests that teachers at all levels collaboratively used multiple sources of data to evaluate...
and adjust instructional practices. Thus, suggesting that teacher collaboration during PLC meetings might have influenced student achievement.
Overarching Question
What influence does the implementation of a PLC have in one school district’s culture?

Conclusion 5
Implementation of structural changes developed a culture of learning and collaboration

The literature suggests that bringing about cultural change in any organization is a complex and arduous process (DuFour et al., 2008; DuFour & Fullan, 2013; Huffman, 2003b). DuFour et al. (2005a) argued that a school culture must be transformed not just at the surface level, rather it must change the beliefs, assumptions, expectations, and habits that constitute the norm throughout the organization. Wells and Feun (2007) categorize the concept of change into two types - cultural and structural. Structural changes refer to changes that take the form of policies, rules, and/or procedures implemented to initiate change (Wells & Feun, 2007). Argyris and Schön (1996) refer to structural changes as a system or process aimed at correcting an issue that does not affect the beliefs, values, and policies that guide the whole organization.

On the other hand, cultural changes represent the deeper level changes in human behavior within a school, such as a deeper analysis of how educators approach teaching and learning (Wells & Feun, 2007). Argyris and Schön (1996) refer to cultural changes that affect the norms of an entire organization as double loop learning. In order to achieve significant changes, Wells and Feun (2007) suggest that both structural and cultural changes are needed. They further contend that cultural changes are the most difficult to achieve (Wells & Feun, 2007).

Structural changes

This case study documents structural changes the district initiated and implemented. The district implemented 11 types of structures as they engaged the district in PLC work. In PLC implementation at the district level, structural changes are usually implemented in the form of
policies and structures (DuFour et al., 2008). In this case study, the district implemented a
variety of structures to promote teacher and administrator collaboration, improve conversations,
promote staff learning, and promote the use of data to inform decisions. The structures
implemented took the form of common meetings times and the addition of personnel. Table 37
presents the 12 structural changes implemented at SCISD.

Table 37

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tool and/or Structure</th>
<th>Type of Change</th>
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<tr>
<td>SBDM</td>
<td>Structural</td>
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<td>PLC Meetings</td>
<td>Structural</td>
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<td>DEIC</td>
<td>Structural</td>
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<tr>
<td>Extravaganza</td>
<td>Structural</td>
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<tr>
<td>Additional Support Personnel</td>
<td>Structural</td>
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<tr>
<td>Collaborative Team Meetings</td>
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<td>System of Support</td>
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<td>Surveys</td>
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<td>OHI</td>
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<tr>
<td>PLC Agenda</td>
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<tr>
<td>Assistant Principal Academies</td>
<td>Structural</td>
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<tr>
<td>Principal’s Institute</td>
<td>Structural</td>
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Moreover, data collected from interviews and surveys indicated district staff agreed that policies
and programs are aligned to schools’ vision (item 18; all; 3.02). Talbert (2010) suggests that
“changing a system toward PLCs requires coherent professional strategies, policies, and
practices at all levels of the system overtime” (p. 569). SCISD strategically placed local policies
and practices that supported PLC work throughout all levels of the school district.

Cultural changes

Data collected revealed that the district implemented 12 structures. The implementation
of these structures facilitated a change in the district’s culture. The literature suggests that
educational leaders engaged in PLC work at the district level must remember that before change
efforts implemented, an established culture has been in place for an amount of time (DuFour et
al., 2008; Talbert, 2010). Interview data suggested that the district had an established culture of campus autonomy and the use of SBDM’s. The superintendent noted these cultural norms.

I could tell we had several independent school districts within our own school district (Superintendent, 115-117).

A total of 65 interviews were conducted. From that I could tell that in our district we had a lot of autonomy at our campus level which there is nothing wrong with that. So the term ‘site-based’ is very important (Superintendent, 82-92).

Wells and Feun (2007) suggest that structural changes are the easiest to implement, nevertheless, Schlechty (2002a) points out that structural changes not supported by cultural changes will eventually be overwhelmed by the current culture. Thus, data collected disclosed 12 different structural changes that served as the vehicle for change in the district’s culture to one that supports culture of collaboration and culture of learning.

1) Culture of Collaboration

Collaboration in SCISD was fostered by the district’s concerted effort to implement structures to ensure teachers were meeting to collaborate (DuFour et al., 2008). The district implemented structures such as the extravaganza, PLC Meetings, an assistant principal academy, and a principal’s institute. PLCA-R items on collaboration suggested:

Item 23. The staff plan and work together to search for solutions to address diverse student needs (3.12).

Item 29. Staff members collaboratively analyze multiple sources of data to assess the effectiveness of instructional practices (3.14).

Item 30. Staff members collaboratively analyze student work to improve teaching and learning (3.09).

Item 43. Time is provided to facilitate collaborative work (2.86).

Item 49. The proximity of grade level and department personnel allows for ease in collaborating with colleagues (3.05) (Olivier & Hipp, 2010, pp. 33-35).
Survey results indicated that all respondents agreed on items 23, 29, 30, and 40. Nevertheless, item 43 had a mean score below 3.00 indicating that the majority of respondents disagreed that the district provided time to facilitate collaborative work. Further analysis indicated that the high school teacher subgroup (2.60) had a direct impact on the all respondents’ mean score (2.86).

Interview data for high school teachers indicated the following:

Not enough time with current schedule and only one conference, need collaborative period (High School Teacher, 37-39).

Our problems with collaboration exist not because of the staff’s unwillingness, but rather because we do not have a schedule that supports teachers spending time together (High School Teacher, 172-177).

Teachers teach 7 classes with only one 49 minute conference to grade, plan, collaborate, examine data, share activities, make copies, etc. Except for a few release 1/2 day[s], time is extremely limited for PLC (High School Teacher, 253-258)!!!

Comprehensive high schools’ schedules provided administrators a challenge to get subject-matter departments to meet. Hord et al. (2010) maintain that the best way to implement PLCs at the secondary level is to develop subject-matter teams. The district developed LASER Teams as a solution to this issue. This action illustrated SCISD’s focus on developing structures to ensure teachers and staff have time to meet and collaborate.

The superintendent and central office supported SCISD’s focus on implementing structures to allow teachers and staff to collaborate. Schlechty (2002b) corroborates this finding by pointing out that the superintendent’s support to implement a team-based approach to instructional improvement is essential. Nevertheless, Talbert (2010) contends that the implementation of structural changes such as PLC meetings does not ensure that teachers will engage in the type of collaboration needed to build capacity and improve student learning. Thus, the issue becomes how is the time used when collaborating (Talbert, 2010). SCISD
administration noted this issue and implemented structures to focus conversations during **PLC Meetings**. Interview data noted:

…when we say we're going to phase in and formalize the professional learning communities is going to be a standard in SCISD where we're going to create systems and we're going to formalize systems and structures to allow meaningful conversations to take place vertically and horizontally among our professional staff and our principals (Central Office 3, 833-847).

The academic and those teams get together and ensure that the conversations are taking place or strictly zoned in on student achievement, data, shared practices, best practices, and how do we enrich the program in what we're doing and how do we remediate when there's a need. So it's very purposeful. We establish norms. How those meetings are going to be held. And it's been a progression. And so, we're at the point where we have monthly professional learning communities with all their administrator staffs and we have monthly professional learning communities with our principals only. And so, we have structures that we organize here at the central administration and we model the behavior we expect to see at our campuses (Central Office 3, 864-894).

Well, structure and implementing it is one thing to talk about it, but it's another to actually do it. You can put all the structures in place but if you don't do anything in those meetings to encourage that collaboration, it's just lip service, but you need to make sure that when you have those meetings that you're embedding those pieces with it and giving the staff the time, an[d] giving them the opportunities to collaborate and share, and you got to model as well (Principal 2, 765-778).

Thus, the district administration made a concerted effort to structure the conversations during **PLC Meetings**. As part of structuring conversations during **PLC Meetings**, the district developed a five question agenda. The following are the five questions:

1. What do we want students to learn? What should each student know and be able to do as a result of each unit?
2. How will we know if they have learned? Are we monitoring each student’s learning on a timely basis?
3. What will we do if they don’t learn? What systemic process is in place to provide additional time and support for students who are experiencing difficulty?
4. What will we do if they already know it?
5. Are we doing all we can to prepare our students to be successful in the world of work and higher education?

The implementation of this five question agenda for PLC Meetings influenced teacher and administrator discussions during **PLC Meetings**. Data collected supported this finding.
PLCA-R results

Item 11. Staff members use multiple sources of data to make decisions about teaching and learning (3.20).

Item 20. Data are used to prioritize actions to reach a shared vision (3.14).

Item 29. Staff members collaboratively analyze multiple sources of data to assess the effectiveness of instructional practices (3.14) (Olivier & Hipp, 2010, pp. 32-33).

Interview data

A lot, sometimes we go over data especially like if they just...like the accelerated reader and (state assessment) testing. We do a lot of goal setting with accelerated reader so we talk about that. What are the kid's goals and are they meeting them? And if they've just tested DCA (District Curriculum Assessment), which are like our benchmarks; we go over those results and discuss all that. We do our timelines; we talk about our timelines (Elementary Teacher 12, 3513-3524).

Grade level meetings. We discuss different things. How we're gonna teach something, how well they did on whatever it is that we're looking...whatever data we're reviewing and a lot of the times if they didn't do well then we had to go back to the drawing board to come up with strategies to re-teach and get that re-done (Elementary Teacher 8, 1454-1463).

I'm very impressed with our teachers. I'll tell you one of the visits that we did I walked into a sixth grade PLC time and they had their data and it was a team of three but they had their data and it was teachers. They looked at their data, they looked at their year at a glance and collectively they said 'wow you really did great on that how did you get your kids to master that?’ …And these are real conversations that our teachers were having…And they looked at their timeline and they said you know these are the three, across all of our classrooms; these are the three areas that our kids just aren’t getting. We need to go back and reteach that (Central Office 4, 2813-2857).

The district focused on implementing structures to allow for teacher, staff, and administrators to collaborate. In total, the district implemented PLC Meetings as their main structure for collaboration. The literature, while supporting the implementation of district-wide PLC Meetings (Hord & Roussin, 2013; Hord et al., 2010), cautions that just because teachers meet doesn’t mean that meaningful conversations occur (Talbert, 2010). Therefore, the district
structured PLC conversations. Richmond and Manokore (2010) examined structured teacher collaboration in PLC meetings over five years and found that this structure enhanced teacher learning and collaboration to improve student learning.

2) Culture of Learning

A *culture of learning* is evidenced by teacher, and administrator’s willingness to seek continuous staff development to improve their own capacity, thus improving student learning (Barnett & O'Mahony, 2006). For example, the SCISD implemented structures such as the assistant principal academies, principal’s institute, and the extravaganza to provide opportunities for teachers and staff to learn. This is evidenced by PLCA-R results for items 21 and 28.

Item 21. Staff members work together to seek knowledge, skills and strategies and apply this new learning to their work (3.12 for all respondents).

