THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN "HIGH STAKES" TESTING

AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS

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This study was designed to investigate the influence of the accountability movement on school-sponsored professional development programs, through an investigation of how accountability ("high-stakes" testing and sanctions) shapes the ways in which professional developers plan, implement, and reflect upon their professional development. The study was carried out by qualitatively examining the manner by which two groups of schools planned and implemented their professional development programs. More specifically a group of five schools identified by the state as needing improvement due to low test scores was compared with a second group of five schools not so identified. For both groups, the goal setting and planning stages of their professional development were examined, as well as the implementation of that plan (specifically, the form, duration, participation levels, focus, degree of active learning, level of coherence, and use of student data). Finally, the planners' reflections were investigated to determine what they believed to be the influences of accountability on their professional development programs. The responses across the two groups of schools were coded and analyzed in order to identify similarities and differences within or between these two groups.

In summarizing the data, the research suggests that only minimal differences exist between "Warning List" and "Non-Warning List" schools in the areas of planning, implementation, and reflection upon the professional development. Though variations occurred, schools generally carried out their professional development as they always have and being identified as a "Warning List" school provided no meaningful role in modifying professional development programs.

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1.0 CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTIONS

1.1   Introduction

In class, board, and faculty rooms around the nation, conversations center around issues of accountability and "high-stakes" testing. These educational "buzz words" have gained prominence through the federal legislation, the "No Child Left Behind" (NCLB) Act, which was signed into law in 2002. The NCLB in conjunction with state-level initiatives, have worked to radically change the educational landscape in our schools today. Now, unlike any other time in our history, the government is holding schools accountable for the educational achievement of all students.

In order to hold schools accountable, the NCLB Act mandates that states require districts to administer tests to measure school effectiveness. In Pennsylvania, schools are required to administer the Pennsylvania Standard for School Assessment (PSSA). This statewide test provides educators and state-level educational decision-makers with feedback on their students' performance in various curriculum areas identified by the state. Student scores are then used as a measure of the effectiveness of the schools as a whole, thereby encouraging schools to review their PSSA data and use it to evaluate their curriculum, classroom practices, and professional development programs in order to take corrective actions to improve student achievement. Public accountability and the threat of losing local control to the Pennsylvania Department of Education have placed pressure on districts to take these tests seriously.

This emphasis on accountability and "high-stakes" testing has created an environment where educational decision-makers must focus their efforts on improving student achievement. Research acknowledges that for schools to improve student learning, they must first improve their teachers' effectiveness in the classroom (Killion, 2002). Through the use of effective professional development, schools can actively seek to increase teachers' abilities which ultimately effect student achievement (Sparks & Richardson, 1997)

Many schools have elected to deal with the pressures of accountability and "high-stakes" testing by establishing new programs of professional development for all teachers. However, creating effective professional development is not as simple as it seems. Professional development has traditionally been improperly planned, ineffectively administered, and lacking in the qualities that are essential to the demands of teaching (Porter, Garet, Desimone, Yoon, & Birman, 2000). Often, professional development is seen by teachers as a waste of time and meaningless to the real environment of the classroom (Little, 1999; Troen, 2003). These reactions are not due to a disregard by decision makers as to what is important in professional development, but rather to an unfamiliarity with what is necessary for effective professional development, as well as the lack of monies available for effective practices, and the ineffective structures of schools which impede worthwhile professional development (Killion, 2002; O'Neill, 2002; Turchi, 2002).

This raises several important questions: how will the pressures of the new accountability system, "high stakes" testing, and the consequences for poor performance influence professional development programs? Will administrators, teachers, and schools be able to rise to the challenge of this new era of accountability and work to create more effective professional development experiences or will the status quo be maintained?

1.2   Purpose

The purpose of this study was to examine the relationship between the new accountability environment in which Pennsylvania schools find themselves and the structure, design, and content of the school-sponsored professional development programs. In doing so, two groups of schools were identified. The first group were those schools under pressure by the state and their communities to improve their scores on the Pennsylvania Standard for School Assessment (PSSA) test. This group was made up of schools that have been identified on Pennsylvania's "Warning List" of schools by scoring below the state expectations on the reading portion of the PSSA tests for the 2002-2003 school year. Schools that have obtained this status are under pressure by the state to improve or risk being taken over by the state, and may be required to provide parents with the option of sending their children to another school, to develop school assistance teams, and to develop a specific plan for improvement. The second group of schools were those identified as meeting the reading standards set by the state.

By comparing the professional development offerings of schools on the "Warning List" to those schools not so designated, the relationship between external accountability measures and the nature and effectiveness of school-sponsored professional development programs and the manner in which school leaders were adjusting their professional development programs to account for these new pressures were identified. This study attempted to provide insight into what is occurring in schools that have come under pressure from the state and determine how these schools carried out their professional development planning and implementation, and the nature and extent of differences between those identified on the "Warning List" and similar schools that were not.

1.3   Method

In order to limit the influence of socio-economic levels as a variable, all high poverty and extremely low poverty schools were eliminated by limiting the selection criteria to those schools that meet specific economic criteria. In this study, all schools studied have between thirty-three percent and sixty-six percent of their students eligible for the free and reduced lunch program and spend over six thousand dollars on per-pupil expenditures per year. The first group of schools, however, are also identified on the Pennsylvania "Warning List" while the second group of schools were those where students attained at or above state benchmarks for proficiency and are not identified by the Pennsylvania Department of Education for any other deficiencies. By focusing on schools with similar economic factors, the socio-economic advantages of the community and school, which can directly impact the ability of the school to provide resources, were lessened. For this comparison, it was assumed that schools of similar socio-economic wealth would also have similar parent involvement, access to resources, student populations, and be similar in other aspects that may have a direct impact on student achievement. Also, similar per-pupil expenditure spending was assumed to be associated with similar levels of economic opportunities for students and teachers in terms of developing programs and providing support for the implementation of those programs.

Data were collected on how each school's professional development program in language arts was planned, structured, and implemented during the 2003-2004 school year and the effects of the "No Child Left Behind" Act on it. This was done by collecting data from one individual identified by the principal as having the responsibility for the development, planning, and

implementation of professional development for each of the ten schools. The data were collected through the use of an interview and a survey with each participant.

The analysis was done by examining the data collected through interviews and surveys. All interview data were transcribed and coded and organized around the major topics of planning, reflection, and methods of implementation of the professional development programs (See Appendix C). The data were evaluated to determine if any patterns of similarities, or differences emerged within and between the different groups of schools, and were graphically organized to allow for visualization of patterns.

1.4 Significance

The effects of accountability systems on education are for the most part unknown, especially the effects of being identified as providing inadequate reading instruction. This study will help to put one piece of the larger puzzle in perspective by examining the relationship between a schools' performance on accountability measures and their professional development programs. Insights into how programs are planned and implemented following their identification on a state's "Warning List" for poorly performing schools was gained. Also, this study investigated the content of professional development programs and determines the extent to which they were responsive to the demands of teaching. This information was important for determining how professional development was being carried out and what administrative decisions were being made in this new era of accountability. The decisions made in regard to the design, structure, and content of professional development can directly impact a school's success in dealing with accountability. If schools consistently make poor decisions in regard to professional development

programs, all stakeholders stand to lose. This information helps decision-makers understand what is occurring in schools as a result of accountability measures and indicates whether higher-level supports are needed for schools and administrators to overcome the poor decision-making surrounding professional development.

1.5   Research Questions

Question 1: What differences exist, if any, between the planning of professional development in schools on the Pennsylvania "Warning List" versus schools not on the "Warning List"?

Question 2: What differences exist, if any, between professional development programs in schools on Pennsylvania's "Warning List" versus professional development programs in schools not on the "Warning List" in the areas of:

1.   Form

2.   Duration

3.   Participation

4.   Focus

5.   Level of active learning

6.   Degree of coherence

7.   Use of student data

Question 3: What differences exist, if any, between professional development planners' reflections of the impact of accountability on professional development programs in schools on the Pennsylvania "Warning List" versus schools not on the "Warning List"?

1.6   Limitations

This study was designed to look specifically at the structure, design, and content of professional development programs within schools. At no point did this study focus on effectiveness in terms of teacher learning or student achievement. Effectiveness is assumed if schools indicate that they utilize all aspects of established criteria of effective professional development. This assumption is possible because of prior research that identified factors associated with professional development that leads to improved teacher and student learning (Birman, Desimone, Porter, & Garet, 2000; Elmore, 2000; Guskey, 2000; Loucks-Horsley, 1998; Sparks, 1997). Also, this study is limited to schools at a certain economic level and conclusions should be applied cautiously to schools at other socio-economic levels. Finally, all data collection was done through interviews and self-reporting which are notoriously subject to bias in terms of social desirability and demands on informant's memories

1.7   Overview

This research document is divided into five chapters. Chapter I provides a general overview of the research and attempts to place this problem into perspective in relation to the larger picture of education and professional development. Chapter II provides an in-depth review of the literature on the influence of accountability systems and characteristics of effective professional development program. Chapter III presents the methods utilized in this study, including the manner in which data were analyzed. Chapter IV provides an analysis of the data in regards to the three research questions. In this chapter, each research question is broken into subtopics and the data analysis are summarized within and between the different groups of schools. Chapter V

provides a discussion of the main points identified through this research, as well as their implications for practice at the school, district, and state level. Suggestions are also provided in regards to future studies of this area.

2.0 CHAPTER II: REVIEW OF LITERATURE

2.1   The "No Child Left Behind" Legislation and the Accountability Movement

Improved student learning has always been at the heart of educational reforms and policies even though most have failed to improve student learning. However, a consensus is emerging in the literature and research that identifies effective professional development as central to improved student learning (Birman et al., 2000; Joyce, 1995; Kahle, 1997; Little, 1993). Unfortunately, professional development has frequently left education unchanged and educators questioning its benefits (Troen & Boles, 2003). It has been perceived as unresponsive to the true demands of education and the needs of teachers and students, and historically, little has been done to hold educational leaders accountable for its ineffectiveness.

This may, however, change. In 2002, President Bush signed into law a controversial educational policy called the "No Child Left Behind" Act. This federal legislation, touted as a landmark in educational policy, was designed to transform education by improving "overall student performance and close the achievement gap between rich and poor students in America" (Pennsylvania Department of Education, 2002). As a result, the educational environment of our schools is radically changing, but it remains to be seen if it will produce the intended results.

Since the inception of the "No Child Left Behind" Act, pressure has been placed on state and district-level employees to implement its mandates and to understand what will happen if they do not achieve the desired results. To achieve its goals, the "No Child Left Behind" Act is

built upon four general principles: stronger accountability for results, increased flexibility and local control, expanded options for parents, and an emphasis on teaching methods that have been proven to work (Pennsylvania Department of Education, 2002). These principles provide the framework for states to make major changes in the manner in which educational systems have traditionally functioned. To understand this, a fuller awareness of each principle is needed.

Stronger accountability for results requires states to develop rigorous academic standards delineating what every child should know in the various academic disciplines. States are then required to develop and administer tests to all students at various grade levels to check the progress of schools in meeting those academic standards. Schools are expected to make adequate progress in meeting the various content standards and the results of these yearly tests must be published. Schools not making adequate yearly progress are to be held accountable for their low performance and sanctions imposed if they do not improve (Pennsylvania Department of Education, 2002).

The federal government sought to empower schools to accomplish these new accountability standards by providing schools with increased flexibility and more local control to improve student achievement. To achieve this, the federal government gave schools more freedom in the decision-making process and in the utilization of federal monies to ensure that students are making adequate yearly progress. Schools may now use up to half of their federal monies as they see fit in order to improve student achievement (Pennsylvania Department of Education, 2002). This enables schools to spend federal monies on new reading programs, professional development, or other programs which will improve overall student learning.

States, in keeping with the new law, are mandated to impose sanctions on failing schools and have required districts to provide expanded options for parents of students who are not

meeting the academic standards or who are attending "low performing" schools. If a child's present school is identified as a low-performing school, the state can levy sanctions that will force districts to permit students to transfer to a better performing school if they so desire. Additionally, the legislation has made it easier for districts to access monies in an attempt to help schools support lower performing children. Schools can now use federal dollars to provide tutoring, summer school, and other school services designed to assist low performing students (Pennsylvania Department of Education, 2002).

To meet these new requirements, federal legislators believed that schools should utilize researched-based programs that have shown evidence of increasing student achievement. The use of federal monies is limited to programs, curricula, and initiatives that are supported by research. Through this, schools can access funds for programs and professional development practices that will help teachers and students perform better in this new era of accountability (Pennsylvania Department of Education, 2002).

These mandates place pressure on schools to reevaluate their current practices and look for new ways to improve student achievement. Schools can no longer blame external factors for their students' failure to succeed but must critically examine every aspect of their organization, i.e., professional development programs, curriculum, teaching methods, etc., and create new standards for all stakeholders.

2.1.1   Pennsylvania and the "No Child Left Behind" Act

Pennsylvania, in accordance with the "No Child Left Behind" Act, developed state-level processes and procedures to bring Pennsylvania's 501 school districts into compliance with the federal legislation, part of which is the implementation of a statewide assessment system, the

Pennsylvania Standard for School Assessment (PSSA). Currently, this test is given in third, fifth, eighth, and eleven grades. This "high-stakes" test provides educators and educational decision-makers with feedback on their students' performance in reading and math. Aggregate student scores are used by the state as a measure of the effectiveness of the school's educational programs as a whole. This has pressured schools to review the data obtained through the PSSA and use it to evaluate their curriculums, classroom practices, and professional development programs, and to take corrective actions where necessary in order to improve student achievement. Public accountability and the threat of losing local control to the Pennsylvania Department of Education encourages districts to take these tests seriously.

Pennsylvania schools, like those in other states, are relatively new to the accountability movement. Pennsylvania schools began the use of "high stakes" testing in 1995, but it has only been more recent that consequences have been attached for low performance. Though Pennsylvania is only in the beginning stages of developing accountability, schools are encouraged to utilize test results in making decisions in regard to adopting programs and planning professional development for the improvement of their teachers' skills in order to improve student achievement.

2.1.2   The "No Child Left Behind" Act as an Agent of Change

How will the "No Child Left Behind" Act change the way in which education is carried out? If we examine educational history, we see that many past educational reform movements and policies have had little impact on the ways in which we educate our children (McLaughlin, 1989). Educational movements such as the Whole Language Movement (Stephens, 1991), Socio-Emotional Learning Movement (Elias et al., 1997), Multiple Intelligence's Movement

(Gardner, 1993) and educational policies such as Title III and the Right-to-Read Program all have attempted to create change in the method and manner in which we educate children, but have had little impact. McLaughlin (1989), in her review of the landmark RAND study on the implementation of educational change, states that "it is exceedingly difficult for policy to change practice" (p. 8). McLaughlin (1989) further suggests that external agents, such as the ones listed above, have a limited ability to promote positive change in local practices. Given this institutional ability to withstand change, it should not be surprising that the present manner in which we educate our children is similar to the way we have educated our children in the past (Cohen & Ball, 2000).

Theorists have attempted to account for the limited effects of past reform movements and policies. Elmore (1996) for example, contends that school reform measures typically fail because they do not change the "core of educational practices" that is, what happens between teachers and students in the classroom. Similarly, Sparks (1997) believes that reforms are often unsuccessful because they do not affect a "teacher's understanding of the nature of knowledge, the student's role in learning, how this understanding is manifested in teaching, grouping practices, and teacher's responsibilities" (p. 20). McLaughlin (1989) further argues that strategies for change are "ineffective because they were incompatible with aspects of district realities or with the dominant motivations, needs or interests of teachers responsible for implementation" (p.7).

Understanding why past reforms and policies have had a limited impact is important. However, the "No Child Left Behind" Act is unlike previous reform movements or policies. This federal legislative act strives to hold poorly performing schools accountable for their performance through "high-stakes" testing and the threats of sanctions. Turchi, Johnson, Owens, and Montgomery (2002) describe high-stakes accountability movements, such as the "No Child

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Left Behind" Act, as a system designed to "get more of what policy makers want and expect out of public education."

The hopes for this new accountability movement are based on the assumption that educators and their leaders will be motivated by the pressure applied through the use of "high stakes" testing, new accountability measures, and external rewards and punishments (Mintrop, 2003; Turchi, 2002). The belief that work, motivation, and productivity can be enhanced by increased rewards and punishments has always been a core belief in our society regardless of the contradictory evidence (Boger, 2002) and limited scope of applicability. Proponents of this belief system adhere to the idea that the ability to "dangle a carrot" (reward) or "carry a stick" (punish) alone will motivate people to work harder and achieve more. Although little research exists on the influence of accountability systems on education, what exists can help us understand why and how accountability systems influence educational change.

2.1.3   Accountability Systems and Change

Since the impact of the "No Child Left Behind" Act is in its beginning stages, it is important to look at past efforts to implement accountability measures and to identify their effect on these facets of educational systems: a) individual teacher performance; b) a school's capacity to improve: and c) factors directly linked to student learning. These areas are critical for creating and sustaining change in our educational system and fulfilling the goals of the "No Child Left Behind" Act.

2.1.3.1 The Effects of Accountability Systems on Individual Teachers

In reviewing the research on accountability systems and teacher performance, studies have found little increase in the motivation of teachers due to external accountability systems (Abelmann, Elmore, Kenyon, & Marshal, 1999; Mintrop, 2003). Abelmann and his colleagues (1999) found that teachers viewed accountability as something that might affect their daily lives in some way, but not something they could, or should, do much about. Similarly, Turchi et al. (2002), found that public accountability measures did "get the attention" of a majority of the teachers, but only for a short period of time. Soon after sanctions were imposed on a school, teachers felt demoralized and experienced concern regarding the security of their jobs. However, after the initial shock wore off, "teacher's personally distanced themselves and rejected personal culpability" and found personal worth in spite of the public perceptions (Turchi, Johnson, Owens, & Montgomery, 2002). In displacing responsibility, the study reported that as a result of accountability systems, teachers talked more about students in terms of "haves" and "have-nots" and placed much of the blame for low-achieving students on the parents (Turchi et al., 2002).

Studies also show that individual teacher perceptions regarding accountability were not positive. Mintrop (2003) finds that among teachers, "high stakes" testing was not believed to be a fair system nor was it believed to be a gauge for good teaching. Many educators felt that "high-stakes" tests were meaningless and unrealistic when compared to what truly happened in the classroom. As Mintrop theorizes, teachers' internal performance standards were not congruent with the external standards of the accountability agency, thus limiting a teacher's desire to change.

Individual commitment levels also suffer as a result of accountability measures. In one study, teachers reported that the negative stigma and pressure of accountability made teaching

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more stressful, causing teachers to leave the field or to seek transfers to a better school (Mintrop, 2003). Mintrop also states that teachers often felt overwhelmed by accountability measures and reported a disenfranchised attitude because of them. Similarly, Abelmann et al. (1999) found that accountability systems exercised little influence over individuals' conceptions of responsibility, their collective expectations of fellow colleagues and students, or a school's internal accountability structures.

On the other hand, some research does indicate a positive effect on individual teacher motivation showing that accountability measures can positively affect teachers by increasing their willingness to take advantage of resources provided after sanctions were levied (Mintrop, 2003). Studies show that work effort and engagement in school improvements plans increased (Mintrop, 2003; O'Day, 2002) and educators noted that accountability systems forced teachers to pay more attention to student achievement (Turchi et al., 2002). McNeil and Valenzuela (2000) found that accountability encouraged teachers to focus their efforts on tested items. In this study of the Texas accountability system, McNeil and Valenzuela found that teachers were more motivated to teach specific material and teach in certain ways because of the economic rewards that are tied to test results. However, students were negatively impacted because of the emphasis on test preparation and the narrowing of the curriculum to information needed exclusively for the state test.

In conclusion, we see that the pressure applied through accountability systems has had minimal effect on improving individual teacher performance. For this to change, a radical paradigm shift must take place in the present attitudes, values, and beliefs of teachers about themselves, their students, and their curriculum. But can the "No Child Left Behind" Act and its

consequences encourage educators to reflect upon their attitudes, values, and beliefs in a manner which will bring about positive change?

2.1.3.2 The Effects of Accountability Systems on a School's Capacity to Improve

Though research shows little effect on individual teacher performance, some positive effects are seen in terms of the overall school capacity. School capacity is described as the ability of a school to organize and be consistent in its overall programs. This concept is of great importance in a school's success and its ability to deal with accountability standards and is at the heart of what accountability systems hope to achieve (Cohen & Ball, 2000; O'Day, 2002).

Accountability systems do show some positive effect regarding school capacity. In a study comparing eleven schools, Mintrop (2003) found that a school's capacity is improved through accountability measures because they inspire teachers to be involved in more cooperative work groups with peers. These types of experiences, as indicated in the research, lead to increased levels of work satisfaction, commitment, and productivity (Mohrman, Mohrman, & Odden, 1996; Tennenbaum, 1970). In addition, research indicates that after sanctions, schools reported higher levels of teacher engagement and effort as well as improved teacher perception of peers' collegiality (Mintrop, 2003). Other studies show that accountability systems increase commitment to, and involvement in, reform movements when individuals were involved in a supportive and strong work group (Turchi et al., 2002).

Unfortunately, accountability systems also have been shown to have a negative impact on various factors related to building the capacity to improve. One critical factor in limiting school capacity is that sanctioned schools tended to be more controlling and rigid (McNeil, 2000; Turchi, 2002). Turchi et al. (2002) hypothesizes that accountability systems have resulted in "a

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proliferation of control strategies that have the potential to turn classrooms into the opposite of what performance-based pedagogy intended" (p. 22), focusing schools on traditional teaching approaches and teachers on coverage and task completion. McNeil (2000) suggests that accountability leads to an increased focus on test preparation and curriculum constriction. This narrowing of the curriculum and teaching methods, not only limits the students' exposure to a meaningful education, but also constricts schools' overall capacity.

School capacity is also undermined by the reorganization of school resources due to accountability. McNeil and Valenzuela (2000) theorize that the accountability movement is "diverting scarce instructional dollars away from such high quality curricular resources as laboratory supplies and books toward test-prep materials and activities of limited educational value" (p. 4). McNeil and Valenzuela (2000) further state that "financial rewards go to those schools whose scores go up, not necessarily to those in need of a serious upgrading of staff and materials" (p. 10). McNeil (2000) continues the argument by stating that accountability is perpetuating the inequality of schools by channeling money and effort into the maintenance of the accountability system through the purchasing of test preparation materials and programs designed to improve test scores, neither of which necessarily improves learning. This leaves the ability of the system to affect capacity severely limited.

Professional development programs, widely perceived as the most effective tool for schools to develop their capacities for improvement, seem to be negatively affected by accountability measures. Studies show that pressures placed on schools have little effect on a school's attempt to build a stronger teaching staff through professional development. Instead of providing professional development to increase the abilities of the teachers, schools tended to impose add-on programs (Turchi et al., 2002) or focused on adopting whole-school content area

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approaches (Fashola & Slavin, 1998). Accountability systems also pressured schools to focus their professional development opportunities on tested subject areas and increased the professional development exercises focused on developing teachers' abilities to teach to the test and to analyze test results (McNeil & Valenzuela, 2000; Turchi, 2002). In addition, teachers reported that once sanctions were imposed, teachers had fewer professional development options than they had prior to sanctions and many of the professional development opportunities were primarily of the skill training/retraining nature (Turchi et al., 2002).

In sum, Turchi and her colleagues (2002) caution us that many of the positive results of accountability systems on school capacity are the result of the influx of monies due to new initiatives; moreover, many of the changes that have occurred in schools were of a superficial nature. This may have some validity, but the impact of the "No Child Left Behind" Act in assessing school performance may provide the pressure needed to bring about better school-wide planning, organization, programs and curricula which will ultimately improve school capacity.

2.1.3.3   The Effects of Accountability Systems on Student Learning

Central to any educational reform is the emphasis on improving student achievement. Mintrop (2003) theorizes that for an accountability system to increase student learning, it must raise the school's expectations to the higher demands of the system and develop formalized internal accountability procedures. Mintrop believes that "only then are the conditions ripe for a restructuring of teaching content and methods" (p. 17). This, however, is dependent on how well the accountability system motivates individual teachers to change as well as the ability of the school to build its capacities for improvement. In the previous sections, the research on accountability measures indicates only minimal effects on these areas. Therefore, it is important

to determine if previous accountability systems had a positive effect on factors directly linked to student achievement.

A review of some of the studies on accountability, primarily those on the Texas accountability system, indicate a positive effect of accountability on student achievement. In Texas, proponents of accountability report that test scores have risen in all cases, and in some cases the increases have been dramatic (Stecher & Hamilton, 2002). In another report, researchers have cited increases in overall passing rates from 53% in 1994 to 80% in 2000 (Schachter, 2001). The same research also reports improvements in passing rates of black students from 39% in 1994 to 72% in 2000.

In supporting the idea of accountability, proponents cite that the two largest gains of all states on the NAEP test, commonly known as the "Nation's Report Card", were from states with strict accountability standards (Schachter, 2001). This, as the author suggest, is evidence that accountability works at improving student achievement. Other researchers (Texas Business and Education Coalition, n/d) report that Texas eighth grade students' results were at or near the top of the nation on the 1998 writing tests. Also, scores for African-American students in Texas led the nation and Hispanic students ranked second only behind Virginia.

However, other research demonstrates a negative impact of accountability measures on student learning. McNeil and Valenzuela (2000), in an overall statement regarding accountability, state that it is "reducing the quality and quantity of education offered to the students" (p. 3). Many authors suggest possible reasons for this. Earl (1999) states that when teachers are held responsible for their students' scores, they are more likely to find ways to increase them, without necessarily increasing the learning that takes place. McNeil (2000) implies that teachers resort to "defensive teaching" by simplifying courses, reducing the variety

of information sources, and discouraging student interaction. Turchi (2002) finds that there was no evidence that teachers were teaching at more elaborate levels. In fact, some theorize that teachers were focusing more on specific content knowledge and specific skills, thus limiting the depth of knowledge taught.

Accountability measures also forced schools to focus their students' learning experiences on tested content areas and spend considerably less time on non-tested subjects (Earl, 1999; McNeil, 2000; Turchi, 2002). McNeil and Valenzuela (2000), in their analysis of the Texas accountability system, found that the pressure to raise scores leads teachers to spend class time, often several hours each week, drilling students on practice exam materials. This drill takes time from real teaching and learning, as much of the time is spent learning how to bubble in answers, how to weed out obviously wrong answers, and how to become accustomed to multiple choice and computer scored formats. In fact, McNeil and her colleague theorize that the achievement test is actually becoming the curriculum in the poorest schools.

A more alarming result of the accountability system pertaining to student achievement is that for our most disadvantaged students, research shows that achievement gains are nonexistent. McNeil (2000) suggests that as schools attempt to increase the scores of the neediest students, they end up narrowing the curriculum and eliminating higher level thinking skills. In fact, she suggests that in the drive to raise scores, what actually occurs is a focus on the test at the expense of more potent learning. Neill and Gaylor (2001) found that most of the achievement gains seen are from students in the highest categories, and for the students in the lowest categories, achievement has actually declined.

McNeil (2000) also identifies another negative consequence on student learning in that there was an increase in the drop out rate after an accountability system was established. She

suggests that one reason why some statistics show student achievement increasing is due to the exodus of those not proficient on the test. Burnette (n.d.) supports this idea and suggests that if students flunk or are pushed out before they take the test, it could look as though the scores have improved simply because fewer students are taking the test. Clarke, Haney and Madaus (2000) further state that since 1993 when Texas began to require that students pass the state-level achievement test before they could graduate, over 40,000 students in Texas have dropped out.

Mintrop (2003) further explains that student achievement is unaffected when districts attempt to increase achievement by employing alignment strategies to bring about improved instructional practices at the classroom level. These strategies result in only superficial task modification because they fail to reach more deeply ingrained task and discourse demands. Mintrop found, in an analysis of classroom teaching, that there was no evidence of more elaborate levels of teaching and no greater frequency of higher order thinking or problem solving with complex dialog. In fact, he found that student learning is actually impeded because teachers often trivialized complex tasks to simpler task demands. In addition, Mintrop describes how teachers doubt the relevance of ambitious performance standards, citing an incongruity between the state's expectations and their own perceptions of the needs of their children. O'Day (2002) builds upon this in her analysis of accountability and argues that many educators simply don't feel they have the capacity to influence student learning in the ways that external accountability systems suggest they should.

Though the evidence of the success of accountability can be argued, the above studies suggest that for accountability systems to have the desired effect, they must be aligned to student learning outcomes, valued by local participants and focused on high-level performance standards while providing extensive support to teachers in order to achieve those standards. This is a

change from the traditional ways in which education has been carried out. No longer can teachers pick and choose what is important. Schools, districts, and the state must work together to determine what students should know and be able to do and provide the skills necessary for teachers to be successful in the new era of accountability.

2.1.4   Summary: The NCLB: A Law with Consequences

Though much of the existing literature does not positively support the idea that past accountability systems have encouraged individual teachers to be motivated, increased schools' capacities to change, or enhanced student learning, many believe that the accountability system can effect change. Many claim that the Texas accountability movement, which is similar to the nation's "No Child Left Behind" Act in its mandates, has increased student achievement (Cordell, 1998; Texas Education Agency, 2000). However, these claims are adamantly opposed by others (Haney, 2000; McNeil, 2000; McNeil, 2000). How this plays out in the future is dependent on the impact of the "No Child Left Behind" Act in encouraging schools and teachers to reflect upon their practices and to raise the bar on what is expected from all children. The primary means of creating this environment is through effective professional development practices. If the "No Child Left Behind" Act is able to affect professional development programs, it may have an effect beyond what present research indicates.

2.2   Professional Development

The "No Child Left Behind" Act has placed pressure on educational decision-makers to focus their efforts on improving student achievement or risk serious consequences. With this in mind,

it is essential that schools focus their efforts on developing both their teachers' and school's effectiveness (Abelmann et al., 1999). Both the literature and research indicate that this can be accomplished through the investment in quality professional development (Killion, 2002; Troen, 2003). Through the use of effective professional development, schools can actively seek to increase teachers' and schools' capacities for improvement which ultimately effects student achievement (Sparks & Richardson, 1997). However, professional development has traditionally been ineffective for the true demands of teaching and has had a limited impact on student learning (Porter et al., 2000; Troen, 2003). The question remains, will the "No Child Left Behind" Act change this? To fully understand what is needed, the effectiveness of professional development must be investigated.

2.2.1 What is Professional Development?

The term "professional development" has a variety of meanings among practitioners. Most educators would define it in terms of the activity or event in which they most recently participated. Some would describe it as a special event that they participate in for a few days each year. Others would view their participation in graduate level courses at a university as professional development, and still others would describe the mandatory professional development hours which are required by a teacher's contract.

Similar to the wide array of responses from practitioners, a review of the literature offers a variety of definitions. Guskey (2000) defines professional development as those "processes and activities designed to enhance the professional knowledge, skills, and attributes of educators so that they might, in turn, improve the learning of students" (p. 16). Butler (2001) looks similarly at professional development as opportunities to improve professional skills and increase

effectiveness. Kahle (1997) describes it as sessions designed to impart discrete skills and/or techniques and Reitzug (n.d.) further describes it as a broad range of processes and activities that contribute to the learning of educators. Though definitions vary, they are similar in that each cites professional experiences that are designed to increase teachers' effectiveness in the classroom.

2.2.2   The Transformation of Professional Development

From its inception, the concept of professional development has been transformed both in practice and how it is characterized in the literature. As demands for student results have increased, so too, has there been more pressure placed on professional development to produce results (Guskey, 2000). Leading in this transformation are the theorists, researchers, and practitioners who are attempting to determine the programs and experiences that produce results.

For the purposes of this paper, the transformation of the literature of professional development will be discussed. However, the transformation in the literature does not neatly parallel the transformation of professional development in practice. In practice, it is critical to understand that the elements of each form of professional development were apparent before they were formally presented in the literature and each element forms the basis for the present and future of professional development.[1]

For the purposes of this paper, the transformations of professional development will be defined by their area of emphasis or focus. Professional development in its First Form (known herein as the "traditional form") focuses on standardized solutions or activities to improve teaching. This is based on the assumption that teachers must learn skills in order to improve their

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[1] As with all progressions or trends, there are some exceptions to a steady, unidirectional movement both in practice and in the literature. In this section, overall trends are discussed.

teaching and that the imparting of knowledge and skills can occur in an isolated fashion separate from the teacher's classroom practice.

The Second Form of professional development, which encompasses most of the literature on professional development, focuses on the role of the teacher. In this form, theorists, researchers, and practitioners turn their focus from the content and skills teachers need to the role of the teacher as a learner. Here, the emphasis is on the methods and processes designed to bring about improved teacher practices. In discussing this form of professional development, the literature focuses on ideas, models, and guidelines which provide a greater understanding of what is needed in professional development to make teachers more effective in the classroom.

With a better understanding of what was involved in creating professional development, a Third Form has emerged. This shift, evident in the last few years, changed the emphasis from teacher to student. The driving force for the Third Form of professional development is what students know, what students need to know, how students learn best, and how teachers can assist in that learning.

In the following sections, this transformation in the literature will be examined to determine what is needed to produce effective professional development experiences that will directly affect teachers' learning and ultimately improve students' learning.[2]

2.2.2.1   The First Form: The Traditional Form of Professional Development

For the purposes of this paper, the characteristics of the First Form of professional development are presented to enable us to look historically at how professional development has been

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[2] To understand the different levels of professional development, it is important to understand that the literature in the later stages is predominately a reaction to what were perceived to be the ineffective qualities of the "traditional" form of professional development experiences that existed and still exist today. As such, the characterization of Form 1 was derived mainly from Form 2 and Form 3 critiques of professional development and not from a systematic description of that kind of professional development.

practiced and how this has become the basis for much of the literature on professional development. However, it is difficult to characterize the First Form of professional development because its main ideas are derived not from accounts of how professional development was carried out, but from reactions to the inadequacies in the way it was implemented. What follows is an understanding of the main deficiencies of the First Form of professional development practices.

Professional development in the First Form can be defined by its "one size fits all" nature. Teachers are exposed to professional development experiences with little regard to their backgrounds, needs, or circumstances (Little, 1993). This disregard forced teachers from different content areas into the same professional development experience leaving many teachers feeling unsatisfied because they could not see the merits of the experience for their own professional circumstances (Sparks & Hirsch, 2000; Turchi, 2002).

At the core of professional development in this form is an emphasis on the "training strategy." The "training strategy" is what most educators perceive professional development to be and encompasses experiences such as the "one-shot workshop," short-term workshops, conferences, lectures, seminars, or any other group-related experiences which are led by an "expert" or a team of "experts." This is viewed as an efficient way to develop new knowledge and skills in teachers (Killion, 2002), which, once learned, will be implemented in the classroom, thereby creating a more effective teacher. The advantages of the training strategy are that it is the most efficient and cost-effective strategy for sharing ideas and information with a large group of educators and that it provides a large number of people with a shared knowledge base and a common vocabulary (Guskey, 2000).

The literature and research on the training strategy as the sole basis for professional development suggests that it is limited in its ability to bring about change. Little (1994) feels that the training strategy places teachers in passive roles as consumers of knowledge and further suggests that the training strategy "is poorly conceived to help people expand the possibilities of learning, teaching, and schooling." Killion (2002) states that only a small percentage of what is learned in most training programs is likely to be incorporated into routine practice and used to solve problems in the classroom. Stein, Silver, and Smith (1999) suggest that this strategy is ineffective because it does not attend to the particulars of the local cultures in which teachers work.

Another attribute of the First Form of professional development is its focus on the content of the professional development experience, often disregarding the roles and needs of the teachers and students. Professional development often ignored those factors necessary to make implementation in the classroom successful. The assumption was that once teachers learned new information they would successfully implement it in the classroom.

A final characteristic of the First Form of professional development is its detached nature. Often the training or learning experiences are detached from a teacher's actual learning environment, i.e., teachers receive training outside the school and are expected to come back and implement programs and procedures that have little relevance or connection to what is happening in their individual classrooms.

The characteristics described in the literature regarding the First Form of professional development highlight the shortcomings in practices. However, later thought regarding professional development takes the positive aspects of this form of professional development and restructures them to create different and more effective learning experiences.

2.2.2.2 The Second Form: The Focus on the Teacher

Much of the shift in thought regarding professional development was due to the belief that the qualities of the First Form were insufficient to bring about any real change in teaching practices. The literature began to focus on creating more effective activities for teachers. Central to the Second Form is the idea that professional development should focus on the teacher as a learner, and as a result, the focus changed to creating more meaningful and worthwhile professional development experiences for teachers.

The literature regarding the Second Form of professional development began by focusing theoretically on general principles and broad sweeping concepts designed to affect teachers. Ideas such as providing feedback and organizing learning experiences that were meaningful and useful were emphasized in the literature. Though some of the least effective ideas about professional development have fallen to the wayside, many of its more central principles and concepts, through research and practice, have become the cornerstones for more effective forms of professional development. Later, the literature emphasizing the role of the teacher began to evolve, focusing on variables that can critically affect a professional development experience and limit its effectiveness for teachers. Though the literature may emphasize different characteristics, the Second Form is defined by the professional development's focus on the role of the teacher.

Also critical in understanding the distinction of the Second Form of professional development is the belief that the "one size fits all" model is an outdated idea which is ineffective in meeting the demands needed to create true change in the classroom. The focus changed from an emphasis on content to how best to teach that content to teachers. The attention shifted to the needs of individual teachers and the elements that are important in increasing their knowledge and improving their practices.

Another important consideration in the Second Form is the unspoken assumption that professional development effects student learning. The issue that student learning is an assumed outcome of successful professional development is ignored in much of the literature oriented around the Second Form of professional development, referring instead to the improved practices and knowledge of the teacher.

2.2.2.2.1 Strategies

As noted above, the focus of the Second Form of professional development is on the ability to provide more meaningful and worthwhile learning experiences for teachers. In this section, an overview will be provided of the various strategies that have stood the test of time, that changed the way teachers learn, and that altered our ideas of how professional development is carried out. These strategies, proven through research and practice, provide a new way of looking at factors that are important in sustaining teacher learning and improving the implementation of ideas and programs in the classroom. These strategies can stand alone or be integrated depending on the teachers' needs.

      1.   <u>Training</u>. The shift in professional development did not completely disregard the effectiveness and influence of the training strategy. However, the literature suggests that the over emphasis on it as the only means for professional development is ineffective (Killion, 2002). In fact, most educators agree that it has an important and viable role in the overall picture of professional development. Joyce and Showers (1995) believe that to make the training strategy more effective, it is essential to include background theories, demonstrations or modeling of skills, simulated practice, constructive feedback, and coaching. Also important to successful training sessions is to have clear objectives and the outcomes of the participants in mind. Killion

(2002) also expresses that training can be extremely effective if it includes modeling or demonstrations, low-risk practice, and coaching or other forms of on-going support.