Item 28. School staff is committed to programs that enhance learning (3.16 for all respondents) (Olivier & Hipp, 2010, p. 33).

Interview data also supported this finding. The following interview excerpts from Central Office 4, Principal 2 and a teacher address the district’s focus on learning.

…we're having our District Extravaganza, every one of our employees will be learning on that Day (Central Office 4, 3615-3618).

For example, you'd go to a principal meeting and what they would do is give you all the information that occurred at the board meeting; a run-down of the board meeting used to be a principals meeting. Now, a principal's meeting always has a learning piece, always has a…the board meeting is the smallest portion of the principal meeting now. It's like here's the information you could have gotten in minutes on the internet, so now let's go into the learning piece, the cooperative learning, the development of PLCs…they're constantly training, the staff development is embedded, the sharing of knowledge, it's just a whole different purpose of meeting (Principal 2, 695-715).

Well you see, first thing is the extravaganza. The last two years it's been in October. And it's a day that we have a work day for the teachers, but the kids are off and they have this huge thing. This year they were talking about having it in one of the back-to-school days, but every single person in the district goes to this and it's like little mini sessions, and you pick. Oh, I want to do something on math, so you go to that room and hear about math for
an hour. Oh, I want to hear about data. I’ll go to that room (Elementary Teacher 12, 3574-3588).

Thus, the district’s emphasis on implementing structures to support learning facilitated the development of a *culture of learning*. Hipp and Huffman (2010a) contend that schools must foster a culture where learning is valued, encouraged, and supported by all.

In summary, the findings suggest the superintendent at SCISD had a solid foundation in change theory as well as practical experience guiding district-wide change efforts and district-wide PLC implementation. The literature suggests that having a superintendent with a background in change theory and experience in PLC implementation provides the opportunity to implement meaningful organizational improvement (Evans et al., 2012). Thus, the findings suggested that the superintendent and central office administration played a key role in engaging the district in PLC work.

Data collected revealed that the district implemented 12 structures, and through the implementation of these structures, the district experienced a change in culture. The structural changes developed a culture of learning, collaboration, and continuous improvement. Richmond and Manokore (2010) examined teacher talk in PLC meetings over five years and found that such structures enhanced teacher learning and collaboration.
Conclusion 6
The exclusion of non-core teachers from participating in the PLC meetings created a culture of segregation.

An important caveat to note on the district’s culture was that interview and PLCA-R Comment data indicated that only core teachers participated in the PLC meetings. Core teachers work in the following subject areas: English Language Arts, Mathematics, Social Studies, and Science. Teachers not teaching in these areas were not included in the PLC Meetings. As a result, non-core teachers felt alienated as evidenced in the following teacher interview excerpts:

Elective classes are not viewed as equal to core subjects (Middle School Teacher, 85-86).

The following excerpt is from an interview with a support staff member assigned to an elementary school. This individual does not participate in PLC Meetings with the core area teachers.

Researcher: Ok. How do you feel about not being involved?

Support Staff 1: I’ve asked to be involved. I think it’s important. I think as the one person, one of the few people on campus, who knows everyone’s curriculum; all the grade levels. I feel like if I had that data, if I had that information, if I was part of that planning, then I could make the library more of a curriculum aspect of our school; that’s not the right word, but I can use that information to make the library better, to better serve our students, to better serve our teachers.

This practice contradicts what the literature on PLC membership supports. The literature suggests that in facilitating change, it is important to make sure that everyone involved in the change initiative is doing their part to make the process of change less cumbersome (Hall & Hord, 2011).

Interview data suggested that the practice of excluding elective teachers from PLC meetings originated at the secondary campus level. One possible explanation was provided
through data collected from Central Office 2, the data indicated that LASER Teams were intended to consist of a representative from each department.

…we were trying to provide an extra period off for every department so that they can plan together and some of our departments are pretty big so to put all biology teachers the same period off, if not all the science department that same period, but we just couldn’t afford it. We had moved away from block scheduling already because of financial reasons and so we said we can’t do everybody, we can’t afford that but we can do some, and so let’s do some then. What if we had a team that helped, because we only have one instructional coach at each high school anyway and we have forty-six hundred kids a High School, and so that’s what we decided to do. We created an extra layer there so that it represented each department, we had several representatives plus we have our special populations that are represented as well (Central Office 2, 392-417).

Data collected from a middle school principal indicated that elective teachers did not participate in **PLC meetings**. This assertion was further supported by three elective teacher interviews. Meanwhile, one elective teacher at the elementary level indicated that she participated in PLC at her campus. This finding suggests principals’ and central office understanding of PLC membership varies across the district.

Data collected revealed that only core teachers participated in PLC meetings and elective teachers were excluded. Thus, creating a *culture of segregation* amongst teachers. This practice is contrary to what the literature suggests on PLC membership. The literature on PLC membership suggests that all teachers and professional staff should be considered a part of the PLC (Bolam et al., 2005; Hord & Roussin, 2013). Meanwhile, Bolam, Stoll, and Greenwood (2007) suggest that PLCs consist of an inclusive group that includes teachers, professional staff, and support staff.

While both the campus principal and central office seemed to be directly involved in excluding non-core teachers across the district, the decision to exclude certain teachers was based on fiscal efficiency. This act of efficiency goes against the tenets of what defines and makes an effective PLC. In other words, implementation of and invitation to PLC membership
was viewed through a monetary lens not through a communication lens. Thus, the campus and central office leadership made assumptions that communication was possible only through one pathway – face-to-face communication. Instead of inviting the campus community to come together to build a PLC, it limited campus-wide and district-wide empowerment and capacity building by segregating teachers into two groups – core and non-core teachers. Core teachers had access to the implementation of the PLC.

Thus an important role and function of principals, who are involved in building a professional learning community during fiscally challenging times, is to encourage inclusivity and collaboration. These actions can occur by restructuring the campus environment based on the principles of intentional leadership. Therefore, the principal will work to create structures and conditions that promote teacher leaders at the campus that work collaboratively and collectively to build positive relationships, distribute power and authority and align teacher leadership and professional learning based on the needs of faculty, teams and students. (Moller & Pankake, 2006) The literature contends that the roles and behaviors of the building principal are essential in influencing how a school operates as a PLC (DuFour et al., 2008). Huggins et al. (2011) found that the principal’s leadership was the most significant factor in the implementation of a PLC.
Implications for District Leadership

The following are implications for district leaders to consider as they engage in PLC work. During data collection the researcher found documents the district had developed to assist in the implementation of a PLC. For example, district leaders adapted the four critical questions developed by DuFour et al. (2008) into a PLC meeting agenda. The purpose of this agenda was to structure conversations during PLC meetings. Therefore, district leaders must identify, adjust, use, and/or develop tools to assist in the implementation of a PLC.

The findings in this study suggest that not all professional staff participated in PLC meetings. The participation of all professional staff is crucial, especially when teachers routinely get together to discuss student learning (Bolam et al., 2007). Therefore, district leaders must ensure to engage in PLC work that involves all members if the professional community. The literature in PLC membership suggests that all professional members of the school or district must participate in the PLC (Bolam et al., 2005; Bolam et al., 2007; Hord & Roussin, 2013).

As district leaders begin to engage in PLC work it is important to provide professional development for teachers and administrators on how to have effective conversations during collaborative meetings to ensure focus is on improving teaching and learning. Talbert (2010) points out that one of the mistakes district leaders make in PLC implementation is to assume that teachers know how to collaborate and speak freely about the effectiveness of their instructional strategies. It is very common for teachers to focus conversations on school supplies or gathering of instructional materials during PLC meetings (Levine, 2011; Talbert, 2010).

Implications for Educator Preparation Programs

The following are implications for educator preparation programs to consider. Educator preparation programs are tasked with preparing future school leaders and teachers. For school
leaders, it is essential that both superintendents and principals have a strong foundation in change theory, PLC principles, and implementation. The findings in this study suggest that having a superintendent with a foundation in change theory and PLC implementation played a major role in the development Shirley Hord’s five dimensions of a PLC. On the other hand, having principals that do not have a foundation in shared leadership can be a barrier in the development of a PLC dimension (Hipp & Huffman, 2010a; Hord, 2004a). Shared leadership is one of the essential elements in a PLCs (Hipp & Huffman, 2010a).

As for teachers, preparation programs must ensure that they understand their role in a PLC implementation and operation. Furthermore, a foundation on how to have effective conversations about instructional practices is essential. As Talbert (2010) noted, administrators cannot assume that teachers know how to have effective conversations during PLC meetings. The findings in this study, suggest that district leaders provided staff development and modeled for teachers what effective conversations in PLC meetings should look like. This practice is one of the reasons the district development a culture of learning and collaboration.

**Recommendations for Further Study**

The focus of this study was to examine what effect the implementation of a PLC had on one school district’s culture. The following discussion offers suggestions for future research.

**Quantitative studies**

Future research using quantitative methodologies can be considered in the examination of the implementation of PLCs. This study employed qualitative methods in examining the district’s culture. While qualitative methods provide rich data on the district’s culture, using quantitative methods to examine changes in teachers’ perceptions of the school culture is warranted.
This study examined what influence the implementation of a PLC had on student achievement. Archival data noted observations in student achievement that warrant correlational studies. In particular examination of student achievement data over time as teachers in PLC work is necessary to add to the literature. Vescio, Ross, and Adams (2008) note that although, the analysis of student achievement data is time consuming, it is essential in building the case for PLCs as a powerful type of school reform.

Additional implications for future research include the following:

- Further inquiry on the types of skills needed for principals to help them develop shared leadership.
- Follow up study at SCISD to examine how the district has evolved with a superintendent change. Two weeks after the superintendent was interviewed media circuits announced that he had taken another job in a different district within the same state. The newly appointed superintendent was hired from within the district and was a major contributor to the transformation work for the past six years.
- Study to examine how the collaborative work has impacted teaching and learning at the classroom level.
- A study to examine how the implementation of a PLC has impacted teaching and learning in comprehensive high schools within a district.
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Huffman, J. B. (2003a). Case study #1: Role expectations in schools moving to site-based management leadership. In K. K. Hipp & J. B. Huffman (Eds.), *Reculturing schools as professional learning communities*. Lanham, MD: Scarecrow Education.