      2.   <u>Coaching/mentoring/evaluative</u>. The Coaching/mentoring/evaluative strategy has been cited as another way to bring about more effective change. Although not expressed in the literature in this manner, it is a compilation of similar strategies expressed in works by Guskey (2000), Loucks-Horsley (1998), and Little (1994) based on the idea that careful observation of teaching with attention to certain behaviors and open discussions of the results will bring about greater awareness, learning, and increased effectiveness (Little, 1994). Loucks-Horsley (1998) believes that the "reflection by an individual on his or her own practice can be enhanced by another's observations and perceptions" and that "teachers are competent professionals whose experience, expertise, and observations are valuable sources of knowledge, skill development, and inspiration for other teachers" (p.127). Guskey (2000) suggests this strategy provides alternate perspectives that can reveal certain shortcomings or strengths in a teacher and this information is critical for that individual to develop as a professional. Stein and D'Amico (2002) go further and discuss how this method can be the key feature of a district's professional development program by bringing to life crucial elements of the curriculum.

Guskey (2000) suggests that following up any observation with detailed and careful analysis, explanations, questions, and reflections helps lay the groundwork for meaningful change and that the most effective observations are ones that are well planned, focus on specific issues, and provide follow-up to documented improvements. Loucks-Horsley (1998) believes that for this strategy to succeed, there must be a climate of trust, collegiality, continuous growth, a long-term commitment to interaction, and skill building through coaching, mentoring, and administrative support.

Showers and Joyce (1996) feel that this strategy provides important feedback to the person being observed and also benefits the observer in that they are able to gain an expertise by watching a peer, giving feedback, and discussing common experiences. Ackland (1991) describes the advantage of this strategy as breaking down the isolation of teaching. This strategy does, however, require a high level of commitment of time and requires supportive and safe working relationships.

3.   Development/improvement process. A third strategy designed to enhance professional development is involvement in the development/improvement process which brings educators together to rectify a problem and/or implement a new program, i.e., reviewing curriculum, designing new programs, planning strategies to improve instruction, or solving particular problems. This process requires participants to acquire new knowledge or skills through reading, research, discussion, and observation (Guskey, 2000). Sweeney (n.d.) believes that involvement in this process provides participants with the opportunity to create clarity, integration, and commitment to goals at all levels. He also suggests that this process has the ability to improve the quality of interactions and relationships, enhance the group's effectiveness, and strengthen the structures that facilitate improvement.

Guskey (2000) cites several advantages of this strategy. Involvement in this process increases the participants' "specific content knowledge and skills, and also enhances their ability to work collaboratively and share in the decision-making" (p. 24). However, this strategy is restrictive in that only a small number of participants can be involved and the personal differences that may arise could impede the process of reform (Guskey, 2000).

4.   Study group. The study group strategy "offers teachers the opportunity to come together to address issues of teaching and learning" (Loucks-Horsley, Hewson, Love, & Stiles,

1998). Loucks-Horsley and colleagues also state that study groups provide teachers with a framework in which they can ask questions and study those questions over time. According to Murphy (1997), the function of study groups is to facilitate implementation of curricular and instructional innovations, collaboratively plan school improvement efforts, and study research on teaching or learning.

Loucks-Horsley and colleagues believe that the basis for study groups resides in the fact that teachers have the knowledge, skills, and desire to make decisions regarding their own professional growth and the context in which teacher's work is valuable in determining the direction for the study group. Guskey (2000) suggests that the benefit of the study group is to bring "focus and coherence to improvement efforts, especially if groups are carefully structured, well trained, and well supervised" breaking down the isolation inherent in schools.

The disadvantage of this strategy is that certain individuals may dominate a group, fragmenting or distracting the group as a whole. Also, since obtaining relevant research is difficult, there is a tendency for discussions to be based on opinions rather than research (Guskey, 2000). Loucks-Horsley et al. (1998) believe that this strategy is difficult to sustain and requires a large commitment of time and effort from participants.

5. Inquiry/action research. The Inquiry/Action Research strategy relies on insightfulness of teachers and their abilities to ask questions and solve problems. According to Loucks-Horsley et al. (1998), "teachers reflect on their practices by studying what they are doing." As O'Hanlon (1996) states, this strategy "is based on the belief that educators have the ability to formulate valid questions about their own practice and pursue objective answers to those questions."

Loucks-Horsley and colleagues (1998) identified several elements essential to the function of action research, the first of which is the use of an action research cycle. Calhoun (1994) identifies an action research cycle as a five-step or level process. Educators: 1) select a problem or question of interest; 2) collect, organize and interpret information related to the problem; 3) study literature and research; 4) determine possible actions to achieve the goal and; 5) take action and document results. The need for teachers to be linked with sources of knowledge and stimulation from outside their schools is identified as the second element, with outside experts or perspectives aiding in the act of action research. Finally, action research is a collaborative event with the results documented and shared. This sharing enables others to see the advantages of such activities and adds to the knowledge base of the larger group.

The benefits of this strategy are that it makes teachers "more reflective, more systematic problem solvers, and more thoughtful decision-makers" (Sparks & Simmons, 1989). Loucks-Horsley et al. (1998) comment that individuals involved in this process "feel more valued and confident, increase their awareness of classroom issues, become more reflective, change educational beliefs and align their theories with practice, and broaden their view of teaching and learning" (p. 119). Loucks-Horsley et al. (1998) further state that action research can shift the school culture in a positive direction and help unite teachers and encourage collegial interactions.

Though rewarding, this process is time consuming and requires difficult and tedious work on the part of the participants (Guskey, 2000). Loucks-Horsley et al. (1998) suggest that not everyone is ready for action research. She feels that teachers who are struggling may be overwhelmed by the task and unable to work productively.

6.   Individually guided activities. This strategy is based on the assumption that teachers can assess their own learning needs and design strategies that will address those needs,

i.e., take courses, attend conferences or workshops, review research, journal write, etc. This is based on the idea that individuals have their best professional goals in mind and will be more "motivated to learn when they initiate and plan their own learning activities" (Guskey, 2000).

Guskey (2000) notes that the major advantage of this strategy is flexibility and the opportunities it offers for choice and individualization. However, the literature notes that though this method of inquiry is beneficial to individual teachers, it can have a detrimental affect upon the organization of a school in that it can fragment staff, limiting their effectiveness in working together to achieve organizational goals (Killion, 2002).

7.   Other strategies. For the purposes of this paper, it would be impossible to list and describe every professional development strategy, but an awareness of different methods is needed. The following strategies each serve a role in the larger picture of professional development and are effective in improving teacher content knowledge, increasing teachers' understanding of instruction, and sustaining learning over time. They include: Student Assessment Events, Consultation and Planning Days, Staff Retreats, Subject Matter Networks and Collaboratives, Professional Networks, Partnerships, Curriculum Implementation, Curriculum Development and Adaptation, Case Discussions, and Technology Based Professional Development (Little, 1994; Loucks-Horsley, 1998).

2.2.2.2.2 Variables critical to improved professional development

Theorists, researchers, and practitioners did not stop with the listing of different learning opportunities designed to bring about improved professional development, but also identified variables that are at the basis of an effective experience. In the following section, specific variables critical to effective professional development will be discussed.

1.   Time. Adequate time to foster learning is a critical variable of successful professional development, but the lack of time is a pervasive problem in the United States. Little (1999) states that the allocation of time for teachers in the United States is comparatively low compared to other developed nations. Recently, the National Staff Development Council attempted to rectify this problem by recommending that twenty-five percent of a teacher's day should be spent learning and collaborating with colleagues (Sparks & Hirsch, 2000). The literature overwhelmingly calls for a restructuring of the teacher's school day, allowing for more high quality, targeted activities (Killion, 2002). Hansel, Huie, and Martinez (2002) suggest that teachers need increased time to immerse themselves in new knowledge and skills related to their teaching. Others believe that merely reading and hearing about new concepts is rarely enough to advance authentic learning. "Multiple learning experiences are needed to develop a person's understanding of concepts and systems" (Loucks-Horsley, n.d). Loucks-Horsley et al. also state that not only does time need to be created but also sustained in order to focus on areas of importance. Her belief is that multiple experiences should be sustained over an extended period for effecting change.

2.   Leadership. The concept of leadership is a critical element of successful professional development. Killion (2002) notes that the main difference between successful and unsuccessful schools is the idea of sustained leadership that advocates high quality professional development which is guided by direction and clear expectations. Guskey and Sparks (1996) believe professional development is advanced through leadership. They suggest two ways in which this is done: a) by interacting with teachers through activities such as clinical supervision, coaching and formative evaluations; and b) by establishing the organizational structure, policies, and practices which are critical in enabling quality professional development.

However, leadership does not have to come from the administration. This idea, known as "distributed leadership," (Elmore, 2000) places the responsibility of leadership on many participants and has a critical role in generating school reform and instructional improvement by distributing leadership across many individuals and focusing around common tasks and shared common values (Lashway, 2003). Little (1994) supports this by stating that common professional development experiences where teachers have little influence and play few leadership roles are often ineffective. O'Neill and Conzemius (2002) go further and suggest that "leadership is less about an individual, a position, or a set of traits and more about the positive energy created with knowledgeable and caring people convened around common purposes to make improvement together" (p. 18).

3.   Participant buy-in. Teacher buy-in or acceptance of programs and practices is a critical variable of successful professional development (Richardson, 2003) and involving teachers in the decision-making process increases the chances of participants buying into a program, reducing the risk of poor implementation. Loucks-Horsley (1998) believes that it is important to include participants in the decisions about what they will learn, how they will learn, and how they will use what they have learned. Richardson (1997) believes that involving participants in the decision-making process helps sustain focus on a topic or problem. Richardson believes that to achieve buy-in, one needs to build consensus. Richardson defines consensus as "a cooperative effort to find a solution acceptable to everyone, rather then a competitive struggle in which an unacceptable solution is forced on others" (p. 1). Richardson believes that consensus works best when dealing with the major elements of a decision such as defining the problem, identifying assumptions about the solution, establishing criteria for evaluating solutions, choosing the final solution and setting priorities.

4.   Job embeddedness. A relatively new concept in professional development thought is job embeddedness, the belief that professional development should not occur outside the school walls but be a part of the natural school day and centered around topics important to individuals within that particular school setting (Sparks, 2000). Stein and D'Amico (2002) encourage teachers to "view the actual work of teaching as a learning laboratory and the best place to learn about teaching is inside one's own classroom practice and in conversations surrounding that practice" (p. 1332). Job embeddedness includes providing opportunities for experimentation, peer observations and critique, reflection, self-evaluation, and time to build effective practices (Hansel, Huie, & Martinez, 2002). The importance of this element is evident in that it has been included as an important consideration in the National Staff Development Counsel's vision for improving student learning (Hirsch, 2001).

5.   Collaboration. Evident in the professional development literature, is the importance of a school's ability to work together or collaborate around an issue or problem. O'Neill and Conzemius (2002) state that schools with the ability to collaborate make the most progress. They suggest that schools with a collaborative environment where teachers are in a continuous journey of improvement and utilize other colleagues and parents in this journey are more apt to create a successful environment. However, the authors suggest that successful collaboration doesn't occur by simply putting teams of people together but requires skill development over time, constant reinforcement and coaching, and structures that encourage and invite shared work around common goals. In fact, Little (1999) states that nothing about the collaborative process guarantees success. This process can actually be counterproductive when certain members dominate the process, thereby limiting its overall potential. Also, collaboration may lead participants down the wrong path if incorrect or inaccurate information is presented. It

is important, as Little (1999) notes, that collaboration be based on valid research as its core in order for knowledgeable participants to make informed decisions.

6.   Subject matter. Professional development has always attempted to focus on improving teacher learning and knowledge, however, new research shows that teachers engaged in learning experiences focused on their subject matter may be more receptive to improving teaching and are more likely to enhance student achievement (Richardson, 2003). In fact, several authors contend that the focus on content is more relevant to improving student learning then the amount of time teachers engage in professional development, or the professional development forms or the structures involved (Kahle, 1997; Kennedy, 1998). In another study, Monk (1994) found that additional course work in specific content areas had a greater effect on student learning, while additional course work in unrelated subjects had no or a negative effect. Cohen (1997) found that sustained professional development tied to standardized curricula improved teachers' knowledge and ability to transfer that knowledge to students.

2.2.2.2.3 Conceptualizing professional development.

To fully understand the complexities of creating effective professional development, one needs to be aware of all the variables and external factors that may impede professional development experiences. Several authors have attempted to help conceptualize the complexities by the creation of models that organize the planning and implementation of professional development experiences. Two such models, Loucks-Horsley, Hewson, Love, and Stiles's Design Process Model (Loucks-Horsley et al., 1998, p. 17) and Guskey and Sparks's Model on Linking Professional Development to Student Achievement (Guskey, 2000, p. 73), provide professional development planners with a greater understanding of elements, factors and characteristics

essential to the planning and implementation processes of professional development and their interrelationships. This understanding enables planners to proactively design experiences to ensure successful implementation and results.

1. The design process model. Loucks-Horsley et al. (1998) have attempted to simplify the professional development planning, decision-making, and implementation processes (See Figure 1). Their model identifies elements that can impede the planning and implementation process and identifies factors that influence the success of the professional development experience.
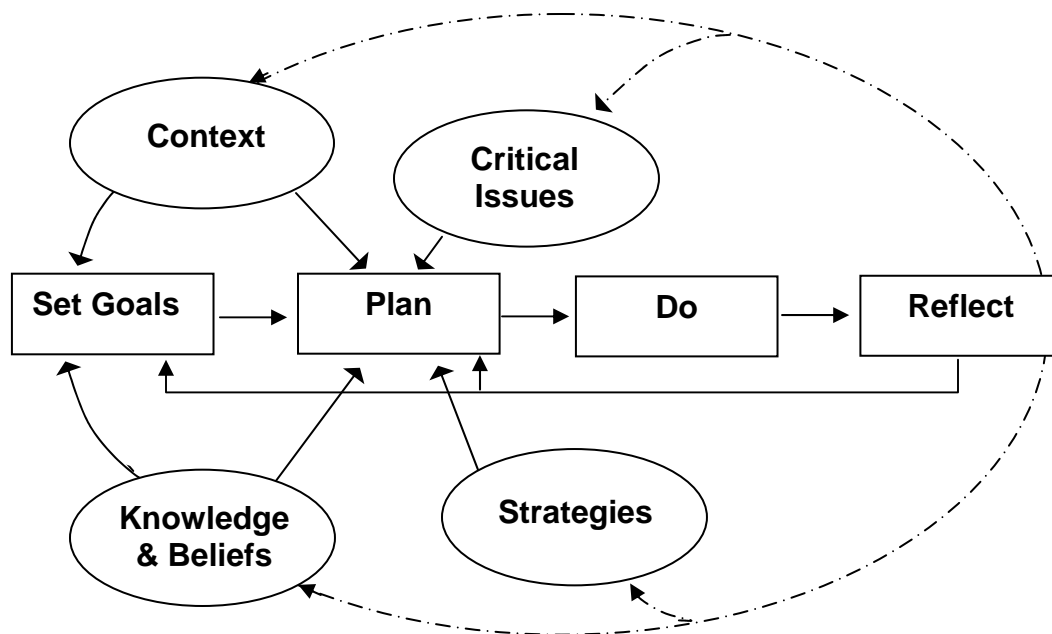
Figure 1. **Loucks-Horsley, Hewson, Love and Stiles's Model of Professional Development Design Process for Mathematics and Science Education Reform**

This model has at its center a generic planning sequence which incorporates goal setting, planning, doing, and reflecting. The first stage provides participants the opportunity to set goals for both students and teachers. Here, teachers' goals flow directly out of the goals that have been identified for student learning. The second stage, planning, enables professional development

designers to think about meeting the determined goals by sketching out a plan to do so. At this point, thought is directed to the strategies or combination of strategies that need to be established to achieve the desired results. During the critical third stage, implementation takes place. Most difficulties arise during this stage and it is important to employ problem-solving strategies to help facilitate change. The final stage, reflection, enables the professional development program or experience to renew itself or act as a summative activity to make improvements for future programs or experiences.

Loucks-Horsley et al. (1998) identified four inputs that can have significant impact on the success or failure of professional development. The first input, awareness of the knowledge and beliefs that people bring to the table, helps professional developers determine the shared beliefs of the group as well as its points of misunderstanding. As Loucks-Horsley states "taking advantage of this knowledge can help planners jump start their efforts, put them on solid footing, and avoid unnecessary and costly mistakes" (p. 18). To assist in determining the shared beliefs of the group, five distinct knowledge bases are cited: 1) what we know about learners and learning in general, 2) what is known about teachers and teaching, 3) the nature of the disciplines, 4) the principles of effective professional development, and 5) the knowledge base regarding change and the change process.

The second input, an understanding of professional development strategies available, enables professional developers to determine which strategy, or combination of strategies would best fit the goals of the endeavor. A listing of possible strategies was cited earlier in this paper.

Professional developers need an awareness of the context in which they are operating. Influences such as "who the students and teachers are; the state of practice, including curriculum, instruction, assessment, and learning environment; the policies in place: available resources, such

as time, money, the expertise of the available professional developers, and community support; and organizational culture and structure" (p.20) are all critical factors (Loucks-Horsley et al., 1998). Loucks-Horsley further suggests that skillful planners should have "one foot planted firmly in theory and the other in reality" (p. 20).

The final input of Loucks-Horsley's model, critical ideas, identifies "equity and diversity, professional culture, leadership, capacity building for sustainability, scaling up, public support, effective use of standards and frameworks, time for professional development, and evaluation and assessment" (p.21) as essential issues which need to be accounted for in successful professional development. Guskey and Sparks feel these issues need to be identified and addressed during the early stages of planning.

Loucks-Horsley believes that this model describes professional development design at its very best. She further describes it as "an ideal to strive toward rather than an accurate depiction of how it happens or a prescription for how it should happen" (p. 16). She further suggests that this model can be used no matter where planners are in their process to bring about better awareness and understanding and will help in providing future direction for the program or plan.

2.   Guskey and Sparks's Model. Guskey and Sparks's Model on Linking Professional Development to Improved Student Achievement (2000) suggests that planners need to be aware of three categories which have direct influence on the quality of a professional development experience (See Figure 2). These factors (content characteristics, process variables, and context characteristics) must be critically examined and accounted for prior to the implementation of any professional development experience.
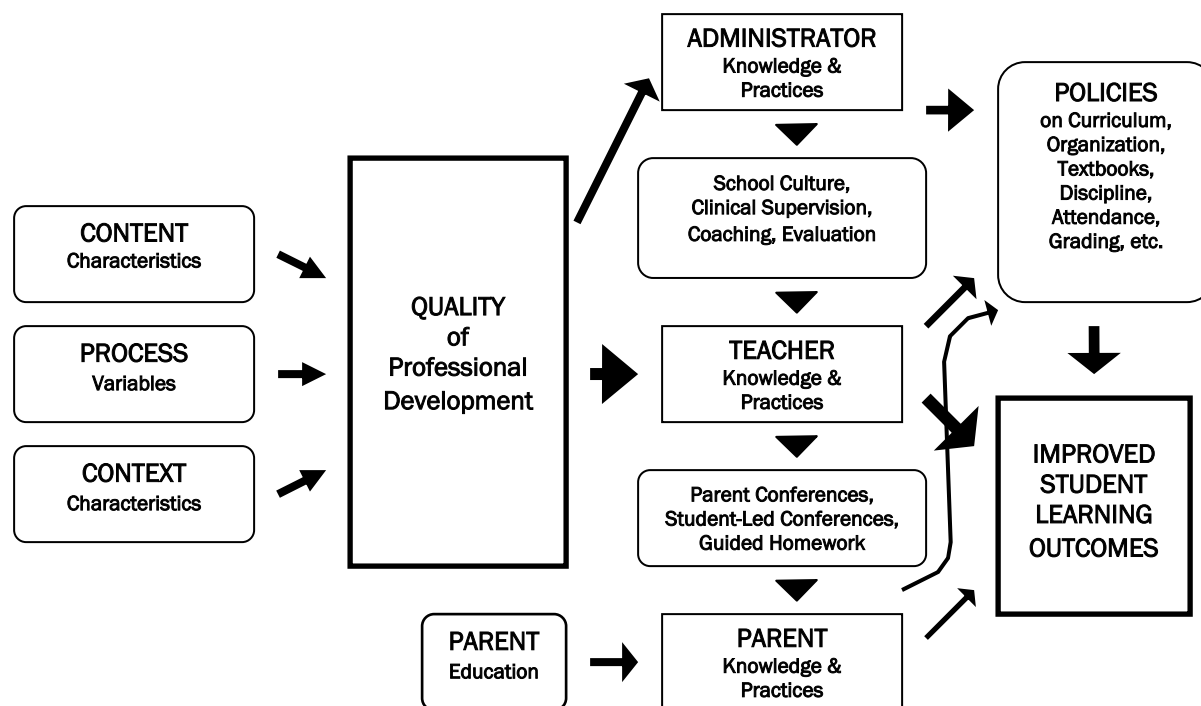
Figure 2. Guskey and Sparks's Model of the Relationship Between Professional Development and Improvements in Student Learning

Content characteristics refer to the "what" of professional development. Guskey and Sparks identified this as new knowledge, skills, and understandings that are the foundation of any professional development effort. Content characteristics may also include deeper understanding of particular academic disciplines, specific pedagogical processes, new role expectations and responsibilities, or elements related to the magnitude, scope, credibility, and practicality of the change required to implement this new knowledge or skill.

Guskey and Sparks refer to process variables as the "how" of professional development, or the ways in which professional development activities are planned, organized, carried out, and followed up.

The last category, context variables, refers to the "who", "when", "where", and "why" of professional development. Here, the focus is on the involvement of the organization, system, or

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culture in which professional development takes place and where the new understandings will be implemented.

Guskey and Sparks state that all three categories are essential in determining the effectiveness of professional development and "neglecting any one of these dimensions can significantly diminish the effectiveness of professional development and drastically reduce the likelihood of improvement in student learning" (p.75).

Though the quality of the professional development experiences are central to this model, other elements are identified that affect the professional development experience and ultimately student learning (e.g., administrator knowledge and practice, school culture, parents, etc). Guskey and Sparks state that this model demonstrates that professional development that is directed at student achievement is not a random or chaotic event but makes us aware that there are clear factors which are under a school's control to influence. According to Guskey and Sparks, this model clearly identifies the complex nature of professional development suggesting that efforts that do not take these into account are destined to fail.

The Loucks-Horsley et al. Model and the Guskey and Sparks's Model help in our understanding and ability to conceptually look at the larger picture of professional development. With these models, our understanding is enhanced by making the professional development planning and implementation more predictable.

2.2.2.3   The Third Form: The Emphasis on Student Performance

In recent years, a different shift has taken place in professional development thought. In addition to teachers' knowledge, practices, or content, the literature has begun to focus on student outcomes as the driving force for professional development. As Little (1999) suggests, "schools

may be better organized to focus more fully on what and how teachers learn through their work with students" (p. 235). Little further suggests that "the most powerful and least costly occasion of teacher learning is the systematic sustained study of student work coupled with individual and collective efforts to figure out how that work results from the practices and choices of teaching" (p. 235). Student outcomes and the knowledge teachers gain from working with students is becoming the focus for teachers' learning experiences.

This shift has forced professional development in a new direction. In the previous forms, the driving force for professional development was often detached from the school environment. Choices regarding professional development decisions were made on "gut assumptions" or based on research external to the school. Now, the driving factor for improving student achievement is students themselves (Bernhardt, 2000). Critical to this idea is the collection of both formative and summative student information.

The process of studying student information to create professional development experiences pushes educators to "begin with the end in mind" (Hirsch, 2001). Hirsch suggests that we need to identify what all students are expected to know, determine what teachers need to know and do in order to insure student success, and figure out where professional development must focus to meet both goals. This information enables us to focus our professional development activities and helps us begin to identify the outcomes we are expecting.

Guskey (2000) also suggests some considerations to help in the decision-making process in which he advocates working backwards. Guskey feels student-learning outcomes need to be defined at the beginning of the process. Next, a determination, based on the research, of those instructional practices and policies that will most effectively produce the identified student-learning outcomes should be made. Guskey also sees the need to recognize organizational

supports that need to be in place for those practices and policies to be implemented. Subsequently, an awareness of the knowledge and skills teachers must have in order to implement the described practices and policies must be developed. Finally, the experiences that will enable participants to acquire the needed knowledge and skills must be identified.

In the Third Form, assessing student information, i.e., achievement scores, portfolios, student work, test scores, etc., helps determine what is important and identifies a starting point. Richardson (2002) focuses on the use of data in the decision-making processes and states that once information or data is obtained, it should be analyzed to discover student deficits and strengths and suggests that such data will identify areas where teachers need to improve. After data are collected and analyzed, teachers need time to work collaboratively to design lessons and prepare classroom assessments. Finally, Richardson believes that sustained support, such as coaching, is an important element needed for enhancing teacher understanding and learning and will ultimately lead to improved student achievement.

The literature that promotes the use of student results to center professional development cites various characteristics as consistent with improved student learning. O'Neill and Conzemius (2002) believe that for a school to show improved student results, a shared focus must be developed which drives the goals of the school and of the teachers which, in turn, are all focused on student learning. It should "drive every conversation, transaction, and process at the school" (p. 3). Another characteristic of the student-centered approach is the responsibility of the school to enable teachers to be involved in (1) reflective practices that are supported by the use of data, and (2) a collaborative environment which invites shared work around a common goal that identifies specific areas of improvement.

Another important characteristic cited in this literature is the role of leadership. Richardson (2000) suggests that leaders must recognize that they need to facilitate the work of others and develop a staff that is deeply committed to the school goals and that they must invest themselves in achieving those goals. Richardson acknowledges the need for leaders to lead by example when it comes to focusing on student achievement and to nurture those elements necessary for this progressive style of professional development.

The research on student centered professional development demonstrates the ability to improve student achievement. Sparks (2000) suggests that involvement in this type of process can show increased student achievement results within one year. Killion (2002) similarly states that when programs include increasing student achievement as a goal of the program, positive results were obtained consistently.

2.2.2.4   Conclusion

Navigating the vast amount of literature written about professional development can be difficult and confusing. As the reader investigates the transformation of the three forms of professional development described in this paper, they should be better able to conceptually organize the broad topic of professional development and better frame their understanding of the manner by which professional development experiences should be planned and implemented.

2.2.3   A Cumulative Understanding: A Perspective of Evaluation

By understanding the transformation of professional development, we can more fully understand its inherent complexities and what is needed to bring about the changes required by the "No Child Left Behind" Act. Though many theorists and researchers have developed various models

of effective professional development designed to bring about this change, one study encapsulates the most important elements and features a framework for evaluating the effectiveness of professional development programs. This study, conducted by the research team of Porter, Garet, Desimone, Yoon and Birman (2000), provides a comprehensive analysis of professional development through a longitudinal review of the Eisenhower Program. The reason for the selection of this study as one of the guiding frameworks for this dissertation is because of the depth, scope, and significance of the study. This study is the largest research project focused on the effectiveness of professional development in kindergarten through grade twelve schools. Within this study, the researchers surveyed 1,027 participants over a three-year period. Case studies and a longitudinal study of teacher change were also completed. Through both quantitative and qualitative research, the study identified six features of effective professional development, which can be used as a framework for in-depth evaluations of other professional development programs (Porter et al., 2000).

The researchers identified three structural and three core attributes which work together to form an effective professional development experience. The structural features set the context while the core features characterize the processes that occur.

The first structural feature of effective professional development is the "form", also known as the type or method of activity. The authors suggest that the type or method of professional development has a large impact on its effectiveness. The authors further defined the "form" as two types, traditional or reform. Typically, traditional formats are largely defined by their implementation of the training strategy, for example, the "one-shot" workshop or conference. In a follow up article that appeared in Educational Leadership, Beatrice and her colleagues (2001) state that the traditional formats provide teachers limited "time, activities, and

content necessary for increasing their knowledge and for fostering meaningful change in their classroom practice" (p. 29). The researchers believe that reform types of professional development provide more meaningful experiences, such as study groups, teacher networks, mentoring, coaching, individual or group action research projects, etc., and are more "responsive to how teachers learn and have more influence on changing teaching practice" (p. 29). Beatrice et al. (2001) states that reform activities are more effective because they are usually longer in duration, focus more on content, actively involve the participants in their own learning and tend to be more coherent in regard to other professional development experiences. However, the authors state that traditional forms of professional development can have the same positive effects if they are implemented over a longer period of time and possess other aspects of progressive professional development, i.e., teacher immersion into the topic, appropriate subject-matter content, active learning and coherence.

Duration was identified, in the research study, as the second structural feature and is characterized by activities that last over a longer period of time. Such activities typically had a more content specific focus, actively engaged the participants, and provided experiences that were typically more coherent with other professional development activities.

Beatrice et al. identify collective participation as the third structural feature and state that the "the participation of teachers from the same department, subject, or grade is more likely to afford opportunities for active learning and are more likely to be coherent with teachers other experiences" (p. 30). The authors cite several advantages of collective participation of members of academic groups. It enables teachers to discuss content specific concepts and problems that are directly associated with their teaching, as well as discuss any problems associated with the experiences they are having. Collective participation also provides opportunities for participants

to integrate what they learn with others and use peers as sounding boards by sharing in the same experiences. Another advantage of collective participation is that it contributes to a shared professional culture where teachers "develop a common understanding of instructional goals, methods, problems and solutions" (p. 30).

Core attributes are defined by the influence they provide through increasing teacher-reported growth in knowledge and skills as well as changes in teaching practice. The first core attribute is the degree to which professional development experiences focus on content knowledge which is directly related to teachers' reported increases in knowledge and skills (p. 30). The authors note that generic professional development experiences that provide teachers with general teaching techniques without a connection to content specific material are ineffective in changing teachers' classroom practices. The authors state that if teachers are "expected to teach to new standards, including complex thinking skills, it is essential that they have a sophisticated understanding of the content and of how students learn that content" (p. 30).

Active learning, the second core attribute, provides professional development experiences in which teachers are actively engaged, thereby increasing their knowledge and skills and demonstrating a greater degree of change in their teaching practices. "Through active learning, teachers become involved in meaningful discussions, collaborative planning, and practices" (p. 31).

The final core attribute, coherence, is the degree to which experiences are interrelated. Typical professional development activities tend to be unrelated to one another. The researchers report that coherence is directly related to increased teacher learning and improved classroom practice. The authors state "an activity is more likely to be effective in improving teachers' knowledge and skills if it forms a coherent part of a wider set of opportunities for teacher learning and development" (p. 31).

The authors contend that the structural characteristics of professional development activities have a direct impact on the core features, and the core features, in turn, influence how successful the experience is in increasing teacher-reported growth in knowledge and skills and changes in teaching practice.

Though this study defines important elements of effective professional development, it does not account for any attributes of the Third Form. The use of data (student outcomes) in professional development planning is a critical characteristic in developing and evaluating a professional development program and any study would be remiss without utilizing student outcomes in its analysis of professional development.

The incorporation of the various elements and aspects of professional development cited throughout this section provide the basis for an in-depth study of professional development programs in determining their value to bring about sustained change in teachers' behaviors and student achievement. But will the "No Child Left Behind" Act and associated state tests pressure schools to provide teachers more effective professional development experiences?

2.3   Framing This Study

As we have seen throughout this chapter, effective professional development experiences are critical in improving teacher effectiveness and student achievement. But in this new era of accountability, with the increased pressure on schools to improve, to what extent has creating and implementing effective professional development been a priority? This study examined the emphasis, or lack thereof, that schools are placing on creating effective professional development experiences as a result of the pressures placed upon them because of accountability. By

comparing schools' professional development programs in terms of their planning and implementation, we can describe changes that are occurring and the effects those changes are having on the ways in which professional development programs are developed and carried out.

3.0 CHAPTER III: METHODS

3.1   Introduction

This study was designed to determine the influence of the accountability movement, and being identified as an ineffective school, on school-sponsored professional development programs, through an investigation of the ways in which professional developers plan, implement, and reflect upon their professional development in effective and ineffective schools.   This was carried out by qualitatively examining the manner by which two groups of schools planned and implemented their professional development programs.   More specifically, a group of five schools identified by the state as needing improvement due to low test scores was compared with a second group of five schools not so identified. For both groups, the goal setting and planning stages of their professional development were examined, as well as the implementation of that plan (specifically, the form, duration, participation levels, focus, degree of active learning, level of coherence, and use of student data). Finally, the planners' reflections were investigated to identify what they believed to be the influences of accountability on their professional development programs.   The responses across the two groups of schools were coded and the data analyzed in order to identify similarities and differences within or between groups.

3.2   Research Questions

Question 1: What differences exist, if any, between the planning of professional development in schools on the Pennsylvania "Warning List" versus schools not on the "Warning List"?

Question 2: What differences exist, if any, between professional development programs in schools on Pennsylvania's "Warning List" versus professional development programs in schools not on the "Warning List" in the areas of:

1.   Form

2.   Duration

3.   Participation

4.   Focus

5.   Level of active learning

6.   Degree of coherence

7.   Use of student data

Question 3: What differences exist, if any, between professional development planners' reflections of the impact of accountability on professional development programs in schools on the Pennsylvania "Warning List" versus schools not on the "Warning List"?

3.3   School Selection Process

The school selection process was designed to obtain two similar groups of schools, one group identified by the state as needing to improve their test scores or risk consequences, and a second

not so identified. This process consisted of two steps. The first step identified all eligible schools with similar attributes in each of the two groups and the second step focused on narrowing the two groups to five schools each.

In obtaining similar groups of schools, the first group consisted of those schools on the Pennsylvania Department of Education's "Warning List" based upon their 2002-2003 reading scores. Schools acquiring this status had less than forty-five percent of their students score in the "Proficient" or "Advanced" ranges in reading for the 2002-2003 school year. Being placed on the "Warning List" means that the school has fallen short of their annual progress targets, but still has another year to achieve them. These schools are not subject to any consequences, rather they have a year in which to meet their progress targets or risk more severe consequences. The second group of schools was made up of those that reached the state benchmark of forty-five percent or more of their students in the "Proficient" and/or "Advanced" range in reading and are not identified on the state's "Needs Improvement" list in any category or subgroup.

Attempts were made to control schools' socio-economic levels so as not to compare schools of different wealth levels. This decision was based on the assumption that schools from varying socio-economic levels have different access to resources, different opportunities, and different needs for professional development, as well as other factors that make direct comparisons of schools and their professional development programs difficult. To overcome this disparity, the variation in schools' socio-economic levels was minimized by excluding schools with extremely high and extremely low poverty rates. In order to identify schools of similar levels of economic wealth, schools were chosen based upon two economic variables. The first indicator was the percentage of students eligible for the "Free and Reduced Lunch Program" that attend a particular school. For the purposes of this study, only schools that have more than thirty-

three percent but fewer than sixty-six percent of their students' eligible to receive free and reduced lunch were considered. This economic indicator permitted the identification of schools that have similar economic opportunities and students of similar economic backgrounds. The second economic indicator was per-pupil expenditure rates. Only schools with six thousand dollars or more per-pupil expenditures were included. These two economic variables together identified schools that have moderate access to resources and have similar factors likely to affect to student achievement. The data were collected based on schools' self-reporting during the 2001-2002 school year (Pennsylvania Department of Education, 2002).

District size was also considered as a variable that could have an impact on the ability of a school to provide professional development. By their very nature, large school districts (i.e., those with large numbers of schools) often have different priorities, different access to resources, and different needs than do smaller school districts. Therefore, large school districts were eliminated enabling this study to further select schools with similar characteristics. For the purposes of this study, schools within large districts, specifically Pittsburgh, Philadelphia, Harrisburg, and Erie, were eliminated.

Another factor that made comparison difficult was the various types of professional development that schools offer. For this study, all school-sponsored mandated events for the 2003-2004 school year were investigated that specifically focused on Language Arts due to each "Warning List" school's status of poor performance in that area. This included any district and school-level events. Individual experiences, such as teachers attending college courses to obtain permanent certification, teachers attending a conference as an individual, or teachers involved in individual experiences of their own free will, were not considered for this study. Also, by

limiting this study to elementary grades, we further narrowed the variety and content of professional development programs.

As stated earlier, the second group was selected according to the same proficiency, economic, and content criteria, however, they were not on the Pennsylvania "Warning List" in any category or subgroup.

Once the two groups of schools were identified, a second step to narrow the schools in each group was undertaken by examining their geographical region. Schools from the first group (schools identified because of their "Warning List" status) were categorized based on their geographical location. The schools were identified and grouped as falling into one of three regions: Western Region, Central Region, and Eastern Region. Within each region schools were randomly ordered. The second group ("Non-Warning List") was categorized based upon if they fell within Intermediate Unit No. 4, No. 5 and No. 6. Within each category, schools were randomly ordered.

The five schools were then selected as follows. For the "Warning List" group, the researcher began with the schools in the Western Region because they were in closer proximity to his home. Telephone calls were made to the principals of the schools in the order in which they appeared on the list. Once five schools agreed to participate, no additional phone calls were made. For the "Non-Warning List" schools, the researcher began with the schools in the three Intermediate Units closest to his home. Calls were made in the order they appeared on the list beginning with Intermediate Unit No. 5. Once five schools agreed to participate, no additional phone calls were made.

After agreeing to participate, each principal was asked to identify one person in the district that would have been most involved with the development, planning, and implementation

of professional development for that specific school (See Appendix A-1). Then, that person was contacted and asked to participate in the study (See Appendix A-2).

The following tables summarize the characteristics of "Warning List" Schools (WLS) and "Non-Warning List" schools that participated in this study.

Table 1

Characteristics of "Warning List" Schools

Characteristics	WLS No. 1	WLS No. 2	WLS No. 3	WLS No. 4	WLS No. 5
Type	Rural	Rural	Suburban	Suburban	Suburban
Location	Northwestern Pennsylvania	Western Pennsylvania	Northwestern Pennsylvania	Central Pennsylvania	Western Pennsylvania
No. of elementary schools in district	10	5	6	7	7
Grades served	K-7	K-6	K-6	K-5	K-5
No. of students	492	256	299	190	393
"Free and Reduced Lunch" %	34	43	63	59	40
Receives Title I funds	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

Table 2

Characteristics of "Non-Warning List" Schools

Characteristics	NWLS No. 1	NWLS No. 2	NWLS No. 3	NWLS No. 4	NWLS No. 5
Type	Suburban	Rural	Suburban	Suburban	Rural
Location	Northwestern Pennsylvania	Western Pennsylvania	Northwestern Pennsylvania	Northwestern Pennsylvania	Northwestern Pennsylvania
No. of elementary schools in district	2	3	3	7	2
Grades served	K-6	K-6	K-5	K-5	K-5
No. of students	534	554	435	551	308
"Free and Reduced Lunch"	36	36	33	47	36
Receives Title I funds	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

As shown in Tables 1 and 2, there are many similarities between the "Warning List" and "Non-Warning List" schools, including the fact that schools in both groups received Title I funds, include a mixture of rural and suburban schools, and serve roughly the same grade levels. The schools in the "Non-Warning List" tend to be larger than those in the "Warning List" group, although the "Warning List" schools appear to be from larger districts (as suggested by the larger number of elementary schools). Finally, both groups have significant numbers of students that qualify for the "Free and Reduced Lunch Program," but the "Warning List" schools have, on average, consistently higher percentages.