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APPENDICES

Appendix A: Abbreviations

Academic Excellence Indicator System (AEIS)
District Curriculum Assessment (DCA)
District Executive Improvement Committee (DEIC)
Ethnograph 6.0 (E6)
Leader’s Achieving Superior Educational Result’s (LASER)
Organizational Health Instrument (OHI)
Organizational learning (OL)
Professional Community, Organizational Learning, and Trust (PCOLT)
Professional Development Appraisal System (PDAS)
Professional Learning Communities Assessment - Revised (PLCA-R)
Professional Learning Community (PLC)
Public Education Information Management System (PEIMS)
Site-Based Decision Making (SBDM)
South Central ISD (SCISD)
South Central Learning Community (SCLC)
Southwest Educational Development Laboratories (SEDL)
State of Texas Assessment of Academic Readiness (STAAR)
Texas Academic Performance Report (TAPR)
Texas Assessment Academic Skills (TAAS)
Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS)
Texas Education Agency (TEA)
Appendix B: IRB Approval

Research Integrity and Compliance
The University of Texas at Brownsville

Matthew Johnson, Ph.D.
IRB Chair

September 4, 2014

Mr. Jaime Lopez
The University of Texas at Brownsville
One West University Blvd.
Brownsville, Texas 78520
RE: IRB-HS Approval

Study Title: “Professional Learning Communities Influence on School Culture in one School District”

Protocol #: 2012-024-IRB

Approval Type:
☐ Full Board Review
☒ Designated Member Review
☐ Continuing Review
☐ Change request/Modification/Amendment
☐ Exempt Category
☐ Expedited Category

Approval Period:

Start Date: September 4, 2014
End Date: September 3, 2015

Dear Mr. Lopez,

In accordance with Federal Regulations for review of research protocols, the Institutional Review Board – Human Subjects of The University of Texas at Brownsville has reviewed your study as requested.

The IRB-HS grants its approval for this project contingent on compliance with the following items. You may make as many copies of the stamped consent form as are necessary for your activity. All consent forms MUST bear the UTB IRB stamp indicating approval.

Responsibilities of the Principal Investigator also include:

• Inform the IRB-HS in writing immediately of any emergent problems or proposed changes.
• Do not proceed with the research until any problems have been resolved and the IRB-HS have reviewed and approved any changes.
• Report any significant findings that become known in the course of the research that might affect the willingness of the subjects to take part.
• Protect the confidentiality of all personally identifiable information collected.
• Submit for review and approval by the IRB-HS all modifications to the protocol or consent form(s) prior to implementation of any change(s).
• Submit an activity/progress report regarding research activities to the IRB-HS on no less than an annual basis or as directed by the IRB-HS through the Continuing Review Form.
• Notify the IRB-HS when study has been completed through submission of a Project Completion Report.

Should you have any questions or need any further information concerning this document please feel free to contact me at (956) 882-8888 or via email at Matthew.Johnson@utb.edu.

Sincerely yours,

Matthew Johnson, Ph.D.

Matthew Johnson, Ph.D.
IRB – Chair

One West University Blvd. • BRHP 2.210 • Brownsville, Texas 78520 • 956-882-7731 • research.compliance@utb.edu
Research Integrity and Compliance
The University of Texas at Brownsville

Matthew Johnson, Ph.D.
IRB Chair

September 4, 2013

Mr. Jaime Lopez
Teaching, Learning and Innovation
The University of Texas at Brownsville
One West University Blvd.
Brownsville, Texas 78520

RE: IRB-HS Approval

Study Title: “Professional Learning Communities Influence on School Culture in one School District”

Protocol #: 2012-024-IRB

Dear Mr. Lopez,

In accordance with Federal Regulations for review of research protocols, the Institutional Review Board – Human Subjects of The University of Texas at Brownsville has reviewed your study as requested.

The IRB-HS grants its approval for this project contingent on compliance with the following items. You may make as many copies of the stamped consent form as are necessary for your activity. All consent forms MUST bear the UTB IRB stamp indicating approval.

Responsibilities of the Principal Investigator also include:

- Inform the IRB-HS in writing immediately of any emergent problems or proposed changes.
- Do not proceed with the research until any problems have been resolved and the IRB-HS have reviewed and approved any changes.
- Report any significant findings that become known in the course of the research that might affect the willingness of the subjects to take part.
- Protect the confidentiality of all personally identifiable information collected.
- Submit for review and approval by the IRB-HS all modifications to the protocol or consent form(s) prior to implementation of any change(s).
- Submit an activity/progress report regarding research activities to the IRB-HS on no less than an annual basis or as directed by the IRB-HS through the Continuing Review Form.
- Notify the IRB-HS when study has been completed through submission of a Project Completion Report.

Should you have any questions or need any further information concerning this document please feel free to contact me at (956) 882-8888 or via email at Matthew.Johnson@utb.edu.

Sincerely yours,

Matthew Johnson, Ph.D.
IRB – Chair

Approval Type:
☐ Full Board Review
☒ Designated Member Review
☐ Continuing Review
☐ Change request/Modification/Amendment
☐ Exempt Category
☐ Expedited Category

Approval Period:
Start Date: September 4, 2013
End Date: September 3, 2014
September 24, 2012

Mr. Jaime Lopez
Teaching, Learning and Innovation
The University of Texas at Brownsville
80 Fort Brown,
Brownsville, Texas 78520

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Matthew Johnson, Ph.D.
IRB – Chair
Appendix C: Consent Form

Consent Form

Dear Faculty Member/Principal/Professional Staff/Central Office Administrator/Superintendent/Board Member:

You are invited to participate in a study as part of a research project that examines what influence the implementation of a Professional Learning Community (PLC) has in one school district’s culture. The principal investigator is Jaime Lopez, a doctoral candidate at the University of Texas at Brownsville. The study has been reviewed and approved by the Institutional Review Board at the University of Texas Brownsville.

You have been selected because you are an employee of this district, and your opinions and comments will be of great value to this study. This study offers an opportunity and a potential benefit to gather pertinent data on schools and school districts that possess traits of PLCs over a four-year period.

There are two forms of participation in this study. First, all current employees qualify to take the Professional Learning Community Assessment-Revised (PLCA-R), an online survey that consists of 53 items. The data gathered from this survey will help the principal investigator determine the strength of each of Hord’s 5 Dimensions of a PLC. We will not ask you to provide any identifying information, and you should be able to complete the survey in approximately 10 minutes. You must be 18 years old or older to participate.

The second set of participants will be selected based on their years of employment with the district. In order to examine changes in culture it is important to gather data from employees that were employed by the district before the employment of the current superintendent. This set of participants consists of faculty, principals, central office administrators, superintendent, and school board members.

Participation in this study is voluntary and responses will remain completely confidential. You do not have to complete the survey, and you can choose not to answer individual questions. If you decide that you no longer want to participate once you have begun, simply close down your browser window. Your name will not appear anywhere on the questionnaire. Code numbers will be assigned to each school campus and the code number for your campus or site will need to be entered before submitting the questionnaire.

Confidentiality will be maintained to the degree permitted by the technology used. Every effort to keep your responses anonymous and confidential have been taken, including the use of a secure server, but no guarantees can be made regarding the tracking or interception of your responses by any third parties.

If you have any questions regarding the questionnaire or research, contact Jaime Lopez, principal investigator, at 956-501-5073 or email me at jlopez9526@yahoo.com.

This study has been reviewed by IRB-HS, any questions regarding the rights of being a research subject please call the Office of Research Integrity and Compliance at 956-882-7731.

Consent Statement:
You are voluntarily making a decision whether or not to participate. Your signature indicates that, having read and understood the information provided above, you have decided to participate. You will be given a copy of this consent form to keep.

__________________________  __________________________
Signature of Subject        Date

Jaime Lopez
Doctoral Candidate
The University of Texas – Brownsville
721 Lakeway Dr.
Weslaco, TX 78596
956-501-5073
jlopez9526@yahoo.com

UTB IRB-HS Approval Stamp
2012-024-IRB Lopez
Approval Date 9/24/2012
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The University of Texas – Brownsville
721 Lakeaway Dr.
Weslaco, TX 78596
956-501-5073
jlopez0526@yahoo.com
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Jaime Lopez
Doctoral Candidate
The University of Texas – Brownsville
721 Lakeway Dr.
Weslaco, TX 78596
956-501-5073
jlopez0526@yahoo.com

UTB IRB-HS Approval Stamp
2012-024-IRB Lopez
Approval Date 9/4/2014
Expiration Date 9/3/2016
Appendix D: Site Approval

From: (Director for Research SCISD)

Sent: Thursday, August 16, 2012 7:57 AM

To: Jaime Lopez

Subject: RE: Request to conduct Dissertation Study

Mr. Lopez, (Superintendent) has approved your dissertation study. From what I read you will need some information from our office with regard to employees in the district prior to (Superintendent) being hired. Please give me an idea of your timeline and specifics of the data you will need. I look forward to working with you.

Director of Research and Evaluation/Computer Services
SCISD

This email message may contain confidential student information protected by FERPA and other laws. The information is intended solely for the use of the named recipient(s). Any other use or disclosure of this information without prior authorization by the SCISD is prohibited to the extent permitted by law.

From: Jaime Lopez [jlopez0526@yahoo.com]
Sent: Tuesday, August 14, 2012 9:06 AM
To: (Director for Research SCISD)
Subject: Re: Request to conduct Dissertation Study

Thank you for your prompt response.

Jaime Lopez

On Aug 14, 2012, at 9:01 AM, (Director for Research SCISD) wrote:

Thank you for submitting the information requested. I have forwarded this information to (Superintendent) for approval.

(Director for Research SCISD)
Director of Research and Evaluation/Computer Services
SCISD
I am a doctoral candidate from the University of Texas at Brownsville requesting to examine your district's efforts as it transforms into a PLC.

Attached are the documents requested. Please let me know if any questions.

Jaime Lopez  
jlopez0526@yahoo.com  
Learn, Lead, Serve

Mr. Lopez, I apologize for the delay. There are attached forms that the district requests to be completed and returned to me prior to approving studies done in the district. The first attachment is a proposal abstract describing what your dissertation is about and please include what information or data you will be seeking. The district requires a confidentiality statement which includes revealing any conflicts of interest. The last form is a Vitae giving us a little more information regarding yourself.

The district welcomes studies that may provide valuable data that may be beneficial to education. Please take time to complete the forms and you may email them back to me at your convenience. After review, I will forward information to (Superintendent) for his approval. Thank you.

Director of Research and Evaluation/Computer Services  
SCISD

Jaime Lopez  
jlopez0526@yahoo.com  
Learn, Lead, Serve
Good morning Mr. Administrator,

My name is Jaime Lopez and I am a doctoral student at the University of Texas at Brownsville. My doctoral degree is in Curriculum and Instruction with a specialization in Educational Leadership. Currently I am working on my dissertation, which is a case study exploring the influence the implementation of a professional learning community (PLC) had on the school district’s culture. I am humbly requesting to conduct my study in SCISD. Your school district is the perfect research site because of its PLC work. My question is how can I get permission to conduct my study? Please advise. If you need any further information, do not hesitate to call me at 956-501-5073 or send me an email. Thank you for your attention and look forward hearing from you.

Jaime Lopez
jlopez0526@yahoo.com
Learn, Lead, Serve
Appendix E: Access to PLCA-R

From: Brian Litke <brian.litke@sedl.org>
To: Jaime Lopez <jlopez0526@yahoo.com>
Sent: Tuesday, September 25, 2012 5:10 PM
Subject: Pricing for PLCA-R survey

Hello Jaime,

This is Web Administrator at SEDL. We talked a few days ago about the PLCA-R, and I said I would talk to my supervisor to see if we could set a fixed price that would accommodate your survey needs.

My supervisor agreed that if you purchase 450 surveys, which would cost $433 ($400 plus $33 in sales tax), that I would set up your account to handle up to 2,000 responses. You may not need that many, as you’re inviting 2,500, but this way we can ensure that you don’t bump into any limits during data collection and in effect, you’ll get a better discount that the quantity discount.

If you decide to purchase, just make the purchase for 450 surveys and I’ll do the adjustment on my end when I add them to your account to give you access to 2,000 PLCA-R completions.

Sincerely,

SEDL Web Administrator

Web Administrator
SEDL
4700 Mueller Blvd.
Austin, TX 78723
511-391-6529 (voice)
511-476-2286 (fax)
http://www.sedl.org
*Advancing Research, Improving Education*
Appendix F: Permission to use Interview Protocols

You are more than welcome to use them. I give you permission. I don’t know the protocol that is needed if any.
Cathy Ostmeyer

Sent from my iPhone

On Mar 6, 2013, at 8:25 PM, Jaime Lopez <jlopez0526@yahoo.com> wrote:

Greetings from deep south Texas,

My name is Jaime Lopez and I am a doctoral candidate at the University of Texas Brownsville. I am humbly requesting to use the Interview Protocols in your dissertation. These tools will play an important role in my case study to collect data from different district personnel to examine their district wide implementation of a PL.C.

My dissertation chair is Dr. Jesus "Chuey" Abrego. Dr. Anita Pankake was his dissertation chair.

Please let me know what the process is to formalize this request. Thanks.

This message is intended for Catherine J. Ostmeyer the author of "Professional learning community characteristics: A study from a district perspective." If you are not the author of this study I apologize for any inconvenience.

Jaime Lopez
jlopez0526@yahoo.com
Learn, Lead, Serve
Appendix G: Professional Learning Communities Assessment – Revised (PLCA-R)

Professional Learning Communities Assessment – Revised

Directions:
This questionnaire assesses your perceptions about your principal, staff, and stakeholders based on the dimensions of a professional learning community (PLC) and related attributes. This questionnaire contains a number of statements about practices which occur in some schools. Read each statement and then use the scale below to select the scale point that best reflects your personal degree of agreement with the statement. Shade the appropriate oval provided to the right of each statement. Be certain to select only one response for each statement. Comments after each dimension section are optional.

Key Terms:
- Principal = Principal, not Associate or Assistant Principal
- Staff/Staff Members = All adult staff directly associated with curriculum, instruction, and assessment of students
- Stakeholders = Parents and community members

Scale:
1 = Strongly Disagree (SD)
2 = Disagree (D)
3 = Agree (A)
4 = Strongly Agree (SA)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STATEMENTS</th>
<th>SCALE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Shared and Supportive Leadership</strong></td>
<td>SD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Staff members are consistently involved in discussing and making decisions about most school issues.</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. The principal incorporates advice from staff members to make decisions.</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Staff members have accessibility to key information.</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. The principal is proactive and addresses areas where support is needed.</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Opportunities are provided for staff members to initiate change.</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. The principal shares responsibility and rewards for innovative actions.</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. The principal participates democratically with staff sharing power and authority.</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
8. Leadership is promoted and nurtured among staff members. 0 0 0 0
9. Decision-making takes place through committees and communication across grade and subject areas. 0 0 0 0
10. Stakeholders assume shared responsibility and accountability for student learning without evidence of imposed power and authority. 0 0 0 0
11. Staff members use multiple sources of data to make decisions about teaching and learning. 0 0 0 0

COMMENTS:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Shared Values and Vision</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. A collaborative process exists for developing a shared sense of values among staff.</td>
<td>0 0 0 0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. Shared values support norms of behavior that guide decisions about teaching and learning.</td>
<td>0 0 0 0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. Staff members share visions for school improvement that have an undeviating focus on student learning.</td>
<td>0 0 0 0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. Decisions are made in alignment with the school’s values and vision.</td>
<td>0 0 0 0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16. A collaborative process exists for developing a shared vision among staff.</td>
<td>0 0 0 0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17. School goals focus on student learning beyond test scores and grades.</td>
<td>0 0 0 0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18. Policies and programs are aligned to the school’s vision.</td>
<td>0 0 0 0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19. Stakeholders are actively involved in creating high expectations that serve to increase student achievement.</td>
<td>0 0 0 0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20. Data are used to prioritize actions to reach a shared vision.</td>
<td>0 0 0 0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

COMMENTS:
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Collective Learning and Application</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>D</th>
<th>A</th>
<th>SA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>21. Staff members work together to seek knowledge, skills and strategies and apply this new learning to their work.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22. Collegial relationships exist among staff members that reflect commitment to school improvement efforts.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23. Staff members plan and work together to search for solutions to address diverse student needs.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24. A variety of opportunities and structures exist for collective learning through open dialogue.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25. Staff members engage in dialogue that reflects a respect for diverse ideas that lead to continued inquiry.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26. Professional development focuses on teaching and learning.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27. School staff members and stakeholders learn together and apply new knowledge to solve problems.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28. School staff members are committed to programs that enhance learning.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29. Staff members collaboratively analyze multiple sources of data to assess the effectiveness of instructional practices.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30. Staff members collaboratively analyze student work to improve teaching and learning.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
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</table>

**COMMENTS:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Shared Personal Practice</td>
<td>SD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31. Opportunities exist for staff members to observe peers and offer encouragement.</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>32. Staff members provide feedback to peers related to instructional practices.</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>33. Staff members informally share ideas and suggestions for improving student</td>
<td>0</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>---</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>34.</td>
<td>Staff members collaboratively review student work to share and improve instructional practices.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35.</td>
<td>Opportunities exist for coaching and mentoring.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36.</td>
<td>Individuals and teams have the opportunity to apply learning and share the results of their practices.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>37.</td>
<td>Staff members regularly share student work to guide overall school improvement.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**COMMENTS:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Supportive Conditions - Relationships</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>D</th>
<th>A</th>
<th>SA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>38.</td>
<td>Caring relationships exist among staff and students that are built on trust and respect.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>39.</td>
<td>A culture of trust and respect exists for taking risks.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40.</td>
<td>Outstanding achievement is recognized and celebrated regularly in our school.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41.</td>
<td>School staff and stakeholders exhibit a sustained and unified effort to embed change into the culture of the school.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>42.</td>
<td>Relationships among staff members support honest and respectful examination of data to enhance teaching and learning.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**COMMENTS:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Supportive Conditions - Structures</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>D</th>
<th>A</th>
<th>SA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>43.</td>
<td>Time is provided to facilitate collaborative work.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>44.</td>
<td>The school schedule promotes collective learning and shared practice.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45.</td>
<td>Fiscal resources are available for professional development.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>46.</td>
<td>Appropriate technology and instructional materials are available to staff.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>STATEMENTS</td>
<td>SCALE</td>
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<td>--------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
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<tr>
<td>47. Resource people provide expertise and support for continuous learning.</td>
<td>0 0 0 0</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>48. The school facility is clean, attractive and inviting.</td>
<td>0 0 0 0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>49. The proximity of grade level and department personnel allows for ease in collaborating with colleagues.</td>
<td>0 0 0 0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50. Communication systems promote a flow of information among staff members.</td>
<td>0 0 0 0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>51. Communication systems promote a flow of information across the entire school community including: central office personnel, parents, and community members.</td>
<td>0 0 0 0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>52. Data are organized and made available to provide easy access to staff members.</td>
<td>0 0 0 0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**COMMENTS:**

(Olivier & Hipp, 2010)
Appendix H: Interview Protocols

Teacher Interview Guide

Name: _______________________________ Campus: ______________________
Grade Level/Subject: ___________ Total Years Teaching Experience: __________ Years
Experience in District: ______ Years at Campus: __________

1. Tell me about what it was like in the district before the current superintendent arrived.

2. Is there anything that has changed since the new superintendent came? Is there anything that has not changed? Has your job changed or have you done anything differently since the current superintendent arrived?

3. From your perspective, what have been some of the challenges the superintendent has faced since arriving in South Central ISD?

Shared Decision-Making

4. How do decisions get made in the district? Can you give me an example?

5. How would you rate your involvement in the decision-making process at the district and campus levels?

6. Describe how the district improvement plan is developed? Describe how the campus improvement plan is developed? Were you involved in developing either plan? How were you involved?

Visions for School Improvement

7. Are there vision and mission statements for your district and campus? If so, can you tell me what it is? Who was included in developing the vision/mission statements?

8. What is the focus of the district goals and your campus goals? How are the goals developed? Who is involved in the process?

9. How is information gathered to determine to what extent the goals have been met?

10. Are you aware of any goals for the district that the superintendent might have? How has he made them known in the district?

Staff’s Collective Learning and Application
11. Are there formal/informal discussions related to the successes, failures, short and long-range goals, and improvement strategies?

12. How often does the staff meet, formally and informally? What is discussed at the meetings?

13. Describe staff development within the district.

14. Are follow-up activities provided after staff development/teacher training? How do you think it could be improved upon?

15. Are individual teachers allowed the freedom to modify and/or adopt new programs or strategies in the classroom?

Shared Personal Practice/Peer Review and Peer Feedback

16. Does the staff at your campus observe others’ classroom teaching? What happens after the observation?

17. Do district administrators visit your school? How often? How much contact or interaction have you had directly with the superintendent?

18. Do campus administrators visit classrooms? How often?

19. What system is used for teacher evaluations?

School Conditions and Capacities Support Staff’s Learning Organization Arrangement

20. Is teamwork promoted at the district/campus level? If so, how?

21. How is collegiality and trust built at the district/campus levels?

22. How is information shared/communicated with the staff from the district level/campus level?

23. Do you feel that you are supported from the central office/campus administrators? Could you give me an example of how you are or are not supported?

Superintendent Characteristics

24. What do you expect from the superintendent?

25. What are some characteristics that the superintendent has brought to the district that you would like to see continued?

Culture
26. What about the school makes you most proud? Why?

27. What about this school serves students well? Why?

28. What about this school serves the faculty well? Why?

29. What about this school serves the parents and community well? Why?

30. What about this school makes it unique? Why?
Principal Interview Guide

Name: ____________________________ Campus: ____________________________
Grade Levels: ____________________ Total Years Teaching Experience: _______
Years as Administrator: _________ Years Experience in District: ____________
Years at Campus: _________

1. Tell me about what it was like in the district before the current superintendent arrived.

2. What if any change has occurred since the current superintendent? Has your job changed and how you approach it changed since the superintendent arrived?

3. From your perspective, what have been some of the challenges the superintendent has faced since arriving in South Central ISD?

Shared Decision-Making

4. How do decisions get made in the district at the district and campus levels? Can you give me an example of the process?

5. What is your involvement in the decision-making process at the district and campus levels?

Visions for School Improvement

6. Are there vision and mission statements for your district? If so, can you tell me what it is? Who was included in the process of developing the statements?

7. What is the focus of the district goals/your campus goals? How are the goals developed and progress assessed toward meeting the goals? Who is included in the process?

8. Are you aware of the superintendent’s goals for the district? What do you think of the goals? How has she made them known in the district?

Staff’s Collective Learning and Application

9. Are there formal/informal discussions related to the successes, failures, short and long-range goals, and improvement strategies? How is student learning/improvement assessed at your campus?