3.4   Data Collection

3.4.1   Procedures and Timeline

Once the administrators agreed to participate, face-to-face interviews were arranged. Each person was interviewed (See Appendix A-3) to understand the Goal Setting, Planning and Reflection Stages of their professional development, and to determine what was accounted for in that process. They were also asked to reflect on the impact of accountability on their school's professional development programming. The interview process began in April 2004 and ended in July of 2004.

At the time of the interview each interviewee was given a survey with a return addressed envelope (See Appendix B). This survey asked each administrator about the different professional development experiences that occurred over the 2003-2004 school year and asked them to identify specific professional development experiences and how they were implemented throughout the year. All participants returned their surveys within one month of the interview.

Once all the interviews were completed and surveys collected, interviews were transcribed. An analysis of the data was done focusing on the "Warning List" schools, then "Non-Warning List" schools. Once the data were organized around the four main themes as represented in Appendix C, gaps and misunderstandings became evident. Phone interviews were then conducted with all administrators to clarify certain areas. These follow-up phone interviews occurred in July and August of 2004.

The instruments used in this study were piloted with practicing administrators three times. After each pilot test was completed and the data reviewed, the instruments were reworked to improve the questions in order to derive more targeted and meaningful responses.

3.5   Description and Conceptual Basis for Instrumentation

This study utilized the model advanced by Loucks-Horsley et al., (1998) to guide the conceptualization of the data collection processes and the focus of the instrumentation (See discussion of Loucks-Horsley's model on pages 41-44). Loucks-Horsley's model presents a general decision-making flowchart that focuses on the steps for the successful design of professional development and factors that may influence the quality of professional development.

3.5.1   Interview

Questions 1-20 of the Interview were designed to obtain information on the Goal Setting and Planning Stages of the Loucks-Horsley's Model and the influence of the four specified inputs. The primary purpose of these questions was to better understand how the different groups of schools ("Warning List" or not) implemented the Goal Setting and Planning Stages by focusing on the four inputs identified in this model (Knowledge and Beliefs, Strategies, Context, and Critical Issues). Information was obtained regarding the extent to which planners took their local context into account, the kinds of knowledge and beliefs that were drawn upon, the variety of possible strategies for professional development that were considered, and finally, the extent to which other Critical Issues identified by Loucks-Horsley et al. (1998) as important in the design of professional development were considered. This data was obtained in order to determine if there were significant differences in the ways in which these two different groups of schools designed and planned for their professional development.

Questions 21-30 of the interview focused on the Reflection Stage identified in Loucks-Horsley's model. The questions were designed to help understand the planners' beliefs about the successes of their programs and to determine what influences accountability had on schools' professional development programs.

In sum, the responses collected for interview question 1-20 addressed:

Research Question 1: What differences exist, if any, between the planning of professional development in schools on the Pennsylvania "Warning List" versus schools not on the "Warning List"?

The responses collected for interview questions 21-30 addressed:

Research Question 3: What differences exist, if any, between professional development planners' reflections of the impact of accountability on professional development programs in schools on the Pennsylvania "Warning List" versus schools not on the "Warning List"?

For the purposes of structuring and organizing the interview questions, the questions were grouped according to topic. The topics were as follows:

Questions 1 through 5 (with follow-up questions) highlighted the Planning and Goal Setting Stages in Loucks-Horsley's Model. Information obtained through these questions helped clarify who was involved, how decisions were made, who was responsible for implementing them, and other factors of the planning process.

Question 6 (with follow-up questions) detailed the degree to which the knowledge and beliefs regarding "best practices" were considered (as substantiated in the research, in the literature, and in the "wisdom of practice") as the professional development plan was designed. This aspect is considered an important input in Loucks-Horsley's model and focused on the planners' knowledge of the learning process, teachers, teaching, and professional development.

Questions 7 through 11 (with follow-up questions) focused on the variety of the strategies considered in the planning phase of the professional development. Successful professional development programs tend to be built around more than the standard "workshop" or "college credit" strategy and through this line of questioning, the administrators' perspectives on strategies were determined.

Question 12 (with follow-up questions) aided in understanding the degree to which the planners considered relevant Contextual Issues that influence professional development. These issues were specific to each school and their consideration has been found to be associated with more successful professional development programs.

Questions 13 through 20 (with follow-up questions) focused on the degree of planning for other issues (Loucks-Horsley calls "Critical Issues") that may significantly impact a school's professional development program.

Questions 21 and 22 focused on the Reflection Stage identified in Loucks-Horsley's model. These questions sought to determine the overall successfulness of a school's particular professional development program.

Questions 23 through 30 highlighted the influence of accountability on each school's professional development program. Through these questions, the degree to which accountability was addressed and its impact on the program were determined.

3.5.2   Survey

The Survey, given to the professional development planner at the time of the interview, focused on the Doing Stage of Loucks-Horsley's model. However, guiding the data collection in this phase was the research of Porter, Garet, Desimone, Yoon and Birman (2000). Porter and his

fellow researchers focused on the qualities of effective professional development. With their framework as a guide, information was obtained on what professional development was carried out and how it was implemented.

The responses collected through the survey were used to address:

Research Question 2: What differences exist, if any, between professional development programs in schools on Pennsylvania's "Warning List" versus professional development programs in schools not on the "Warning List" in the areas of:
1. Form
2. Duration
3. Participation
4. Focus
5. Level of active learning
6. Degree of coherence
7. Use of student data

The survey collected data specifically about how each school implemented their professional development according to Porter et al. The questions were grouped according to topics (See Appendix B). The topics were as follows:

Question 1 focused on forms of professional development.

Questions 2 and 3 referred to the duration of the specific professional

development experience.

Question 4 collected information on the duration and the degree of coherence.

Question 5 and 6 determined the level of participation for the experience.

Question 7, 8 and 12 collected information on the focus of each experience.

Question 9 also collected information on the degree of coherence.

Question 10 determined if student assessments were involved in the planning or

implementation of the experience.

Question 11 inquired about the influence of the PSSA on the planning of this experience.

Question 13 sought information on the level of active learning that took place during the experience.

3.6   Data Analysis

3.6.1   Interview

As each administrator was interviewed, the conversation was audio-recorded and later transcribed. Beginning with the "Warning List" schools, data were coded and analyzed. A summary report was developed for each school, highlighting the major themes (See Appendix D). This same process was done with "Non-Warning List" schools (See Appendix E).

Coding of the transcripts was done initially through a predetermined macro-coding system of Goal Setting, Planning, Implementation and Reflection, which were outlined by Loucks-Horsley et al. (1998) (See Appendix C). The first two areas were broken down into four main topics that correspond to the macro codes in Appendix C: 1) Decision-Making, 2) Delivery Methods, 3) Goals and 4) Inputs cited by Loucks-Horsley as influential on the Goals Setting and Planning processes (Knowledge and Beliefs, Strategies, Contextual Issues and Critical Issues). Though some data were obtained for the macro-code of Implementation through the interview process, most information was obtained via the survey. The data obtained for the last macro-code of Reflection was done by focusing on the areas of: PSSA Significance, Experience Significance to the PSSA, Time, Money and Focus. All data were than evaluated to determine if

any patterns emerged within the groups of schools. The two groups of schools were then compared to determine if any similarities or differences existed.

3.6.2   Survey

Once all surveys were obtained, they were analyzed using the seven aspects of effective professional development identified by the research team of Porter, et al. (2000). The data were analyzed initially by group ("Warning List" or not). Any observations or themes from within each group that became evident through the data, were presented graphically in the analysis section of this paper. Once both groups of schools had their surveys coded, the two were compared by quantitative and qualitative means and observations were made to determine if there were any differences between the two types of schools.

4.0 CHAPTER IV: FINDINGS

This chapter presents the results of a cross-case analysis of "Warning List" and "Non-Warning List" schools in regards to patterns and themes that emerged within each group of schools in response to the research questions presented in the earlier chapters. This is followed by a comparative analysis of those patterns associated with the "Warning List" and "Non-Warning List" schools. Through these comparative analyses, the influence of accountability on schools' professional development programs is examined and the analyses, in turn, highlight areas of need to be addressed at the school, district and state levels. These implications are discussed fully in the next chapter.

4.1   Findings Relevant to Research Question No. 1

Research Question 1: What differences exist, if any, between the planning of professional development in schools on the Pennsylvania "Warning List" versus schools not on the "Warning List"?

The data related to Research Question No. 1 were drawn from the interview transcripts. In this section, findings are reported based on the following four main topics which correspond to the macro-codes in Appendix C: 1) Decision-Making, 2) Delivery Methods, 3) Goals, and 4) Inputs, all of which are cited by Loucks-Horsley as influential in the Goals Setting and Planning

processes. The first three topics are drawn from macro-codes of Goal Setting and Planning; while the Input topic coincides with the macro-codes of Knowledge and Beliefs, Strategies, Contextual Issues, and Critical Issues.

4.1.1 Decision-Making Process

In reviewing the differences and similarities of "Warning List" and "Non-Warning List" schools in the manner in which they plan their professional development, it was important to identify the major decision-makers and elements that went into the decision-making process. Tables 1 and 2 identify the person who had the greatest responsibility for planning and overseeing the district's professional development at the school level. Though other people may have had input (Superintendent, Assistant Superintendent, etc.), these individuals were the primary decision-makers and were in charge of the school's professional development. Also indicated in these charts are the support personnel who assisted the primary decision-maker in planning and implementing the school's professional development. The Professional Development Committees (the group of individuals who were "supposed to" be convened to discuss professional development) were also identified, as well as whether or not meetings of these committees were held prior to or during the 2003-2004 school year. Other sources of input, i.e., teachers, outside experts, or PSSA data, that were taken into consideration during the goal setting and planning stages were also identified.

4.1.1.1   Analysis of "Warning List" Schools' Decision-Making Process

In Table 1, findings specific to the five "Warning List" schools are presented.

Table 1

Analysis of the Decision-Making Processes for "Warning List" Professional Development

Elements of the Decision Making Process	WLS No. 1	WLS No. 2	WLS No. 3	WLS No. 4	WLS No. 5
Main staff position with responsibility for professional development	Supervisor of Curriculum and Instruction	Principal	Supervisor of Curriculum and Instruction	Director of Curriculum and Instruction	Supervisor of Professional Development
Support staff involved in the planning process	6 Content Area Supervisors	1 Lead Teacher	2 Elementary Supervisors	1 Reading Supervisor	None
Professional development committee	Instructional Management Team made up of Administrators (Supervisors, Content Area Supervisors, Principals, Superintendent and Assistant Superintendent)	Principal and Head Teacher	Administrative Team (Supervisor of Curriculum and Instruction, Elementary Supervisors, Principals, Teacher Representatives)	Steering Committee (Director of Curriculum and Instruction, Superintendent, Reading Supervisor, Representative Teachers)	Administrative Team (Supervisor of Professional Development and Assistant Superintendent, Superintendent, and Teacher Representatives)
Planning meeting held	Yes	Yes	No	No	No
State data used in planning process	Yes	Yes	No	No	No
Teacher participation in decision-making process	Yes	No	No	No	No
Outside experts utilized during planning process	No	Yes	No	No	No

A review of Table 1 suggests both similarities and differences exist within this group of schools with respect to the decision-making processes surrounding professional development. Although all five schools had high-level personnel in charge of professional development (row 1), it should be noted that in all but two schools (WLS No. 1 and WLS No. 5) these individuals had a wide range of other responsibilities in addition to coordinating and implementing professional development. Similarly, four of the five schools had support staff who assisted these individuals (row 2), but most of these support staff (3 out of 5) had teaching or supervising responsibilities, thereby limiting the amount of time available for planning and decision-making surrounding professional development.

Table 1 also indicates the limited use of Professional Development Committees for the "Warning List" schools (row 3 and 4). All schools indicated that they had a Professional Development Committee; however of the five schools, only two (WLS No. 1 and WLS No. 2) convened these committees at some point before or during the 2003-2004 school year. Theoretically, these committees were responsible for making decisions regarding professional development for the year and developing implementation plans. In schools where a committee did not meet, decisions were made solely by the principal.

Schools identified by the state for the "Warning List" had to have less than forty-five percent of their students in the proficient or advanced categories on the PSSA in Language Arts. As shown on Table 3, only 2 of the schools utilized this information in their professional development decision-making process (row 5).[3] These two schools were the same schools that also convened their decision-making teams.

[3] Only if the administrator stated (or evidence was provided) that PSSA data was used in the planning stages were they identified on this table and only two administrators acknowledged such use.

Teachers, as indicated on Table 1, were part of only one school's decision-making process (row 6), in that teacher needs assessments were conducted and reviewed for input into the decision-making. The other four schools did not include teachers' input in their decision-making process. This was due to the fact that the decisions for the 2003-2004 professional development were continuations of experiences planned in the 2002-2003 school year.[4]

Finally, Table 1 shows that only one district brought in an outside expert (row 7), in this case, to help create a School Improvement Plan as part of their strategic plan. The four other districts did not tap outside resources for the planning stages.[5]

In summary, Table 1 suggests that the "Warning List" schools tended to place high-level administrators in charge of professional development, but appeared to provide insufficient support that would be needed for effective thoughtful planning. The lack of attention to up-front planning is also suggested by the majority of schools that did not hold even a single planning meeting (n=3) or consult their PSSA data for information regarding how to direct their professional development efforts (n=3). Also ignored by most "Warning List" schools, were the use of teachers in the decision-making process (n=4) and the use of outside experts (n=4) as aides in the planning process to develop meaningful and worthwhile experiences.

4.1.1.2   Analysis of "Non-Warning" List Schools Decision-Making Process

Findings specific to the five "Non-Warning List" schools' decision-making processes are presented in the following table.

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[4] It should be noted that the Lead Teacher in WLS No. 2 is not considered a teacher but a decision-maker for this study.
[5] It should be noted that the individual brought in to assist in the School Improvement Plan worked at the school level but did not specifically work on designing or implementing professional development.

Table 2

Analysis of Decision-Making Processes for "Non-Warning List" Professional Development

Elements of the Decision Making Process	NWLS No. 1	NWLS No. 2	NWLS No. 3	NWLS No. 4	NWLS No. 5
Main staff position with responsibility for professional development	Two Building-Level Principals	Building Principal	Director of Curriculum and Instruction	Director of Curriculum and Instruction	Principal
Support staff involved in the planning process	None	Curriculum Coordinator	Focus Teams	6 Content Area Staff	None
Professional development committee	Professional Development Committee (Superintendent, Principals, and Teacher Representatives)	Building Level Team	Administration with input from Focus Teams	Administrative Team	Principal and Staff
Planning meeting held	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
State data used in planning process	No	No	No	No	Yes
Teacher participation in decision-making process	No	No	Yes (Staff Survey)	Yes (Staff Survey)	Yes
Outside experts utilized during planning process	No	No	No	No	No

Table 2 demonstrates that of the "Non-Warning List" schools in this study, most placed the responsibility to plan and conduct their professional development on the building level principals (row 1). It should be noted that in the three buildings where the principals were the administrator responsible for professional development, two of the districts employed a full time Curriculum Coordinator who did not assist in the process. Also, limiting the resources available for effective professional development was that only one school (NWLS No. 4) had other staff dedicated to assisting the primary person (row 2). This indicates that resources that could have positively impacted professional development, for whatever reason, were not utilized by most the schools, even though they were relatively large school districts.

Table 2 also indicates that some up-front planning was conducted by most of "Non-Warning List" schools (row 4). Of the five "Non-Warning List" schools, three convened their professional development committees to discuss the goals and plans for the year, while the other two met at the building-level and did not utilize their professional development committee. It should be noted that the NWLS No. 1 principals were both new to their positions and had not yet identified the needs of their schools and opted for a pre-packaged program conducted by the Intermediate Unit. The administrator at NWLS No. 2 identified an area of need in her building that she wanted to address though professional development and made the decision to focus on character education. Not evident in the table is that the two schools who did not convene their decision-making teams had not done so for several years.

"Non-Warning List" schools tended not to utilize PSSA data or outside experts in the planning process (row 5 and 7). Though all schools stated that they looked at the achievement test data, only one "Non-Warning List" school (NWLS No. 5) directly used this data in their planning of professional development. Also evident was that no "Non-Warning List" schools

used outside experts at any time during the planning process but relied upon their own personnel to make decisions. One "Non-Warning List" administrator acknowledged this trend by stating "we have so many teachers with so much knowledge, it was just a matter of getting them together to talk."

Also, indicated on Table 2 is that most "Non-Warning List" schools used some teacher input during the decision-making stages (row 6). Of the five schools, two schools (NWLS No. 3 and NWLS No. 4) utilized teacher input through staff surveys and one school (NWLS No. 5) used teachers as part of the decision-making team. The remaining two schools did not solicit teacher input in any manner.

4.1.1.3   Comparative Analysis of the Decision-Making Process

Table 3 highlights the areas of comparisons of "Warning List" and "Non-Warning List" schools in the manner in which they make decisions about their professional development.

Table 3

Decision-Making Processes: Comparing "Warning List" and "Non-Warning List" Schools.

Elements of the Decision-Making Process	"Warning List" schools	"Non-Warning List" schools
Number of schools with individual(s) who had sole responsibility for professional development	2	1
Number of schools that held a professional development planning meeting	2	3
Number of schools that used PSSA data in planning process	2	1
Number of schools that solicited teacher input in the planning process	1	3
Number of schools that utilized outside experts during the planning process	1	0

A review of Table 3 suggest that, in general, neither group of schools appear to be investing a lot of resources, time or other inputs in the decision-making process. Across both "Warning List" and "Non-Warning List" groups, fewer than half of the schools had an individual solely responsible for professional development, held a planning meeting, solicited teacher input, used PSSA data, or utilized an outside experts. Table 3 suggests (slightly) more "Warning List" schools had individuals solely responsible for professional development, examined PSSA data and utilized outside experts, while "Non-Warning List" schools were (slightly) more apt to convene professional development committees and solicit teacher input.

4.1.2   Delivery Methods

Understanding the methods of delivering professional development that "Warning List" and "Non-Warning List" schools use gives insight into the manner in which they support and provide professional development for their teachers.   Tables 4 and 5 indicate the delivery methods through which professional development was offered in each group of schools, including information on the number of Act 80/In-Service Days used during the 2003-2004 school year and if the district provided other professional development offerings, either contractual or voluntary.

4.1.2.1   Analysis of "Warning List" Schools Delivery Methods for Professional Development

Table 4 identifies the mechanisms used by "Warning List" schools to deliver their professional development.