10. How often and when does the staff meet, formally and informally, at the campus level/district level? What is discussed at the meetings?

11. Describe staff development within the district? Do you consider it meaningful and relevant?
12. Are follow-up activities provided after staff development/teacher training?

13. Are you supportive of new programs and ideas? How do you show support for new ideas/programs? Let’s suppose you went to a convention/workshop and found something that might really work for your campus. Do you feel like you would be supported in the implementation of the new idea.

14. What kind of freedom are teachers given in implementing new programs and ideas?

### Shared Personal Practice/Peer review and Feedback

15. Does the staff at your campus observe others’ classroom teaching? If so, what is the next step(s) after the observation?

16. How often do you visit classrooms?

17. Do the district administrators visit classrooms? How often?

18. What system do you use for teacher evaluations?

### School Conditions and Capacities Support Staff’s Learning Organization Arrangement

19. Do you think it is important for teachers to meet? How do you arrange time for teachers to get together?

20. How is teamwork promoted at the district/campus level? Could you give me an example?

21. How is collegiality and trust built at the district/campus level?

22. How is information shared with the staff from the district level/campus level?

23. How would you characterize your relationship with your campus staff?

24. Do you feel that you are supported from the superintendent and central office? Could you give me an example of how you are supported?

### Superintendent Characteristics

25. What do you expect from the superintendent?

26. What are some characteristics that the superintendent brought to the district that you would like to see continued?

27. What characteristics would you like to see in the new superintendent?
**Culture**

28. What about the school makes you most proud? Why?

29. What about this school serves students well? Why?

30. What about this school serves the faculty well? Why?

31. What about this school serves the parents and community well? Why?

32. What about this school makes it unique? Why?
Central Office Interview Guide

Name: _______________________________ Campus: ______________________
Position: ___________________ Total Years Teaching Experience: __________ Years
Experience in District: ______ Years as Campus Administrator: __________ Years at Central
Office: __________

1. Tell me about what it was like in the district before the current superintendent arrived? How is the atmosphere in the district?

2. Is there anything that has changed since the new superintendent came? Is there anything that has not changed? Has your job changed or have you done anything differently since the current superintendent arrived?

3. From your perspective, what have been some of the challenges the superintendent has faced since arriving in South Central ISD?

Shared Decision-Making

4. Discuss how decisions are made at the district level and who is included in decision-making at the campus level and who is included in the decision-making process?

5. How would you rate your involvement in the decision-making process at the district and campus levels?

6. Describe how the district improvement plan is developed? Describe how the campus improvement plan is developed? Were you involved in developing any of the plans? If so, please discuss how you were involved?

Visions for School Improvement

7. Are there vision and mission statements for your district? If so, can you tell me what it is? Who was included in developing the vision/mission statements?

8. What is the focus of the district goals? How are the goals developed?

9. What do you think are the superintendent’s goals? How has she made them known in the district?

10. How is information gathered and progress assessed toward meeting the district goals/campus goals?
Staff’s Collective Learning and Application

11. Are there formal/informal discussions related to the successes, failures, short and long-range goals, and improvement strategies?

12. How often does the central office staff meet, formally and informally? What is discussed at the meetings?

13. Describe staff development within the district.

14. Are follow-up activities provided after staff development/teacher training? How do you think it could be improved upon?

15. Are you supportive of new programs/ideas? How do you show this support?

Shared Personal Practice/Peer Review and Peer Feedback

16. Do district administrators visit the schools? How often?

17. What are the focal points of the visits?

School Conditions and Capacities Support Staff’s Learning Organization Arrangement

18. Is teamwork promoted at the district/campus level? If so, how?

19. How is collegiality and trust built at the district/campus levels?

20. How do you support the campus administrators/teachers?

21. How is information shared with the staff at the district level/campus level?

22. Do you feel that superintendent supports you? Please explain.

Superintendent Characteristics

23. What do you expect from the superintendent?

24. What are some characteristics that the superintendent has brought to the district that you would like to see continued?

Culture

25. What about the school makes you most proud? Why?

26. What about this school serves students well? Why?
27. What about this school serves the faculty well? Why"

28. What about this school serves the parents and community well? Why?

29. What about this school makes it unique? Why?
Superintendent Interview Guide

Name: ___________________ Campus: _______________ Position: ___________________
Total Years Teaching Experience: _________ Years Experience in District: ______ Years as
Campus Administrator: ___________ Years at Central Office: ___________

1. Tell me a bit about yourself, including your educational background and experience?
2. How is the district different now than before you took the job? Describe.
3. Why did you take this job and what was appealing about the job? What were the
   challenges?
4. Describe your leadership style (how you lead, what do you do, what do you say). Does
   what you do to lead vary depending on the situation? Can you give me some examples?
5. Have you adapted/changed your approach while being superintendent in this district?
6. What are the expectations of you as a leader in this district? Who holds these
   expectations? How do you know what they are? What expectations do you hold for
   yourself?
7. I realize that anytime a new superintendent takes over changes occur. Some have
   happened naturally and some have occurred because of your leadership. Can you give
   me any specific examples of changes you have initiated and implemented?
8. Has there been any resistance to changes proposed? Who resisted? Why? What did you
   do?
9. Are there some things that you would like to have accomplished but haven’t? What are
   they? Why haven’t they been accomplished?
10. What has been the most gratifying/rewarding part of your job?

Shared Decision-Making

11. How do decisions get made in this district? Can you give me an example of this process?
12. Could you discuss how the district improvement plan is developed? How is the district
    improvement plan development different/similar from the development of campus
    improvement plans?
13. How do you involve the community in decision-making within the district?
Shared Visions for School Improvement

14. Was there vision and/or mission statement in your district when you assumed your position? Is there one now? What was the process for development? Who was involved?

15. What goals did you have for the district when you arrived? What goals do you have now? What role have you played in identifying and sharing these?

16. To what extent have the vision and goals been achieved? How is the information gathered to determine to what extent the goals and vision have been achieved? How is this information shared with others in the district?

17. What do you see as the district’s goals five years from now?

Staff’s Collective Learning and Application

18. Are there formal/informal discussions related to the successes, failures, short and long-range goals, and improvement strategies? If so, who is included in the discussions?

19. How is student improvement/learning assessed in your district?

20. Discuss your staff development/teacher training program in this district.

21. Is there a staff development program for administrators and non-teaching staff? Can you describe it? How do you encourage and promote learning and growth among district administrators/teachers/non-teaching staff?

22. Tell me about your administrators meetings and the focus of the meetings. How often do you meet with administrators? Who attends? Who takes the lead in facilitating these meetings?

23. Do you attend campus staff meetings? How often? Why?

Shared Personal Practice/Peer Review and Peer Feedback

24. Do you visit the schools and classrooms? How often? What are the focal points of the visits?

25. Do you encourage peer classroom visits and administrator classroom visits? What form does this encouragement take?

26. Do you have any programs in the district that facilitates peer feedback (i.e., cognitive coaching, mentoring)?
School Conditions and Capacities Support Staff’s Learning Organization Arrangement

27. How do you celebrate successes and give recognition for accomplishments in the district?

28. Describe the working relationship you have with the central office staff/campus administrators/teachers?

29. Could you discuss your relationship with the school board, school board meetings’ atmosphere, and the philosophy and goals of the school board?

30. Does teamwork happen in your district? Can you give me an example?

31. How do you build trust within the district and community?
School Board Member

Name: _______________________________
Position on School Board: ________________ Years on School Board: _____ Years in Current Position: __________

1. What characteristics were you looking for in a superintendent when you hired the superintendent? Why do you think that the superintendent was hired?

2. Tell me about what the district was like before the superintendent arrived.

3. Is there anything that has changed since the superintendent arrived? Is there anything that hasn’t changed? Can you tell me about any specific initiatives and/or actions that she has taken?

4. From what you have observed, do administrators and teachers approach their jobs differently since the superintendent arrived?

5. From your perspective, what have some of the challenges been that the superintendent has faced since arriving in Western Crossing ISD? Has she had any critics, opposition, and/or setbacks?

Visions for School Improvement

6. There is a lot of emphasis on vision today. Would you say that the superintendent had a vision for the district? If so, what was it?

7. What were her goals and how has she made them known within the district? Are these consistent with the school board’s goals?

8. How is information gathered to determine to what extent the goals have been met?

School Conditions and Capacities Support Staff’s Learning Organization Arrangement

9. Do you feel teamwork is promoted within the district and if so, how? Could you give me an example?

10. How would you describe her approach in working with the school board?

11. What does the school board expect from the superintendent?

Superintendent Characteristics

12. What characteristics has the superintendent brought to the district that you would like to see continued?
Appendix I: Culture Questions

1. What about the school makes you most proud? Why?

2. What about this school serves students well? Why?

3. What about this school serves the faculty well? Why?

4. What about this school serves the parents and community well? Why?

5. What about this school makes it unique? Why?

(Kruse and Louis, 2009, p. 70)
## Appendix J: PLCA-R Results by Dimension

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PLC Dimensions</th>
<th>D1</th>
<th>D2</th>
<th>D3</th>
<th>D4</th>
<th>D5a</th>
<th>D5b</th>
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<tr>
<td>Q1: 1428</td>
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<td>Q2: 1461</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>Q3: 1453</td>
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<tr>
<td>Q9: 1492</td>
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<td>Q11: 1634</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- **No. of respondents**: 511
- **Sum of raw scores**: 16166 13753 15631 10376 7640 15189
- **Average Raw Score**: 31.64 26.91 30.59 20.31 14.95 29.72
- **Mean**: 2.88 2.99 3.06 2.90 2.99 2.97
- **Standard Deviation**: 0.81 0.74 0.70 0.75 0.76 0.73
### Appendix K: PLCA-R Results for all respondents by Item

**Shared and Supportive Leadership**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>Mean Score</th>
<th>Statement Text</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>2.79</td>
<td>Staff members are consistently involved in discussing and making decisions about most school issues.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>2.86</td>
<td>The principal incorporates advice from staff members to make decisions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>2.84</td>
<td>Staff members have accessibility to key information.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>2.95</td>
<td>The principal is proactive and addresses areas where support is needed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>2.79</td>
<td>Opportunities are provided for staff members to initiate change.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>2.95</td>
<td>The principal shares responsibility and rewards for innovative actions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>2.73</td>
<td>The principal participates democratically with staff sharing power and authority.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>2.87</td>
<td>Leadership is promoted and nurtured among staff members.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.</td>
<td>2.92</td>
<td>Decision-making takes place through committees and communication across grade and subject areas.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.</td>
<td>2.73</td>
<td>Stakeholders assume shared responsibility and accountability for student learning without evidence of imposed power and authority.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.</td>
<td><strong>3.20</strong></td>
<td>Staff members use multiple sources of data to make decisions about teaching and learning.</td>
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</table>
**Shared Values and Vision**

<table>
<thead>
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<th>#</th>
<th>Mean Score</th>
<th>Statement Text</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>2.94</td>
<td>A collaborative process exists for developing a shared sense of values among staff.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>2.96</td>
<td>Shared values support norms of behavior that guide decisions about teaching and learning.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td><strong>3.02</strong></td>
<td>Staff members share visions for school improvement that have an undeviating focus on student learning.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td><strong>3.10</strong></td>
<td>Decisions are made in alignment with the school's values and vision.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>2.94</td>
<td>A collaborative process exists for developing a shared vision among staff.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>2.90</td>
<td>School goals focus on student learning beyond test scores and grades.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td><strong>3.11</strong></td>
<td>Policies and programs are aligned to the school's vision.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>2.82</td>
<td>Stakeholders are actively involved in creating high expectations that serve to increase student achievement.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td><strong>3.14</strong></td>
<td>Data are used to prioritize actions to reach a shared vision.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#</td>
<td>Mean Score</td>
<td>Statement Text</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----</td>
<td>------------</td>
<td>----------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21.</td>
<td>3.12</td>
<td>Staff members work together to seek knowledge, skills and strategies and apply this new learning to their work.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22.</td>
<td>3.04</td>
<td>Collegial relationships exist among staff members that reflect commitment to school improvement efforts.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23.</td>
<td>3.12</td>
<td>Staff members plan and work together to search for solutions to address diverse student needs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24.</td>
<td>2.96</td>
<td>A variety of opportunities and structures exist for collective learning through open dialogue.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25.</td>
<td>2.99</td>
<td>Staff members engage in dialogue that reflects a respect for diverse ideas that lead to continued inquiry.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26.</td>
<td>3.10</td>
<td>Professional development focuses on teaching and learning.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27.</td>
<td>2.88</td>
<td>School staff members and stakeholders learn together and apply new knowledge to solve problems.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28.</td>
<td>3.16</td>
<td>School staff members are committed to programs that enhance learning.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29.</td>
<td>3.14</td>
<td>Staff members collaboratively analyze multiple sources of data to assess the effectiveness of instructional practices.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30.</td>
<td>3.09</td>
<td>Staff members collaboratively analyze student work to improve teaching and learning.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#</td>
<td>Avg. Score</td>
<td>Statement Text</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----</td>
<td>-----------</td>
<td>----------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31.</td>
<td>2.74</td>
<td>Opportunities exist for staff members to observe peers and offer encouragement.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>32.</td>
<td>2.77</td>
<td>Staff members provide feedback to peers related to instructional practices.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>33.</td>
<td><strong>3.12</strong></td>
<td>Staff members informally share ideas and suggestions for improving student learning.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>34.</td>
<td>2.96</td>
<td>Staff members collaboratively review student work to share and improve instructional practices.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35.</td>
<td>2.90</td>
<td>Opportunities exist for coaching and mentoring.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36.</td>
<td><strong>3.00</strong></td>
<td>Individuals and teams have the opportunity to apply learning and share the results of their practices.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>37.</td>
<td>2.81</td>
<td>Staff members regularly share student work to guide overall school improvement.</td>
</tr>
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</table>
## Supportive Conditions - Relationships

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>Avg. Score</th>
<th>Statement Text</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>38</td>
<td>3.13</td>
<td>Caring relationships exist among staff and students that are built on trust and respect.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>39</td>
<td>2.92</td>
<td>A culture of trust and respect exists for taking risks.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40</td>
<td>3.07</td>
<td>Outstanding achievement is recognized and celebrated regularly in our school.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41</td>
<td>2.83</td>
<td>School staff and stakeholders exhibit a sustained and unified effort to embed change into the culture of the school.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>42</td>
<td>3.01</td>
<td>Relationships among staff members support honest and respectful examination of data to enhance teaching and learning.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## Supportive Conditions - Structures

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<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>Avg. Score</th>
<th>Statement Text</th>
</tr>
</thead>
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<tr>
<td>43</td>
<td>2.86</td>
<td>Time is provided to facilitate collaborative work.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>44</td>
<td>2.82</td>
<td>The school schedule promotes collective learning and shared practice.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45</td>
<td>2.89</td>
<td>Fiscal resources are available for professional development.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>46</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>Appropriate technology and instructional materials are available to staff.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>47</td>
<td>2.94</td>
<td>Resource people provide expertise and support for continuous learning.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>48</td>
<td>3.15</td>
<td>The school facility is clean, attractive and inviting.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>49</td>
<td>3.05</td>
<td>The proximity of grade level and department personnel allows for ease in collaborating with colleagues.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50</td>
<td>3.01</td>
<td>Communication systems promote a flow of information among staff members.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>51</td>
<td>2.93</td>
<td>Communication systems promote a flow of information across the entire school community including: central office personnel, parents, and community members.</td>
</tr>
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<td>52</td>
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## Appendix L: PLCA-R Results by Item and Subgroup

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D5a – Supportive Conditions – Relationships

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D5b – Supportive Conditions - Structures

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Note: Mean scores above a 3.00 (Agree) are bolded; n- Number of Survey Respondents; Mean Score Range; 1.00-1.99= Strongly Disagree; 2.00-2.99= Disagree; 3.00-3.99= Agree; and 4.00-4.99 Strongly Agree
Appendix M: List of Documentation

1. Emails
2. Campus Improvement Plans
3. District Improvement Plan
4. Grade Level Meeting Agenda
5. Campus Master Schedule
6. AEIS Reports
7. TAPR Reports
Appendix N: Artifacts

PLC Agenda

11. What do we want students to learn? What should each student know and be able to do as a result of each unit?
12. How will we know if they have learned? Are we monitoring each student’s learning on a timely basis?
13. What will we do if they don’t learn? What systemic process is in place to provide additional time and support for students who are experiencing difficulty?
14. What will we do if they already know it?
15. Are we doing all we can to prepare our students to be successful in the world of work and higher education?
Four Critical Questions

1. What is it we want all students to learn?
2. How will we know when each student has mastered the essential learning?
3. How will we respond when a student experiences initial difficulty in learning?
4. How will we deepen the learning for students who have already mastered essential knowledge and skills?

(DuFour, Eaker, & DuFour, 2005, p. 15)
SCISD Transformation Journey

Projected/Proposed Implementation Schedule

All projects part of this transformational journey may have multiple years of research/planning.

2012 - 2013
- Two-Way Dual Language Academies
- KHAN Academy
- Information Literacy Centers (ILC’s)
- Digital Classrooms
- The Competitive Edge
- Market HCISD/Recruit & Retain Students
- Leadership Academy

2013 - 2014
- Ninth Grade Academy Opens
- Travis Elementary Leadership Academy
- Open Enrollment for Middle Schools*
- Expand Digital Classroom Initiative
- STEM Elementary/Middle Schools*

2014 - 2015
- School of Health Professions Opens*
- Redesign of Comprehensive High Schools
- Multi-Language International School*
- KEYS Redesign*
- International Baccalaureate Program (IB)*

*Projects currently under consideration.

Milestones:
2010: Voters approve $98.6 million Bond Issue.
- New Middle School, Ninth Grade Academy, Stadium Renovations, Performing Arts Center, Ag Farm, Aquatics Center
2012: Board authorizes administration to proceed with award of QSCB program of $13.9 million.

As of August 2012
SUPERINTENDENT’S ENTRY PLAN

(A Work in Progress for Conversation and Further Collaborative Development)
DESTINATION EXCELLENCE: Charting a Course to Exemplary

SOUTH CENTRAL CONSOLIDATED INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT
SUPERINTENDENT’S ENTRY PLAN

PURPOSE
The purpose of this entry plan is to outline a framework that will help guide the entry and transition of the superintendent of the South Central Consolidated Independent School District (SCISD). Key to the transitional success of a school district is the continuance of a clear focus and intent within its executive leadership (board, superintendent, staff, and principals).

Individual entry conferences were held with seven Board members, seven superintendent’s staff members, and twenty-seven campus principals. The purpose of the entry conferences was to determine common themes, highlights, and areas of focus while charting a collective vision and unity of purpose for the SCISD. Individual conferences allowed for each stakeholder to offer insights unique to their own perspective and experience. These entry conferences were designed to enable the gathering of information quickly about the school district; immediately establish a strong community presence; assess the district’s strengths and opportunities for improvement; identify critical issues; and to create a network of contacts and resources that will assist in the service of improving and strengthening upon our already high quality schools.

The importance of understanding the general culture of the SCISD could not be overemphasized.

Thus, as a new leader coming into the organization, the intent was not to shock unless the situation, climate, and culture demand such action. Entry into an organization should allow for the new leader to have time to stop, look, and listen prior to making or advocating major change.

By understanding the ACES framework (Bradt, Check, and Pedraza, 2006), the new leader of an organization can heighten his or her success for a smooth transition into an organization. The leader’s subsequent plan of actions will assist in charting the course to the eventual success or failure of the organization. Below is a brief summary of the ACES framework:
ACES Framework (Assimilate, Converge and Evolve, Shock)

(A) Assimilating is the safest and least threatening way of a new leader to enter into an organization. It is also the least impactful. By assimilating into the organization, a new leader continues the same path and course of the preceding leader with little to no change.

(B) Converge and Evolve allows a leader to move things in the right direction over time. The new leader converges with the existing culture and then helps the organization evolve over time as appropriate. The evolution of the leader allows for stakeholders to be participants in the process of moving the organization forward.

(C) Shock is the opposite of assimilate and occurs when the new leader changes the culture to his or her way immediately. The obvious effects created are resistance and pushback by those that feel threatened.

This entry plan focused on converge and evolve integrating the input of all critical stakeholders. SCISD’s critical stakeholders and their collective (stakeholder group and superintendent) purpose may be defined as follows (see Attachment A: Pyramid for Success):

**SCISD Board of Trustees**  
*Purpose:* Establish strong team-oriented working relationships with each individual board member while assisting the Board as a whole to maintain its focus on student achievement. A board and superintendent may be certain that the quality of their relationship will be reflected in the operations and in the morale of the staff. A harmonious, open, and understanding relationship increases the likelihood that there will be similar relationships among administrators, teachers, and students. This “tone at the top” is a strong determinant to the overall success (or lack thereof) of a school district.

**Superintendent’s Staff and Principals**  
*Purpose:* Create strong professional learning and collaborative-growth opportunities while assessing the strengths and needs of individual campuses in order to provide each teacher with the necessary tools for student success. The accessibility of the superintendent’s staff to assist principals is crucial to the success of the day-to-day operations of a campus.

**Community**  
*Purpose:* Expand support of leaders of community and business organizations while generating good will and the strengthening of communication channels which promote better schools and a better Harlingen. The opportunity to promote SCISD’s highlights and successes is a shared responsibility among stakeholders and accentuates its unity of purpose.

**Parents**  
*Purpose:* Welcome parents as partners in our schools and assist them in advocating for quality schools on behalf of their children while maximizing their role as their child’s first teacher. Allow opportunities for parent participation at the campus and district level.

**Students**
Purpose: Ensure that students are provided with a relevant and rigorous curriculum taught by highly effective teachers allowing them to graduate college and workforce ready. Provide opportunities for students to be participants in the educational design process by creation of a superintendent’s Student Advisory Committee.