Table 4

Analysis of "Warning List" Schools' Methods of Delivery for Professional Development

Elements of Methods of Delivery	WLS No. 1	WLS No. 2	WLS No. 3	WLS No. 4	WLS No. 5
Levels at which professional development was designed and implemented	Building and District	Building-Level	District-Level	District-Level	District-Level
Number of Act 80/In-Service days devoted to Professional Development	4	4	2	3	5
Mandatory Weekly/Monthly Contractual Hours for Professional Development	Yes	No	No	No	No
Types of Professional Development experiences beyond Act 80/In-Service Days	Yes – Optional experiences before and after school and coaching	No	No	Yes – Release time	Yes - Optional experiences after school

Table 4 indicates that most of the "Warning List" schools offer professional development experiences at the district-level (row 1). Although, WLS No. 1 offered professional development at both the district and building level, content-based professional development only took place at the building-level; therefore three of the five "Warning List" schools focused their professional development at a district-level. The perception of the different methods varied: one administrator stated that the decision to present information district-wide allowed them to coordinate experiences among schools in order to insure consistency; another administrator stated that the school-level experiences enabled the district to be responsive to the needs of individual schools. It should be noted that WLS No. 5 will implement their professional development at the school-level next year.

Act 80/In-Service days appeared to be the most frequently used vehicle for delivering professional development (row 2). All districts offered some Act 80/In-Service days with most schools using at least 3 days for professional development. The average number of Act 80/In-Service days for "Warning List" schools was 3.6 days (total of 18 days). However, as will be noted in the section on Focus, the average number of days used for non-content-based professional development was 1.4 days (total of 7 days of the 18 total), thereby suggesting that a good portion of the available time was not used for instructional improvement. Programs such as Sexual Harassment and Wellness Fairs limited time available for content-related learning for the teachers.

Table 4 also demonstrates what appears to be a limited emphasis on creating additional professional development experiences that went beyond their Act 80/In-Service Days (row 4 and 5). Only one "Warning List" school (WLS No. 1) has mandatory professional development that occurs weekly or monthly. It should be noted that although these hours are mandated by contract, the administrator stated that they do not enforce, but encourage attendance. Also, of the five schools, three actively seek to offer professional development through means other than through their Act 80/In-Service days. These methods included release time for teachers and mandatory/voluntary after-school experiences. Of the five schools, three provided no after school professional development experiences during the 2003-2004 school year.

In summary, Table 4 suggests that "Warning List" schools mainly implemented their professional development through their Act 80/In-Service days and implemented topics district-wide (n=3). Also, "Warning List" schools, because of contractual or other reasons, did not engage teachers in a variety of professional development experiences. In that, the average number of Act 80/In-Service days was 3.6, only one had contractually mandated professional

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development beyond their Act 80/In-Service days (WLS No. 1), only two offered professional development time beyond the regular school day (WLS No. 1 and WLS No. 5), while one sought extra time during the school day by providing teachers with release time (WLS No. 4), and one provided coaching (WLS No. 1). One "Warning List" administrator noted this lack of time and stated "We need to do more as a district in creating time, but we need to do that through negotiations."

4.1.2.2   Analysis of "Non-Warning List" Schools' Methods of Delivery of Professional
            Development

Table 5 identifies the mechanisms used by "Non-Warning List" schools to deliver their professional development.

Table 5

Analysis of "Non-Warning List" Methods of Delivery for Professional Development

Elements of Methods of Delivery	NWLS No. 1	NWLS No. 2	NWLS No. 3	NWLS No. 4	NWLS No. 5
Levels at which professional development was designed and implemented	District-Level	Building-Level	District-Level	Building and District-Level	Building-Level
Number of Act 80/In-Service days devoted to Professional Development	5	2	3 and 7 early dismissal days	2	6
Mandatory Weekly/Monthly Contractual Hours for Professional Development	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
Types of Professional Development beyond Act 80/In-Service Days	No	No	Yes – Optional Summer and After School Experiences	Yes – Optional Summer and After School Experiences and coaching	No

Table 5 identifies that all "Non-Warning List" schools utilize their Act 80/In-Service days as the most frequently used vehicle for delivering professional development and that most of the professional development was done at the school-level (row 1). All "Non-Warning List" schools offered some Act 80/In-Service days with most (n=3) offering four or more days. The average number of Act 80/In-Service days for "Non-Warning List" schools was 4 days (total of 20 days).[6]

Of the five schools, only two schools offered only district-level experiences. The other three offered school-level or a combination of district and building level. As one administrator stated "after the district sets the goals, providing it (professional development) at the school-level

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[6] The seven early dismissals are being counted as two entire days of professional development.

helps the district address their initiatives at a school level and guarantees attendance on a specific topic." Another administrator thought offering experiences at the school-level respected the individuality of her school and helped create more focused experiences. She also felt that because her school staff did not have "troublemakers" that were present in the other school, she did not have to spend time dealing with those individuals. Yet another administrator stated that her district had previously held professional development at the school-level and the middle school teachers claimed they could tell which elementary school a child came from because of the inconsistencies between elementary school curricula and asked that the professional development be coordinated more at the district level.

As Table 5 also indicates, most "Non-Warning List" schools utilize other means beyond their Act 80/In-Service days for professional development (row 3 and 4). Three out of the five schools had a contractual obligation for professional development: NWLS No. 2 mandated 10.5 hours; NWLS No. 3 required 24 hours; and NWLS No. 4 has a mandatory 48 hours that teachers must use for professional development. Two of the five schools offered other types of experiences beyond their contractually mandated obligations. In doing so, one of the schools (NWLS No. 4) offered a mandatory coaching program for teachers and two schools (NWLS No. 3 and No. 4) offered voluntary summer and after school programs. One administrator acknowledged the benefit of professional development programs beyond the regular school day and stated "We are proud of our summer staff development program. A lot of teachers come and I feel we get a lot out of it."

In summary, Table 5 suggests that "Non-Warning List" schools mainly implemented their professional development through their Act 80/In-Service days and most offered their experiences at a building-level (n=3). On average "Non-Warning List" schools offered 4 Act

80/In-Service days and went beyond their Act 80/In-Service days and offered either contractually mandated experiences (n=3) or other forms of professional development (n=2). However, two schools had neither school-mandated professional development experiences nor provided professional development in any other manner than through their Act 80/In-Service days.

4.1.2.3   Comparative Analysis of the Methods of Delivery for Professional Development

Table 6 highlights the areas of comparisons of "Warning List" and "Non-Warning List" schools in the manner in which they delivered their professional development.

Table 6

Methods of Delivery: Comparing "Warning List" and "Non-Warning List" Schools

Elements of Methods of Delivery	"Warning List" Schools	"Non-Warning List" Schools
Number of schools that offered professional development at the building-level	2	3
Number of Act 80/In-Service days	18	20
Number of Act 80/In-Service days NOT used for instructional learning opportunities	7	6
Number of schools that mandate professional development beyond Act 80/In-Service days	1	3
Number of experiences offered beyond Act 80/In-Service days	4	5

In comparing "Warning List" schools to "Non-Warning List" schools in the area of methods of delivery, Table 6 suggests that most "Non-Warning List" schools are providing more time for professional development than "Warning List" schools. All 10 schools utilized Act 80/In-Service days as their main vehicle for implementing professional development; however,

"Non-Warning List" schools offered slightly more days and utilized those days more often for instructional improvement (row 2 and 3). Also meaningful is that more "Non-Warning List" schools are more able to offer mandated professional development experiences (row 4) and provide slightly more experiences beyond their Act 80/In-Service days (row 5).

Also, indicated on table 6 is that more "Non-Warning List" schools offered professional development at the school-level (row 1). Several administrators stated that this method is more responsive to individual school needs and felt that they are better able to target their teachers' needs. A "Non-Warning List" administrator argued that in the past their district offered building-level professional development which resulted in schools with different levels of expertise and students with varying levels of proficiencies. She noted that the middle school teachers urged them to unify the elementary programs.

4.1.3   Goal Setting

An analysis was undertaken to identify the professional development goals adopted by "Warning List" and "Non-Warning List" schools for the 2003-2004 school year.

4.1.3.1   Analysis of "Warning List" Schools Goal Setting

Each administrator was asked to identify the goals for this year's professional development program. Of the five "Warning List" schools, three of them acknowledged that "raising scores" was the overall goal of the program. Other goals noted were "creating curriculum maps" and "understanding the new reading series." This suggests that "Warning List" administrators are acknowledging their need to improve their PSSA scores.

4.1.3.2   Analysis of "Non-Warning List" Schools Goal Setting

Of the goals stated for "Non-Warning List" schools, only one addressed student achievement directly (NWLS No. 3). The administrator stated that the goal of their professional development was to "Impact student achievement." The other administrators stated their goals as "continued implementation of the balanced literacy program", "improve the environment of the school", "coordinate activities between the two building and provide teachers with ways they could enhance learning" and "better acquaint teacher with the state standards and develop strategies to best help kids meet those standards and to improve the home-school communication." This may suggest that "Non-Warning List" administrators did not note the same pressures to raise achievement scores as did "Warning List" schools and were more focused on goals of program implementation.

4.1.3.3   Comparative Analysis of the Goal Setting

More "Warning List" schools stated improved student achievement as the goal of the program than did "Non-Warning List" schools. Of the "Warning List" schools, three stated raising test scores or student achievement as the main goal of the program, while one "Non-Warning List" school made this claim. Though most of the other goals for "Non-Warning List" schools were academically oriented in nature, one school's goal was focused on improving the school environment while part of another school's goal was to improve the home-school connection.

4.1.4   Inputs that Influence Goal Setting and Planning

Loucks-Horsley identified four inputs that can have a substantial impact on the manner in which professional development is designed and implemented (Knowledge Base that supports

Professional Development, Strategies and Knowledge of Professional Development, Contextual Issues, and Critical Issues). The administrators' knowledge of these issues can influence the manner in which they design their professional development. The following sections highlight the administrators' understanding of these four inputs. The information in this section was obtained through directly questioning administrators regarding the inputs outlined by Loucks-Horsley et al. (1999) as well as other evidence presented through the interview process. For example, if a school's professional development program showed evidence of Coaching, yet the administrator failed to mention this non-traditional experience when asked, he/she was still credited with having that belief.

4.1.4.1   Knowledge Base and Beliefs that Support Professional Development

Loucks-Horsley et al., (1999) discussed the influence of a professional developer's Knowledge Base and Beliefs on the design of professional development. Included in Knowledge Base and Beliefs is the "knowledge substantiated in the research, in the literature, and in the "wisdom of practice" as well as individuals' beliefs about characteristics of effective professional development" (p. 22). The following aspects of effective professional development (See Chapter II for a more in-depth discussion) were used to code the administrators' responses to the interview questions about their Knowledge Base and Beliefs.

- Time: Time or duration (the length of contact time of an experience) of an activity is a critical aspect that must be provided and sustained in order to focus on areas of importance. Research suggests a positive correlation between increased time and effectiveness.

- Leadership: Leadership is the development of a knowledge base and supports within an organization. As O'Neill and Conzemius (2002) state, "Leadership is less about an individual, a position, or a set of traits and more about the positive energy created with knowledgeable and caring people convened around common purposes to make improvement together." (p. 18)

- Participant Buy-In: Participant Buy-In is the manner in which teachers and faculties accept programs or practices. Involving teachers in the process increases the likelihood of participants buying into the program, thus increasing effectiveness.

- Job Embeddedness: This denotes a belief that professional development should not occur outside the school walls but be a part of the natural school day and be centered around topics important to individuals within that particular setting.

- Collaboration: Collaboration is a school's ability to work together or collaborate around an issue or problem. As O'Neill and Conzemius (2002) state, schools with the ability to collaborate make the most progress.

- Subject Matter: New research shows that teachers engaged in learning experiences focused on their subject matter may be more receptive to improving teaching and are more likely to enhance student learning.

Tables 7 and 8 show the characteristics of effective professional development identified by the "Warning List" and "Non-Warning List" administrators. If the administrator stated anything in the interview that addressed the issues of Time, Leadership, Participant Buy-In, Job Embeddedness, Collaboration and Subject Matter, it is marked with a check ($\sqrt{}$).

4.1.4.1.1 Analysis of "Warning List" Schools' Administrators' Knowledge Base and Beliefs that Support Professional Development

Table 7 indicates the Knowledge and Beliefs about effective professional development of "Warning List" schools' administrators which have an impact on the design of professional development experiences.

Table 7

Analysis of "Warning List" Administrators' Knowledge Base and Beliefs that Support

Professional Development

"Warning List" Schools	Aspects of Knowledge Base and Beliefs that Support Professional Development					
	Time	Leadership	Participant Buy-In	Job Embeddedness	Collaboration	Subject Matter
WLS No. 1	√	√	√	√	√	√
WLS No. 2	√		√		√	√
WLS No. 3	√	√	√	√	√	√
WLS No. 4	√		√	√		√
WLS No. 5	√	√	√	√	√	√

Table 7 suggests that most administrators have an understanding of elements of effective professional development. Of the five administrators, all mentioned at least five aspects, with three addressing all.

In reviewing the data, three of the aspects were acknowledged by all administrators as important. The first, Time (column No. 1), was discussed by all in that more of it was needed in their professional development programs. Though all mentioned it as important, to this author, the degree to which each administrator tried to increase it was limited. Participant Buy-in, the second aspect mentioned by all administrators (column No. 5), was demonstrated by the administrator's comments that to have successful implementation, teachers need to adhere to the program's beliefs and philosophies, and want to do what is being asked of them. As one administrator stated "we need teachers to have a voice in the decisions." However, another administrator stated that they desired Participant Buy-In, but felt to get it was "all a matter of

how it was presented" to the teachers. The last aspect, Subject Matter (column No. 6), was verbalized by reference to feelings that providing content-specific experiences were important and essential to changing and improving teaching. In doing so, one Warning List" administrator stated, "we need to give teachers the tools to change and show them how to implement the things we are talking about."

Leadership was discussed the least (column No. 2). The three administrators who mentioned it stated ideas such as developing a knowledge base and putting the professional development into the hands of the teachers as aspects of leadership. In putting leadership into the hands of the teachers, several administrators demonstrated this by having teachers involved in the implementation (i.e., instructing and participating in the outcomes).

In summary, Table 7 suggests that "Warning List" school administrators appear to have some understanding of the elements essential to effective professional development.

4.1.4.1.2 Analysis of "Non-Warning List" Schools' Administrators' Knowledge Base and

Beliefs that Support Professional Development

Table 8 indicates the Knowledge Base and Beliefs of "Non-Warning List" schools' administrators which may have an impact in the manner in which professional development was planned.

Table 8

Analysis of "Non-Warning List" Administrators' Knowledge Base and Beliefs that Support

Professional Development

"Non-Warning List" School	Aspects of Knowledge Base and Beliefs that Support Professional Development					
	Time	Leadership	Participant Buy-In	Job Embeddedness	Collaboration	Subject Matter
NWLS No. 1	√		√	√		√
NWLS No. 2	√		√	√		√
NWLS No. 3	√	√	√		√	√
NWLS No. 4	√	√	√	√	√	√
NWLS No. 5	√	√	√		√	√

Table 8 suggests that "Non-Warning List" administrators have some understanding of the aspects of effective professional development. Of the five administrators, all acknowledged four or more aspects with one acknowledging them all.

Similar to "Warning List" administrators, all "Non-Warning List" administrators stated aspects of Time (column No. 1), Participant Buy-In (column No. 3), and Subject Matter (column No. 6). In discussing these issues, administrators acknowledged the necessity of Time and noted the lack of it, while only one mentioned a proactive way of obtaining more (through negotiations). Administrators stated the need for Participant Buy-In and its necessity for effective implementation. One administrator stated "We work to let teachers understand the necessity of the programs we offer." While discussing Subject Matter, all administrators felt they needed to offer meaningful content related topics which as one administrator acknowledged,

was important to provide teachers with information that they can take back into the classroom and use.

As Table 8 demonstrates, expressed the least were Leadership (column No. 2), Collaboration (column No. 5) and Job-Embeddedness (column No. 4). In discussing these aspects, the issue of leadership was discussed three times by which administrators stated that professional development should utilize in-house staff to train the rest of the staff, thus creating an in-house contact. They also felt that giving staff input into the decision-making and providing teachers with more control of the process will make them more apt to implement initiatives. In discussing Collaboration, "Non-Warning List" administrators noted its importance in that it helped create a consensus by putting "everyone on the same page." Finally, in discussions on Job-Embeddedness, administrators acknowledged its potential in creating change in teachers' practices.

4.1.4.1.3 Comparative Analysis of the Knowledge Base and Beliefs that Support Professional
      Development

In comparing "Warning List" and "Non-Warning List" schools, Tables 7 and 8 suggest that the administrators who had the main responsibility for designing and implementing professional development had some degree of knowledge base of the elements for effective professional development. Of the ten administrators, all stated some knowledge of at least four of the six elements, with Time, Participant Buy-In and Subject Matter being identified by all.

4.1.4.2   Knowledge Base of Professional Development Strategies

Another element critical to the planning process, as identified by Loucks-Horsley, is the administrators' knowledge base and perspective of professional development strategies beyond traditional workshops and courses for college credit. The knowledge and understanding of professional development strategies is a critical feature that influences both planning and designing of professional development.

For the purposes of this section, all administrators were asked to identify from a list of experiences (See Appendix A-5), those that were considered during the planning stages of their professional development.   This was done to identify strategies administrators consciously thought about as they designed their program and the perspectives they brought to their planning as well as each administrator's knowledge base of the varying strategies.

4.1.4.2.1   Analysis of "Warning List" Schools' Administrators' Knowledge of Strategies

Through the interview process, all administrators acknowledged that "Traditional" type experiences were considered during the planning stages; and all except one, acknowledged some "Reform" type strategy.   Of the "Reform" type strategies, experiences such as "teachers participate in a committees or task forces", "teachers participate in working with a coach or mentor" and "teachers participate in study group" were expressed most often, while "teachers participating in a resource center", "self guided learning experiences", "student assessment event" were considered least. This demonstrates that all administrators have a solid knowledge base of "Traditional" type experiences and most consciously thought about other types ("Reform") of strategies during the planning stages.

Of the four administrators that revealed an understanding of "Reform" type strategies, all implemented at least one experience. However, the strategies were limited to "coaching" or "committee or task force" experiences. This suggests that most administrators had some degree of a knowledge base and considered "Reform" type experiences, but were not successful in implementing them during the 2003-2004 school year.[7]

4.1.4.2.2 Analysis of "Non-Warning List" Schools Administrators' Knowledge of Strategies

Through the interview process all administrators acknowledge that they considered "Traditional" type experiences during their planning stages. However, only three administrators acknowledged a consideration of "Reform" types of strategies while the remaining two only considered "Traditional" type strategies and implemented those types of strategies in their building. Of the three administrators that considered "Reform" type strategies, the experiences of "committees or task forces", "working with a coach or mentor", "student assessment events" were discussed most often while "teachers participating in a resource center", "teachers participating in action research" were discussed the least.

It became apparent through the interview process that three out of the five "Non-Warning List" administrators had some degree of knowledge of "Reform" type strategies and attempted to implement some of the experiences in their school. However, only two "Reform" type experiences ("coaching" and "committee or task force" strategies) were utilized during the 2003-2004 school year. When asked why the specific experiences were chosen, two of the administrators stated that it was due to the resources available and one stated that the

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[7] Though there is an indication of a knowledge base in regards to strategies, it was not observed in the variety of professional development experiences that occurred during the 2003-2004 school year.

professional development was always done in that fashion. This suggests that "Non-Warning List" administrators did not actively seek new forms of professional development.

4.1.4.2.3 Comparative Analysis of Administrators' Knowledge of Strategies

In comparing "Warning List" and "Non-Warning List" schools, all administrators stated a consideration of "Traditional" type experiences and seven out of ten expressed considering "Reform" type strategies. However, of the various types of strategies considered, only "coaching" and "committee/task force" were actually implemented. One administrator stated, "We did those ("Traditional" types experiences) because they were what was available through the IU." Another stated that they were limited to "Traditional" type experiences because of the lack of resources available to the district.

4.1.5 Contextual Issues

As outlined in Loucks-Horsley et al., (1999), it is important for professional developers to understand Contextual Issues in order to maximize the value of and responsiveness to the experiences. Tables 9 and 10 identify the Contextual Issues cited by the "Warning List" and "Non-Warning List" administrators to some degree in the planning or implementation of the professional development. If the administrator stated anything in the interview that addressed the Contextual Issues of Students, Teachers, Practices, State and Local Policies, Resources, Culture or Organizational Structures it is marked with a check (√).

4.1.5.1   Analysis of "Warning List" Schools Addressing of Contextual Issues

Table 9 indicates the Contextual Issues that were addressed by "Warning List" schools during the planning and implementation of their professional development during the 2003-2004 school year.

Table 9

Contextual Issues Addressed by Each "Warning List" School

Contextual Issues	WLS No. 1	WLS No. 2	WLS No. 3	WLS No. 4	WLS No. 5
Students	√	√			
Teachers	√	√	√	√	√
Practices: Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment	√	√	√	√	√
State and Local Policies	√	√			√
Available Resources	√			√	√
Organizational Culture	√				
Organizational Structures	√		√	√	√

Table 9 suggests that administrators were able to address Contextual Issues to varying degrees during the planning of their professional development. Of the five administrators, one addressed all of the Contextual Issues to some extent. The other administrators acknowledged from three to five issues. This would indicate a varying understanding and ability to address these issues in the planning of professional development.

The issue of Teachers (row 2), Practices (row 3) and Organizational Structures (row 7) were most frequently addressed. In addressing issues of Teachers, administrators stated that they designed professional development to influence the manner in which teachers' practice. One

administrator stated, "We did what we did because we felt we had to change some of our teachers' beliefs and practices." In addressing Practices, administrators discussed learning new instructional methods and coordinating curriculums and practices. Finally, in discussing organizational structures, administrators acknowledged existent structures which enhanced professional development (i.e., mandatory hours, staff utilized for the continuation of professional development or other aspect which would support further professional development).

The issue of Organizational Culture (row No. 6) and Students (row No. 1) were addressed the least. Of those schools that addressed Organizational Culture (n=1) the administrator noted how they promoted a professional culture by creating an atmosphere where teachers are encouraged, not mandated to further their education. This, the administrator felt, was raising the bar on the expectations and improving the culture of the district. In addressing Students (n=2) administrators discussed how their professional development programs were designed specifically to address student deficiencies. For both schools, this was based on student data (both state and local).

4.1.5.2 Analysis of "Non-Warning List" Schools Addressing of Contextual Issues

Table 10 indicates the Contextual Issues that were addressed by "Non-Warning List" schools during the planning and implementation of their professional development for the 2003-2004 school year.

Table 10

Contextual Issues Addressed by Each "Non-Warning List" School

Contextual Issues	NWLS No. 1	NWLS No. 2	NWLS No. 3	NWLS No. 4	NWLS No. 5
Students		√			√
Teachers	√	√	√	√	√
Practices: Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment	√	√	√	√	√
State and Local Policies					√
Available Resources			√	√	√
Organizational Culture				√	√
Organizational Structures		√	√	√	√

Table 10 suggests that administrators have varying degrees of knowledge and understanding of Contextual Issues. One administrator addressed all issues, while the other administrators addressed between two and five. Although no administrator acknowledged that any of these issues critically affected an experience, overlooking them could have impacted the professional development to some degree.

In discussing how "Non-Warning List" administrators addressed Contextual Issues, the issues of Teachers (row 2) and Practices (row 3) were addressed by all administrators. In discussing the issue of Teachers, all stated that their professional development programs were focused on perceived deficiencies, helped to create new understandings, or addressed their teachers' needs. In addressing Practices, administrators stated that their programs focused specifically on practices that were to improve their use of strategies, help in creating new understandings, or utilize assessment procedures more effectively.

Of the Contextual Issues, State and Local Policies (row 4) and Organizational Culture (row 6) were addressed the least. In the schools that addressed State and Local Policies (n=2), they did so by focusing on state standards as well as defining areas of weakness through a review of PSSA scores and then creating a plan of action. The schools that addressed Organizational Culture (n=2) did so by focusing on building-level professional development, which the administrators felt respected the individuality of their schools and created a relationship of trust and cooperation. It should be noted that at no time did schools address the negative culture associated with accountability.

4.1.5.3 Comparative Analysis of the Contextual Issues

The two groups appear similar in the extent to which they accounted for these issues. Some administrators/districts addressed all issues, while some were unable to/or did not chose to address various elements. Both groups primarily targeted the issues of Curriculum and Teachers. This would support the belief that teachers and curriculum are the primary components of effective teaching and by being so, are the focus of professional development. As one administrator stated, "We are creating professional development to give teachers what they need to do their jobs in the classroom." Issues that tended to be disregarded or ignored were Students, Organizational Culture and Organizational Structures, which all could have an impact on providing effective professional development.

It should be noted that all "Warning List" schools received their status due to their students' poor performance on the state's accountability test and yet only two of these schools acknowledged and addressed this issue of poor performance to any extent by gearing

professional development to meet specific areas of deficiencies of their students such as focusing on writing or developing assessments to aid in detecting areas of weakness.

4.1.6 Critical Issues

Loucks-Horsley et al., (1999) identified several Critical Issues that if disregarded could have a significant and detrimental impact on the success of a program. Tables 11 and 12 lists those Critical Issues and indicates whether the "Warning List" and "Non-Warning List" administrators, schools, districts or professional development programs addressed them to some degree. If the administrator stated anything in the interview that addressed the Critical Issues of Professional Culture, Capacity for Sustainability, Time or Evaluation and Assessment it is marked with a check ($\surd$).

4.1.6.1 Analysis of Addressing Critical Issues in "Warning List" Schools

Table 11 identifies the Critical Issues that were considered in the planning or implementation of the program.

Table 11

Critical Issues Examined in Each "Warning List" School

Critical Issues	WLS No. 1	WLS No. 2	WLS No. 3	WLS No. 4	WLS No. 5
Professional Culture	$\surd$				
Capacity for Sustainability	$\surd$		$\surd$	$\surd$	$\surd$
Time	$\surd$			$\surd$	$\surd$
Evaluation and Assessment	$\surd$			$\surd$	$\surd$

As demonstrated in Table 11, administrators/districts had varying perceptions of Critical Issues and accounted for them to differing degrees. Of the five administrators, three addressed three or more Critical Issues to some extent. However, two of the other administrators acknowledged one or none of these issues. This would seem to indicate a lack of understanding and an inability to address these elements.

In addressing Critical Issues, Sustainability (row 2) was addressed most often. By doing so, administrators acknowledged structures or elements critical to creating sustainability (i.e., availability of staff, contractual hours, the manner in which experiences were implemented and teacher buy-in of initiatives). Time (row 3) was acknowledged by all administrators as being important; however, only three administrators stated how this issue was addressed to any extent. The administrators stated that their schools have actively pursued professional development hours and have created experiences beyond the usual Act 80/Professional Development days. This demonstrates that this issue is at times beyond the normal control of the building principal. Though Evaluation and Assessment (row 4) were identified as important by three administrators, only "Likeability" surveys were carried out and there were no evaluations or assessments done on the value, quality or the degree to which professional development was implemented.

Of the five "Warning List" schools, four schools noted some negative issues related to their status on the state's accountability list (i.e., teacher apathy, negative perception, depression), however, only one school acknowledged that any effort was put forth to address Professional Culture. They choose to focus on professional development instead of focusing on the negative attitude associated with accountability.

4.1.6.2   Analysis of Addressing Critical Issues in "Non-Warning List" Schools

Table 12 identified the Critical Issues "Non-Warning List" schools addressed as outlined by Loucks-Horsley et al., (1999).

Table 12

Critical Issues Examined in Each "Non-Warning List" School

Critical Issue	NWLS No. 1	NWLS No. 2	NWLS No. 3	NWLS No. 4	NWLS No. 5
Professional Culture				√	√
Capacity for Sustainability			√	√	
Time		√	√	√	
Evaluation and Assessment	√	√	√	√	

Table 12 suggests a varying knowledge of and ability to address these Critical Issues by "Non-Warning List" administrators. Of the five administrators, two identified three or more, while three addressed two or fewer.

As Table 12 suggests, "Non-Warning List" administrators addressed Evaluation and Assessment most often (n=4); however, the evaluation was limited to a "Likeability" survey, and at no time was an evaluation done that would identify the quality or effectiveness of the programs. The issues of Professional Culture and Capacity of Sustainability were the least addressed issues. Of the schools that address the issue of Professional Culture (row 2), they did so by attempting to create a culture for learning and by respecting the culture of individual buildings. Of the three buildings that did not address Professional Culture, only one noted that their culture was negatively impacting their school. In addressing Capacity for Sustainability,

administrators acknowledge that they had a plan for revisiting topics and for providing structures (people and time) to continue the learning. Of the schools that did not address Capacity for Sustainability (n=3) each seemed to lack the infrastructures that would support continued professional development (i.e., personnel, mandated professional development time, etc.).

4.1.6.3   Comparative Analysis of Critical Issues

Both "Warning List" schools and "Non-Warning List" schools addressed Critical Issues to the same extent. Each group had administrators/districts that addressed several issues while others addressed only a few. The four Critical Issues were cited eleven times by each group, with the issues of Capacity for Sustainability, Time, and Evaluation and Assessment being addressed the most frequently. The issue of Capacity for Sustainability was addressed more by "Warning List" schools (four times compared to two).

Of the "Warning List" schools, four stated that accountability was having a negative impact on the school culture; however, none of these schools addressed this issue to any extent in their professional development. Of the "Non-Warning List" schools, only one school reported a negative school culture and this was also not addressed. It should be noted that the "Non-Warning List" school administrator did not associated this negativity with accountability. This suggests that administrators for whatever reason are not addressing the issue of accountability and the negative perceptions it may be creating.

4.2   Conclusions of Findings for Research Question No. 1

In evaluating the data for Research Question No. 1, some differences become apparent in the manner that professional development planning was conducted between "Warning List" and "Non-Warning List" schools in the areas of decision-making, delivery methods, goals and inputs. Of note, "Non-Warning List" schools appear to provide more time in providing professional development than "Warning List" schools. In doing so, more "Non-Warning List" school have mandated professional development hours, seek professional development experiences beyond Act 80/In-Service days and offer more content-based Act 80/In-Service days.

Another difference is that "Non-Warning List" schools tended to offer experiences at the school-level, where as "Warning List" schools focused more on providing experiences at the district-level. The perspectives of administrators varied, some administrators felt that by offering professional development at a school level enabled the school to be more responsive to the individual school's culture, while other believed that building level experiences created division within the district and one indicated the value of district level professional development.

The goals of "Warning List" schools and "Non-Warning List" schools also differ. "Warning List" schools tended to express the goal of "improving student achievement", while "Non-Warning List" schools tended to express the goal of program implementation. This may suggest that "Warning List" administrators are feeling pressure to improve scores, but no data were collected on teacher perceptions. Also of note was the number of "Warning List" administrators that said that accountability seemed to be affecting the professional culture in their schools as compared to those in the "Non-Warning List" schools; however, this issue was not specifically addressed by any of the administrators in any of the schools when questioned. In fact one "Warning List" administrator stated that they did not consciously think about their status

on the "Warning List" even though they noted the negative effects accountability is having on their teachers.

Other differences, though minor, were that "Non-Warning List" schools were more apt to convene planning meetings and utilize teacher input, while "Warning List" schools used student achievement data and outside experts in the planning stages of their professional development but the limited number of schools in each group raises questions about such small differences.

No difference was seen in the degree of Knowledge and Beliefs of both "Warning List" and "Non-Warning List" school administrators, as well as in their knowledge of "Reform" and "Traditional" type experiences. Administrators in both areas had varying degrees of understandings and abilities. Also, there was little difference in the manner in which "Warning List" and "Non-Warning List" administrators/districts were able to address Contextual and Critical Issues.

In summary, the degree of difference between "Warning List" and "Non-Warning List" schools in the area of planning was minimal. Other than the fact that "Non-Warning List" schools provided slightly more time and were least impacted by the negative perceptions of accountability, neither group seemed to placed a greater emphasis on up-front planning, incorporating teachers in the planning process, providing more administrative staff for professional development, or providing more substantial and meaningful planning.

4.3   Findings Relevant to Research Question No. 2

Research Question No. 2: What differences exist, if any, between professional development programs in schools on Pennsylvania's "Warning List" versus professional development

programs in schools not on the "Warning List" in the areas of Form, Duration, Participation,

Focus, Level of active learning, Degree of coherence and Use of student data?

The data related to Research Question No. 2 were drawn from both the surveys and the interview process. In this section, findings are reported on how "Warning List" and "Non-Warning List" schools have implemented their professional development experiences during the 2003-2004 school year. Each of the experiences was reviewed based on the elements identified by Porter et al., (2000) for effective professional development (i.e., Form, Duration, Coherence, Participation, Focus, Level of Active Learning and Use of Student Data).

The professional development investigated does not include all the professional development experiences that occurred during the 2003-2004 school year but only the experiences that were school-wide and school-sponsored. Any experiences that were encouraged, voluntary, or undertaken by an individual or small group of individuals, such as college course work to obtain permanent certification or attendance at an out of district conference were not included in this study.

4.3.1 Form

Porter et al., (2000) identified two Forms of professional development, "Reform" types such as study groups, mentoring committees, task forces, coaches, teacher collaboratives, networks, teacher resource centers, action research, self guided learning experiences, curriculum development or student assessment events, and "Traditional" types such as workshops or conferences. Tables 13 and 15 identify the occurrences of "Reform" and "Traditional" experiences implemented by each of the "Warning List" and "Non-Warning List" schools during the 2003-2004 school year, while Tables 14 and 16 provide the overall totals of "Traditional"

and "Reform" type experiences. These data were obtained through the self-reporting of administrators (through both interviews and surveys) regarding the experiences they implemented.

4.3.1.1   Analysis of Form for "Warning List" Schools

Tables 13 and 14 indicate the "Reform" and "Traditional" types of professional development experiences instituted by each "Warning List" school during the 2003-2004 school year.

Table 13

Analysis of Forms for "Warning List" schools
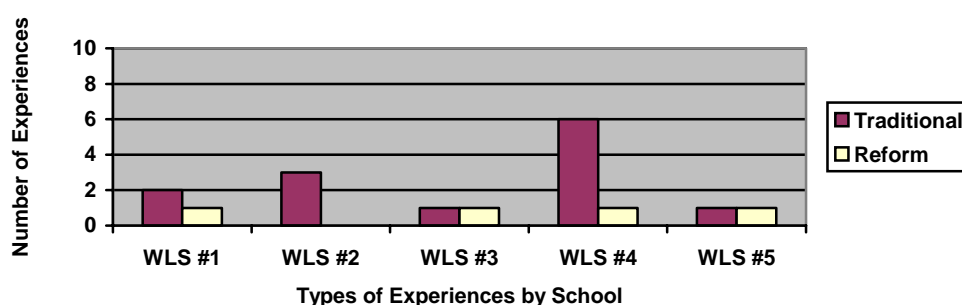
Table 14

Overall Total of "Traditional" vs. "Reform" for "Warning List" Schools
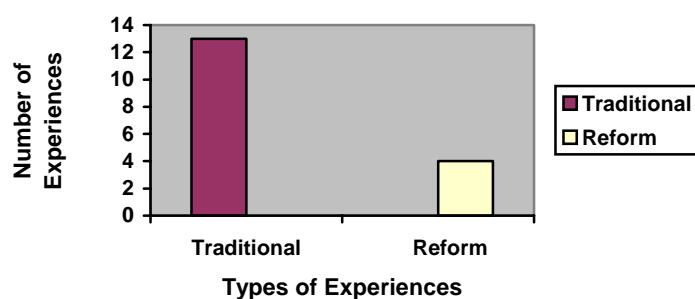
The combined results of Tables 13 and 14 demonstrate the frequency with which "Traditional" types of experiences were utilized by "Warning List" Schools. Some of the

administrators stated that they utilized the "Traditional" experiences because of "convenience" or "it was most practical." Most "Reform" type experiences centered around curriculum development and coaching experiences.

4.3.1.2 Analysis of Form for "Non-Warning List" Schools

Tables 15 and 16 indicate the "Reform" and "Traditional" types of professional development experiences of "Non-Warning List" schools instituted during the 2003-2004 school year.

Table 15

Analysis of Forms for "Non-Warning List" Schools
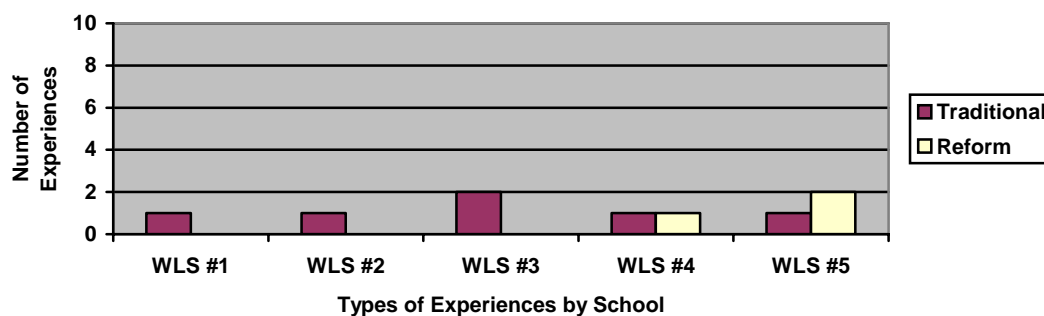
Table 16

Overall Total of "Traditional" vs. "Reform" for "Non-Warning List" Schools
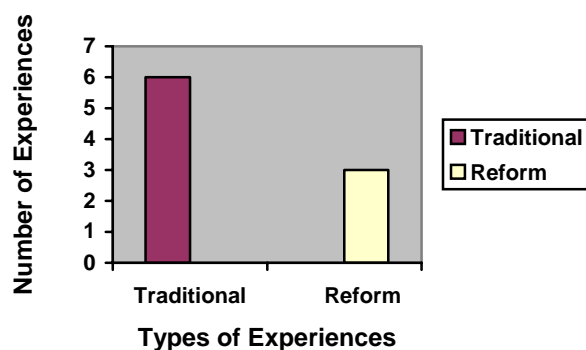
The combined results of Tables 15 and 16 demonstrate the high frequency of "Traditional" types of experiences utilized by "Non-Warning List" Schools. Some of the administrators stated that they utilized the "Traditional" type experiences because of the resources available. For example, one administrator stated that the reason they implemented what they did was because it was "easily available through the IU". "Reform" experiences included coaching and committees or task forces which were implemented by two schools. By and large, administrators appeared to be happy with "Reform" experiences when they have been able to implement them. For example, an administrator of the one school which implemented two "Reform" type experiences (WLS No. 5) noted their worth by stating, "My teachers really got a lot out of it and I felt in the way."

4.3.1.3 Comparative Analysis of "Warning List" and "Non-Warning List" Schools Use of Forms

In comparing the two groups of schools, it is evident that most experiences were "Traditional" in nature. In both groups, "Traditional" experiences out numbered "Reform" experiences nineteen to seven (See Tables 14 and 16).

Also evident was that the total number of experiences that were offered by "Warning List" schools appears greater when compared to "Non-Warning List" schools. Though the numbers seem different, the manner in which schools organized and reported their professional development skewed the data. Some experiences were focused by grade levels and were reported as separate experiences while others were not. Therefore the difference in the number of experiences is an artifact of how they were reported.