**FOCUS (COMPASS POINTS) AND ACTIVITIES**

The overall objective of the entry plan is to listen, learn, and lead. The entry plan has three distinct phases:

**Phase I: Entry**
July 8 – August 5, 2008

**Phase II: School Readiness**
August 6 – September 4, 2008

**Phase III: Development of Action Plans**
September 5 – Ongoing (2 day superintendent’s staff retreat TBD/1.5 Day board retreat TBD)

Listening and learning sessions dominated Phase I and the early stages of Phase II. These consisted of multiple meetings with constituent groups, civic organizations, internal leadership groups, direct reports, as well as external leaders, leadership groups, parent groups, and community organizations.

Phase II consisted of visits to each of the district’s facilities in order to assure that each campus was prepared for the start of the school year. In addition, an on-site tour conducted by the campus principal was completed prior to the first month of the school year.

Phase III will be highlighted by the creation of specific and detailed action plans which will serve to reiterate SCISD’s Vision and Goals (*See Attachment B—SCISD’S Vision and Goals*). The action plans will become the superintendent’s staff’s guiding document for highlighting, addressing, and serving the needs of all campuses to ensure a collective focus on student achievement while targeting and achieving a State Education Agency Exemplary rated school district. The *Compass Points* (focus areas) will serve as the framework for *Destination Excellence: Charting a Course to Exemplary*. Each point was created based on the collaborative input of critical stakeholders.

**Key:** EP - Elementary Principal, SP - Secondary Principal, SS - Superintendent’s Staff, B - SCISD Board

**Compass Point 1:**

**A Governance Framework Highlighting An Effective and Positive Board/Superintendent Relationship Focused on Student Achievement**

**Activities:**

1. Establish the Board and Superintendent as a cohesive leadership team with a singular agenda focused on improving student achievement.

2. Develop and implement appropriate communication protocols between the Board and Superintendent.

3. Schedule meeting with the Board President to discuss a format and agenda for two Board-Superintendent retreats – one in January and one in March.
4. Establish clear understandings of roles, responsibilities, expectations, and systems for reciprocal accountability.

5. Establish regular meeting time with the Board President for reviewing and constructing agendas.

6. Schedule individual meetings, breakfast, lunch, or dinner with each board member for one-on-one time.

7. Establish regular communication systems with the Board in the form of writing, phone calls, and meetings.

8. Establish a performance evaluation format that will contain individual and District goals as indicators of success to be used by the board to evaluate the superintendent.

Collaborative Input:

"We believe in our team of eight." B

"It is so critical that we all have the same vision. We must always work as a team." B

"We have no hidden agendas. Being honest and putting it all on the table on behalf of our students is what we are about." B

"We have a strong commitment to whatever it takes." B
"We may not always agree, but we will respect each other and do everything to benefit our children." B

**Class Point 2:**
An Aligned and Coherent Instructional Program that Provides All Students with Intervention and Enrichment Opportunities to Increase Student Achievement for All Students and Close Existing Achievement Gaps

**Activities:**
1. Conduct an academic review and analysis to review the instructional program, practices, curriculum, and support materials for evidence of effectiveness in improving student achievement and closing the gap between all student populations (internal curriculum audit).

2. Analyze patterns in student achievement data and the gap in achievement between various student populations in order to determine an appropriate course of action for the improvement of teaching and learning.

3. Review District curriculum, instruction, and assessments for high expectations, alignment to standards, and appropriate instructional modifications for students who are not achieving, English Language Learners, and students with disabilities.

4. Provide opportunities for principals and teachers to know the specific knowledge and skills to be taught and learned at each grade and in each subject (creation of vertical and horizontal teams).

5. Allow for instructional support for campuses by designating and/or hiring appropriate campus and central office staff (elementary instructional facilitators and central office content specialists).

6. Review the district’s bilingual education model and determine consistency of implementation throughout the District.

7. Determine alignment of district benchmarks and assessments to subject scope and sequence.

8. Provide tiered interventions for struggling learners.

9. Ensure opportunities for enrichment for students performing at high levels on state and national assessments.

10. Conduct a comprehensive review to determine the possibility of a full-day pre-kindergarten and full-day kindergarten program.
11. Raise expectations for all students and for all campuses.

12. Initiate systemic improvement of personnel quality by providing targeted and tiered professional development of staff. Improve the systems necessary to provide for continual improvement in student achievement. Understand the societal and community structures and systems necessary for the improvement of student achievement.

13. Design a performance review model, developing a “report card” for every school in the District and meet with staff, including principals, to discuss results.

14. Review and analyze the District’s monitoring and evaluation systems for evaluating effectiveness and accountability in terms of achievement for each program based on student progress.

Collaborative Input:

“It is important for the district to offer full day kindergarten for all students. It would be great to have full day pre-k as well.” EP

“More curriculum support is needed, I don’t have many people to turn to at the district level, more curriculum specialists are needed.” EP

“We do not have a true bilingual plan to follow district-wide. Each campus addresses bilingual education individually.” EP

We need to stress a rigorous curriculum because only then can we truly close the gaps.” SP

“We need to constantly examine our curriculum to make sure it is aligned. Instructional facilitators in the secondary schools seem to help, we can sure use them in the elementary schools as well.” EP
In the secondary schools, our science scores need as much assistance as possible. We are working hard to improve in that area.” SP

“As educators our number one focus is our students. Instruction must afford our students to be successful in the classroom, but more importantly, in the world.” EP

“There is no doubt that curriculum and instruction will take us where we want to go, however we need some assistance and focus because we are so thin in that area as far as people go.” SP

“We were hoping that the Curriculum Collaborative would be good, and in a way it has been. However, there is still much skepticism because of the way it was rolled out.” SP

“We are understaffed at the central office in our most important department, curriculum.” SP

“I would like to see more outside the box curriculum, understanding by design.” SP

“Special education impacts so much of our general education.” EP

“We need to have a district wide curriculum that allows campuses some flexibility. However, I would welcome us to all be on the same page.” EP

“Our staff development needs to be aligned to our needs and we are always of district wide initiatives.” EP

“Each campus should have the same vision and the same plan as other campuses in the district. We would be responsible for making it best fit and to fine tune it for our individual campus.” EP

“Benchmarking is helpful but it is becoming increasingly harder to keep up with all the data. We need help simplifying all of this.” EP

“Elementary schools need instructional facilitators as well. More curriculum experts would always be helpful, Tricia cannot do it all.”

“Our campuses would benefit if we were all on the same page.” EP

“We need to tighten our curriculum.” EP
“We must constantly review our systems of interventions for struggling learners. REACH has been extremely helpful.” EP

“All support systems impact instruction. We must create an instructional package that affords all students intervention and or enrichment. No two students are alike.” EP

“We do not have a true bilingual program or model for the district.” EP

“The alignment of (curriculum) has to be assured. The only way we can be sure of its alignment is by having vertical and horizontal teams make that determination.” SP

“We should not forget the importance of creativity.” SS

“Teachers must always have the necessary tools to be successful in the classroom.” SS

“Continue to drill down further and provide campuses assistance in order for students to be more successful.” SS

“We need our students to understand that they are global students and that they will compete with students from South Texas ISD, the United States, and even the world.” EP

“Our students need to have the opportunity to take educational field trips that allow them to see that they can all be college graduates.” EP

“We must continue to focus on success of our students and help them value learning.” EP

“I have always had a problem with 900 plus freshmen entering and then graduating classes of around 450. We must provide our students with hands on, relevant learning. We are all able to help in this area.” SP

“It seems that we do a fairly good job with students who need assistance and those that do very well in school. I think we need to do a better job of not forgetting those students in the middle.” SP
“We must be able to help students set goals and that they can reach these high goals as long as they believe and our teachers believe as well.” SP

“Global awareness must be understood. Our students are in a more competitive world than ever, and this will only grow, not become stagnant. Our students must be prepared for these realities.” SS

“We must have students successful in science and mathematics, in turn this is a good indicator for college and career ready success.” SS

**Compass Point 3:**

**Optimal Learning Environments that Are Safe and Secure**

**Activities:**

1. Implement Safety Audit recommendations and develop timelines for completion.

2. Determine safety needs assessments by campus.

3. Create a district-wide crisis management plan utilizing NIMS training for Superintendent’s Staff.

4. Assess and determine campus “hotspots” by reviewing discipline data and developing plans to address.

5. Develop a security protocol for secondary campuses utilizing the assistance of the school resource officer, probation officer (high schools), and administration.

6. Designate a central command site for the district during a major crisis.

**Collaborative Input:**

“The perception is that some of our schools are not safe. That is a false perception, but we must continue to make our schools as safe as possible in order for our students to have a great learning environment.” SP

“We must always make our students feel safe and that they always have our support, because many of our kids may not receive it any other place.” EP

“The ninth grade year is so tough for our students, after being in elementary school and then teaming in the middle school, I worry about them in high school.” SP
Compass Point 4: Establish a Supportive, Positive, and Effective District Climate and Culture Singularly

Focused on Student Achievement

Activities:

1. Measure the organizational health of each campus and central office division by conducting surveys that assess customer satisfaction.

2. Provide opportunities for campuses to voice concerns to central office in order to improve staff morale throughout the district.

3. Create a weekly message to staff via email.

4. Post a monthly message on the District website.

5. Provide opportunities for all stakeholders to enhance or expand upon their personal knowledge and understanding of the Harlingen Public Schools and community, its rich culture, traditions, history, and expectations.

6. Understand and participate in the community’s faith-based organizations as viable and valuable support and partners to public education.

7. Expand the superintendent’s staff to include a campus principal and a central office director on a six month rotational basis.

8. Establish positive and productive working relationships with key leadership and members of business, service, non-profit, philanthropic, and political organizations within the Harlingen community and their national representative organizations.

9. Increase opportunities to promote Harlingen CISD’s image within the community and to develop advocacy for what is effective and working well.

10. Ensure ongoing, clear, and consistent communication with all stakeholders.

11. Establish a positive and open working relationship with the members of the media.

12. Schedule meetings with other community leaders. Establish a routine communication protocol with these leaders.
13. Attend meetings of key organizations such as various Chambers of Commerce and service clubs/organizations for initial listening and learning sessions. Establish routine communication protocols with these groups.

14. Invite media to all key significant events and allow them to be partners in the educational process.

15. Schedule meetings with the established parent organizations for initial listening and learning sessions.

16. Meet with employee associations’ and employee groups' leaders to discuss common goals and ways of working together and establish regular meetings to facilitate ongoing communication.

17. Review and assess organizational chart and determine necessary changes to maximize productivity and service to campuses.

**Collaborative Input:**

“We need to provide a productive and successful organization (campus, district) that provides opportunities for staff and students to learn and teach at high levels. We are here to serve the citizens of Harlingen.” EP

“The climate and morale of the district is critical because it is their support we need to move forward.” SP

“As superintendent, it would be helpful to give everyone a sense of assurance that change is ok as you help us get to the next step.” SP

“The importance of building relationships at every level should be a major focus. How well we interact with others makes or breaks how successful we can be.” EP
“Attitude is so important and it has to come from within. It is important that we make everyone feel appreciated.” EP

“Relationships are so important. The ability for a leader to stop, look, and listen is always better than not stop, drop, and roll. We can and we must build on our successes.” SS

“Motivating the staff to best meet the needs of our students is necessary for us to become the best district we can possibly be.” SS

“Having the right people in the right place creates a better organizational environment. It all starts with the right attitude.” SS

“Being able to focus on great, not on average is our most important work. We don’t want to produce average graduates.” SS

“We are a strong team and a good district. We must always understand the importance of building trust for the entire district.” SS

Compass Point 5:
Provide Progressive and Innovative Technology for Students and Staff of the 21st Century Activities:

1. Construct a performance review of all schools in the District for participation and success for each technology-based curriculum intervention program.
2. Complete a technology audit for each campus and division to determine campus and District compatibility and distribution of resources.
3. Review and highlight current best practice in SCISD classrooms which promote digital learning, instant feedback, and multiple technology strategies.
4. Create opportunities for staff to design lessons utilizing enhanced technology (i.e. podcasts, gaming, etc).
5. Provide staff development and reward teachers by giving incentives to teachers willing to utilize and experiment with technology in the classroom.
6. Design a progressive and innovative district technology plan while conducting a needs assessment for the next five years.
**Collaborative Input:**
“We need to prioritize our resources and make technology accessible to more students.” EP

“The district provides us with support, but I would like for us to be more innovative. Technology is a great tool for innovation.” EP

“Keeping up with the innovative strategies and educational “cutting edge” practices can be done if we utilize technology.” SP

“Constant exposure to technology that makes our jobs easier is critical to 21st century learning.” SP

“We have always been progressive as district with regards to technology, however we must keep up the pace.” EP

“Technology is a tool, not the end all be all.” SS

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**Compass Point 6:**
**Design and Enhance Facilities That Support Learning and Create Systems that Focus on Campus Needs**

**Activities:**
1. Conduct a district facility needs assessment.
2. Develop a timeline for a possible bond election.
3. Create a committee to assess District's current facilities and determine the need for future facilities (*See Attachment C - SCISD Planning Steps - 2008 - 2009 Future Facilities Task Force*).
4. Conduct a demographic study.
6. Design a system that focuses on providing services to campuses that has priority listing and projected date of service. The system will include a feedback loop for individuals to track progress and completion of requests.
7. Determine “where we are and where we need to go” in terms of each division, department, and direct report within the organization to ensure a student achievement focused agenda and unity of purpose.
8. Implement a structure to consolidate and streamline similar functions and positions in order to increase and maximize service and support for schools.

9. Explore and consider new and emerging green technologies with regard to the future facilities.

**Collaborative Input:**

“I know that the maintenance department is massive, but I see a lot of inefficiency.” EP

“As a principal, my biggest “umph” is working with maintenance and custodial departments. Don’t get much information, I am not a maintenance person and I don’t know how it works. I put in a proposal and I never hear anything back, there is no follow-up.” EP

“Service folks seem to have lost sight that they are here to support us, they are nice people but in some cases they have forgotten they are here to help not hinder us.” EP

“Maintenance needs are usually addressed two to three months later.” EP

“We must continue to get a lot of assistance and support from facilities. It is important to have things done timely because these issues do affect student achievement.” SP

“When we first opened our building at least half of my time was spent on facility issues.” EP

“My frustration with maintenance is that if a part that was ordered does not come in, they stop there. Instead, shouldn’t they be seeking a temporary solution? I realize that there are budgetary restraints.” SP

“In my personal opinion, certain departments don’t seem to understand that their role is to support our campuses. Any assistance we request or need is because we are trying to meet the needs of our children.” EP
Compass Point 7:
Build a Learning Organization that Encourages and Supports Collaboration and Leadership Capacity
Activities:

1. Create vertical teams by feeder pattern (High school 1 and high school 2) to review data, check alignment of standards, and unity of purpose.

2. Develop horizontal campus teams lead by principals conducting focused highlight walks based on determined strengths.

3. Allow time for campuses to partner with others to determine campus best practices to share with other elementary campuses while designing a “teachers teaching teachers” model.

4. Initiate leadership opportunities for students to participate on all campuses (student council, chess club, etc.)

5. Develop a leadership cadre for assistant principals interested in becoming principals by building their leadership capacity through differentiated, engaging, and rigorous professional development that is focused on the district’s instructional and operational systems (Team One Harlingen).

6. Create a cohort and forum for first and second year principals that affords them opportunities to interact with veteran principals while providing them systems of support.

7. Create a Student Advisory Committee to meet quarterly with the superintendent to allow participation and engagement in their educational setting.

8. Establish positive relationships with all direct reports, principals, and key District leadership to meet, evaluate, and establish all as important and critical to the District’s success.

9. Communicate with parents and facilitate active partnerships on behalf of students.

10. Recruit, hire and retain quality teachers.

11. Establish a positive, professional, and collaborative relationship with employee associations’ and employee groups’ leadership to ensure all decisions are made in the best interest of students and the improvement of the conditions for teaching and learning.

12. Assess the quality, quantity, and effectiveness of all existing forms of communication with various stakeholders ensuring unity of purpose:
13. Write letters/articles to various stakeholders, using direct and media facilitated communication, expanding on the district’s goals, expectations and plans for continuous improvement for our schools.

**Collaborative Input:**

“I would like for us to share the things that work well with our students, staff, and principals. In addition, we need more focus to see underlying causes of what can take us to a higher level and for that to be our expectation for the entire district.” EP

“Believe it is important as soon as data comes in for us to share what were our strengths, weaknesses, and plans of action to address these areas. We could do this as a group (of principals), because I would like to see what is successful in other schools in the district.” EP

“I would like to see more sharing between campuses. There seems to be a disconnect between elementary and secondary curriculum standards. I would welcome more vertical planning.” SP

“It is critical that we as leaders, assist others to become leaders. Our job is to work with our staff and provide them opportunities to lead.” EP

“There is too much competition and not enough collaboration among schools. We are all competitive, but we must always remember, our students are very mobile.” EP

“We need more collaboration. If one of our schools is exemplary, shouldn’t we all know what they are doing?” EP
“In some cases, we don’t seem to have a unified front because we are competitive. We need to pull in the same direction.” SP

“We need to find more time to share best practices and to learn from one another.” SP

“Data drives everything we do. Our district data should be the driving force behind our opportunities to visit and learn from each other’s campuses.” EP

“There needs to be more of an all coming together for a common goal attitude. It seems that the bigger we become as a district, the more we lose sight of this. I don’t believe any of us want to do our own thing.” SP

“I appreciate the freedom that me and my campus receive, but I would like to see all of our schools work more together as a team. Providing us with opportunities to learn from others would be great.” EP

“Sometimes we seem to lose focus, we see departments on occasion working in isolation, we need to share and collaborate with each other more than we do.” EP

“We need to work more as a team of schools rather than as an individual school. EP

“Cross collaborative efforts would take us to the next level. Elementary understanding secondary and vice versa would allow us to best meet our students needs. Graduation should not only be a target for the high schools.” EP

“Collaboration is key. We are all willing to share with each other what works in our schools. We just don’t seem to find the time. This results on all our efforts to be on our own campuses.” EP
“We need to build upon ways to develop our future leaders. On campuses it is the teachers being given leadership opportunities. For us, it’s about finding a way we can help those that want to be future principals or central office administrators a better chance to achieve their goals.” SS

*Progression of the Superintendent’s Entry Plan*

Each Compass Point is assigned a team leader from the superintendent’s staff. Specific timelines, persons responsible, and activities will be drafted and completed within the next 30 days. This will be the focus of the first two day superintendent ‘s staff retreat. After the retreat, a report to the board along with a summary outlining the findings and proposed plans will be forwarded. These documents will then serve as the focal point for the first Board-Superintendent retreat (tentatively scheduled for January). This will allow the Board-Superintendent team the necessary time to review, adjust, or recreate the direction of the action plans as we continue charting our course to exemplary. Let us be always mindful of the following reflective questions:

- What do we need to do to be the best District in the nation?
- What assets do we have to build on to accomplish this?
- What are the barriers we need to overcome to reach this level?

*ENTRY CONFERENCE HIGHLIGHTS*

People are the most important asset in the SCISD. The staff is highly engaged in the success of their students. Their strong ties to SCISD and provides for high expectations for students. When discussing all children learning at high levels, SCISD personnel are quick to point to their children, grandchildren, nieces, nephews, etc. This strong family kinship is deeply rooted and is more of an exception rather than the norm when considering Texas’ other 1040
school districts. Regardless of circumstance, staff has a profound belief in their students, and city. All interviewees were solid in their understanding of SCISD being a standard in the region.

Principals overwhelmingly felt that they could lead their campus to Exemplary status. Each principal acknowledged that they were the instructional leader on their campus and valued the important work of their outstanding teaching staff. Principals’ most important expectation of the superintendent was support, accessibility, visibility and facilitating in making a good district better.

Board members understand the importance of a focused governance team and expressed overwhelming support and dedication to the district. Several board members expressed the need for the superintendent to be creative and collaborative in leading the SCISD. In addition, the board is committed to assisting in moving the district forward to Exemplary status. All stakeholders believe the district can be better than an Acceptable rated school district.

As a result, we will work diligently on behalf of the students, parents, and community as we continue our journey towards Destination Excellence: Charting a Course to Exemplary. We will always be mindful that our students are our True North! For them,

**We can...**

**We will...**

**We must!!**
Attachment B:

This page included the district goals for 2008-2009. The picture had to be removed due to confidentiality reasons.
Attachment C:


1. Needs assessment and demographic study are conducted by the administration.

2. Task Force assembled as follows:
   - Chairman appointed by the Board President.
   - Each Trustee appoints a representative.
   - The administration appoints a diverse group of users (school principals.)
   - The Harlingen Chamber of Commerce and the Hispanic Chamber of Commerce each appoint a representative.
   - The administration appoints specific staff to act as a resource to the Task Force.

3. Public Information Department contacts each appointee and confirms their appointments.

4. Public Information Department mails invitations to the “kick-off” meeting along with a preliminary agenda and schedule for future meetings.

5. Task Force Chairman conducts the first meeting and the group agrees on the schedule for future meetings.

6. District Operations Division takes notes, prepares and distributes minutes, and orders appropriate refreshments/meals for the group.

7. Subsequent meetings are held with presentations made by the administrative resources including cost estimates associated with the needs assessment and demographic studies, and financial/tax implications.

8. Chairman makes periodic progress reports to the Board of Trustees.

9. Task Force conducts several “town hall” meetings to receive community input.

10. Task Force ascertains the “pulse” of the voters.

11. Task Force arrives at a recommendation and presents it to the Board of Trustees.

12. Board approves the recommendations and votes to call an election.

13. Task Force members, other that district employees, advocate for the passage of the election, solicit funding for advertisements and commercials, and conduct additional “town hall” meetings to explain the facts of the proposed program to the community.

14. Proposal is passed by the electorate.

15. Celebration.