4.3.2   Duration

Porter et al., (2000) also identified the length or contact time of an experience as an important aspect of professional development. Tables 17 and 18 identify the "Warning List" and "Non-Warning List" experiences and the Total Contact Time for each experience. The time includes the main workshops and all follow-up activities for an activity on a particular topic.

4.3.2.1   Analysis of Duration for "Warning List" Schools

Table 17 on the following page, identifies the contact hours for each experience investigated for this study. The time indicated includes all experiences associated on one specific topic.

Table 17

Analysis of Duration for "Warning List" Experiences

"Warning List" School	Name of Experience	Total Contact Time of Each Experience
WLS No. 1	Experience 1 – (DIBELS)	10 hours
	Experience 2 – (Writing Process)	20 hours
	Experience 3 – (Coaching)*	Varied
	Experience 4 – (Committee)*	5 hours
WLS No. 2	Experience 1 – (Instructional Strategies)	8 hours
	Experience 2 – (Guided Reading)	8 hours
	Experience 3 – (Scoring Rubrics)	8 hours
WLS No. 3	Experience 1 – (DRA)	5 hours
	Experience 2 – (Curriculum Map)*	20 hours
WLS No. 4	Experience 1 – (Kindergarten Pull-Out)	24 hours
	Experience 2 – (First Grade Pull-Out)	24 hours
	Experience 3 – (Second Grade Pull-Out)	16 hours
	Experience 4 – (Third Grade Pull-Out)	8 hours
	Experience 5 – (Forth Grade Pull-Out)	8 hours
	Experience 6 – (Fifth Grade Pull-Out)	8 hours
	Experience 7 – (Coaching)*	Varied
WLS No. 5	Experience 1 – (Reading Series)	8 hours
	Experience 2 – (PIGS)*	30 hours

*Denotes a "Reform" type experience

For the "Warning List" schools, the average contact time for the "Traditional" type experiences was approximately 11 hours and the average contact time for the "Reform" experiences (not including the coaching experiences) was approximately 18 hours. Of the experiences, only five were at or above 20 hours in duration and eight were 10 hours or less. This demonstrates that, for "Warning List" schools, most "Traditional" type experiences were of shorter duration. Of note is that while the limited time for professional development was acknowledged by all administrators, little was done to rectify this issue. This demonstrates the difficulty for administrators in finding more time.

4.3.2.2   Analysis of Duration for "Non-Warning List" Schools

Table 18 identifies the contact hours for each "Non-Warning List" experience investigated for this study during the 2003-2004 school year.

Table 18

Analysis of Duration for "Non-Warning List" Experiences

"Non-Warning List" School	Name of Experience	Total Contact Time of Each Experience
NWLS No. 1	Experience 1 – (Brain-Based)	18 hours
NWLS No. 2	Experience 1 – (Character Education)	16 hours
NWLS No. 3	Experience 1 – (Brian-Based)	18 hours
	Experience 2 – (Writing)	20 hours
NWLS No. 4	Experience 1 – (Guided Reading)	Up to 24 hours
	Experience 2 – (Coaching)*	Varies
NWLS No. 5	Experience 1 – (Standards)*	10 hours
	Experience 2 – (Home-School Communication)*	10 hours
	Experience 3 – (Reading Series)	2 hours

* Denotes a "Reform" type experience

As indicated on Table 18, "Non-Warning List" schools have an average contact time of 15 hours per experience. The average duration for "Traditional" experiences was 16 hours and for "Reform" experiences, 10 hours.

The Traditional experiences in two schools (NWLS No. 3 and NWLS No. 4) were of an extended duration due to their offering of summer courses and mandatory professional development hours around topics that were part of the school's professional development. NWLS No. 2 had mandatory professional development hours but did not offer additional experiences for their character education program that would have enabled teachers to utilize their mandatory hours thereby increasing the duration of the experience.

4.3.2.3   Comparative Analysis of "Warning List" and "Non-Warning List" Schools Duration

Table 19 highlights the differences between durations of "Warning List" and "Non-Warning List" schools.

Table 19

Comparative Analysis of Duration

	"Warning List" Schools	"Non-Warning List" Schools
Average Duration of Experiences	13	15
Average of "Traditional" Type Experiences	12	16
Average of "Reform" Type Experiences	18	10

In comparing the two groups of schools, the average durations of both groups of schools differed slightly (15hours for "Non-Warning List" schools compared to 13 hours for "Warning List" schools). However, the contact time for "Traditional" types of experiences varied to a much greater extent (16 hours for "Non-Warning List" schools compared to 12 hours for "Warning List" schools). This is a result of the experiences initiated beyond their Act 80/In-Service days offered by the "Non-Warning List" schools. In comparing the "Reform" experiences, "Non-Warning List" schools had an average of 10 hours and "Warning List" schools, 18 hours. Though the time frames varied for the "Reform" activities, they were only carried out in one "Non-Warning List" school making it difficult to generalize. Also, not apparent in the data is the fact that "Reform" type experiences were implemented only through Act 80/In-Service days (except for coaching).

4.3.3   Collective Participation

Collective Participation refers to how a school groups their teachers for professional development experiences (Porter et al., 2000). This could be done at a school, department, grade, or individual level. Tables 20 and 21 identify how "Warning List" and "Non-Warning List" schools organized their staff for each experience.

4.3.3.1   Analysis of Participation for "Warning List" Schools

Table 20 indicates the types of participation for the various experiences implemented for the 2003-2004 school year.

Table 20

Analysis of Types of Participation for "Warning List" Schools

"Warning List" School	Experience	Type of Participation
WLS No. 1	Experience 1 – (DIBELS)	Whole Group (K-7) with Breakout Groups
	Experience 2 – (Writing Process)	Whole Group (K-7) with Breakout Groups
	Experience 3 – (Coaching)	Individual
WLS No. 2	Experience 1 – (Instructional Strategies)	Primary and Intermediate
	Experience 2 – (Guided Reading)	Primary and Intermediate
	Experience 3 – (Scoring Rubrics)	Primary and Intermediate
WLS No. 3	Experience 1 – (DRA)	Whole Group
	Experience 2 – (Curriculum Map)	Individuals as Representatives at a Grade-Level
WLS No. 4	Experience 1 – (Kindergarten Pull-Out)	Grade Levels
	Experience 2 – (First Grade Pull-Out)	Grade Levels
	Experience 3 – (Second Grade Pull-Out)	Grade Levels
	Experience 4 – (Third Grade Pull-Out)	Grade Levels
	Experience 5 – (Forth Grade Pull-Out)	Grade Levels
	Experience 6 – (Fifth Grade Pull-Out)	Grade Levels
	Experience 7 – (Coaching)	Individual
WLS No. 5	Experience 1 – (Reading Series)	Grade Levels
	Experience 2 – (PIGS)	Individuals as Representatives at a Grade-Level

Table 20 suggests that the manner in which professional development experiences were

applied (i.e., method of participation) within schools appeared to be similar within each school

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(WLS No. 1 only provided whole group experiences, with breakout groups and WLS No. 4 only provided Grade Level experiences). Schools tend to favor certain methods of staff participation for their professional development. This appears to be related to the administrator's personal understanding of grouping practices and/or the availability of resources. However, all administrators did, at some point, provide grade level or similar grade level groupings during their experiences. It should be noted that all "Reform" type experiences involved teachers as individual representatives of grade levels from different schools and never involved all teachers from an entire grade level or school. One administrator noted that the reason for the manner in which they grouped their teachers was "it's just the way it has always been done." Which suggests a strong reliance on past practices and an inability to think differently about professional development.

4.3.3.2   Analysis of Participation for "Non-Warning List" Schools

Table 21 indicates the type of participation for the "Non-Warning List" experiences implemented for the 2003-2004 school year.

Table 21

Analysis of "Non-Warning List" Schools' Types of Participation

"Non-Warning List" School	Name of Experience	Type of Participation
NWLS No. 1	Experience 1 – (Brain-Based)	Whole Group and Primary/Intermediate
NWLS No. 2	Experience 1 – (Character Education)	Whole Group
NWLS No. 3	Experience 1 – (Brian-Based)	Whole with Breakout Groups
	Experience 2 – (Writing)	Primary/ Intermediate and Grade Levels
NWLS No. 4	Experience 1 – (Guided Reading)	Individuals and Primary/Intermediate
	Experience 2 – (Coaching)	Individual
NWLS No. 5	Experience 1 – (Standards)	Whole Group and Grade Level Groups
	Experience 2 – (Home-School Communication)	Whole Group and Grade Level Groups
	Experience 3 – (Reading Series)	Whole Group

As Table 21 suggests, "Non-Warning List' schools utilize several methods of grouping teachers for experiences. Only two of the experiences involved having all teachers convened as a whole group (Kindergarten to Seventh grade) to learn new information. All of the other experiences had some degree of small group interaction. One administrator acknowledged the virtue of putting staff in grade level groups by stating "when they get into their groups, they were really able to talk about stuff meaningful to them."

4.3.3.3 Comparative Analysis of "Warning List" and "Non-Warning List" Schools Manner of
  Participation

In comparing "Warning List" to "Non-Warning List" schools, there seems to be little difference in the manner in which schools group teachers for participation in professional development. All experiences, except when new information was presented, had teachers grouped in a manner in

which they could work with and discuss grade-specific information. This suggests an understanding by administrators of the importance of creating grade specific groupings and enables experiences to be more meaningful to participants.

4.3.4 Focus

Focus refers to the content-based nature or the degree to which the activity is focused on improving and deepening teachers' understanding of content material as it related to the teaching of elementary literacy (Porter et al., 2000).

4.3.4.1 Analysis of Focus for "Warning List" Schools

Of the school-sponsored experiences identified by "Warning List" administrators, all reported an emphasis on the content of the language arts curriculum.

However, there were a number of Act 80/In-Service days utilized for non-content based experience by "Warning List" schools. Table 22 indicates the number of teacher learning experiences (Act 80/In-Service days) that were not used for content-based professional development.

Table 22

Analysis of Focus for "Warning List" Schools

"Warning List" School	No. of Act 80 days	No. NOT used For Content Based Professional Development
WLS No. 1	4 days	2 days
WLS No. 2	4 days	1 day
WLS No. 3	2 days	0 days
WLS No. 4	3 days	3 days
WLS No. 5	5 days	1 day

The "Warning List" schools engaged in a total of 7 school sponsored Act 80/In-Service Days that were not focused on content-based experiences. These days were allotted to topics such as Sexual Harassment and a Health and Wellness Fair. This indicates that "Warning List" schools are not utilizing all the time available to them for content-based experiences.

4.3.4.2 Analysis of Focus for "Non-Warning List" Schools

Of the school-sponsored professional development experiences that each "Non-Warning List" school focused on during the 2003-2004 school year, all but one was centered around language arts. This experience, NWLS No. 2's implementation of a character education program, is a literature based socio-emotional program, which could be considered a language arts related program.

The administrators also acknowledged other teacher learning experiences that, though not investigated thoroughly for this study, show the number of days not utilized for content-based teacher learning. Table 23 identifies the total number of school sponsored days of professional development that were not content-based in nature.

Table 23

Analysis of Focus for "Non-Warning List" Schools

"Non-Warning List" School	No. of Act 80/ In-Service days	No. NOT used For Content Based Professional Development
NWLS No. 1	5 days	2 days
NWLS No. 2	2 days	2 days
NWLS No. 3	3 days and 7 Act 80 Early Dismissals	0 days
NWLS No. 4	2 days	1 day
NWLS No. 5	6 days	1 day

Of the "Non-Warning List" schools, 20 Act 80/In-Service days, six were spent on non-content based experiences. These include experiences such as in-service on a socio-emotional based curriculum, school visitations and a Health and Wellness Fair.

4.3.4.3   Comparative Analysis of "Warning List" and "Non-Warning List" Schools Focus

In comparing the "Warning List" to the "Non-Warning List" schools, most school-sponsored experiences implemented during the 2003-2004 school year were content-based in nature. Also, more days were spent by "Warning List" schools on non-content-based experiences, thereby limiting the extent of time available to those teachers. This issue impacted "Warning List" schools more significantly than "Non-Warning List" schools.

4.3.5   Active Learning

Active Learning is defined as the extent to which activities actively engage teachers in meaningful analysis of teaching and learning. Engaging activities, as outlined in Porter et al., (2000), include: conducting a demonstration lesson, giving a lecture, leading a small or large group discussion, engaging in extended problem solving, writing a report or plan, practicing by

using student materials, developing or reviewing materials, reviewing or scoring student work, collaborating with a colleague, giving feedback, completing a paper and pencil problem or exercise and assessing participants knowledge or skills. Passive learning experiences involve listening to a speaker or lecture, observing a demonstration lesson, participating in a whole or small group discussion. Tables 24 and 25 indicate the degree to which "Warning List" and "Non-Warning List" report that their experiences engaged teachers. An event is rated as actively engaging if administrators acknowledged that the participants were engaged in active learning experiences over 50% of the time within the experience.

4.3.5.1 Analysis of Active Learning for "Warning List" Schools

Table 24 indicates the number of Passive and Active Learning Experiences for the 2003-2004 school year.

Table 24

Analysis of Active Learning for "Warning List" Schools
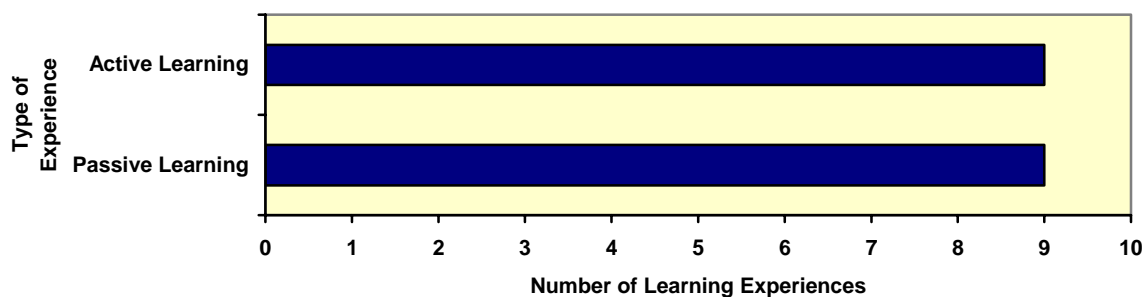
It is evident from Table 24 that experiences designed by the "Warning List" schools involved passive and active learning experience equally. Due to the number of "Traditional" types of experiences (n=13), it is encouraging to see how planners attempted to involve teachers in meaningful and engaging experiences, even within "Traditional" type activities. One administrator noted the difficulty in implementing experiences that actively engage the

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participants by stating, "it is hard to do all that when you have so much information to share in such a short time."

4.3.5.2   Analysis of Active Learning for "Non-Warning List" Schools

Table 25 indicates the number of Passive and Active Learning Experiences implemented during the 2003-2004 school year.

Table 25

Analysis of Active Learning of "Non-Warning List" Schools
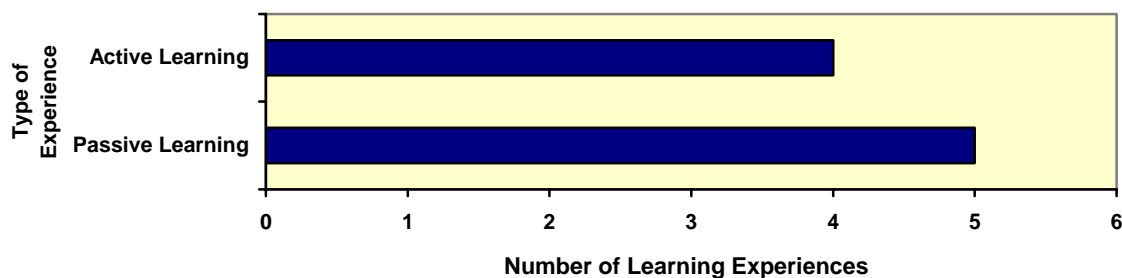
The experiences offered by "Non-Warning List" schools during the 2003-2004 school year, were more passive in nature. However, even though "Traditional" experiences were the norm, many "hands-on" type experiences were included within the "Traditional" type workshop. Several "Non-Warning List" administrators noted the importance of active learning experiences and stated that they help teachers understand the information better and show them how to implement it.

4.3.5.3   Comparative Analysis of "Warning List" and "Non-Warning List" Schools Use of

Active Learning

In comparing "Warning List" and "Non-Warning List" schools, there appears to be no difference in the degree to which these schools actively engage participants. However, these results do demonstrate some attempt by both groups of schools to actively engage participants even when involved in "Traditional" type experiences.

4.3.6   Coherence

Coherence, defined by Porter et al., (2000), is the "extent to which professional development activities are perceived by teachers to be a part of a coherent program of teacher learning" (p. 12).   Tables 26 and 27 identify which "Warning List" and "Non-Warning List" experiences occurred previously and if the administrator expects them to continue (This measure serves as a proxy for coherence because teacher perceptions were not measured in this study).   Where a "Yes" occurs in the tables signifies where an administrator specifically acknowledged if the experience were continuations of past experiences and if they were expected to continue.

4.3.6.1   Analysis of Coherence for "Warning List" Schools

Table 26 identifies if experiences implemented during the 2003-2004 school year are continuations of past experiences and are expected to continue.

Table 26

Analysis of Coherence for "Warning List" Schools

"Warning List" Schools	Experiences	Similar Experiences Occurred in the Past	Experiences are Expected to Continue
WLS No. 1	Experience 1 – (DIBELS)	Yes	Yes
	Experience 2 – (Writing Process)	No	Yes
	Experience 3 – (Coaching)	Yes	Yes
	Experience 4 – (Committee)	No	No
WLS No. 2	Experience 1 – (Instructional Strategies)	Yes	Yes
	Experience 2 – (Guided Reading)	Yes	Yes
	Experience 3 – (Scoring Rubrics)	No	Yes
WLS No. 3	Experience 1 – (DRA)	No	Yes
	Experience 2 – (Curriculum Map)	No	Yes
WLS No. 4	Experience 1 – (Kindergarten Pull-Out)	Yes	Yes
	Experience 2 – (First Grade Pull-Out)	Yes	Yes
	Experience 3 – (Second Grade Pull-Out)	Yes	Yes
	Experience 4 – (Third Grade Pull-Out)	Yes	Yes
	Experience 5 – (Forth Grade Pull-Out)	Yes	Yes
	Experience 6 – (Fifth Grade Pull-Out)	Yes	Yes
WLS No. 5	Experience 1 – (Reading Series)	Yes	Yes
	Experience 2 – (PIGS)	Yes	Yes

Table 26 demonstrates that of the experiences initiated by "Warning List" schools, most were continuations of past experiences. Of the 18 experiences, 12 were continued of past initiatives. It should be noted that all except one of the "Warning List" administrators were veteran administrators, which may account for the continuation of initiatives.

Also, when asked if these experiences were going to continue, most administrators stated that they were. However, during the interview several administrators stated that other

experiences were also going to be implemented. It is uncertain whether enough professional development time exists to implement more experiences in 2004-2005.

4.3.6.2   Analysis of Coherence for "Non-Warning List" Schools

Table 27 identifies if experiences implemented during the 2003-2004 school year are continuations of past experiences and are expected to continue.

Table 27

Analysis of Coherence for "Non-Warning List" Schools

"Non-Warning List" Schools	Name of Experience	Similar Experiences Occurred in the Past	Experiences are Expected to Continue
NWLS No. 1	Experience 1 – (Brain-Based)	No	Yes
NWLS No. 2	Experience 1 – (Character Education)	No	No
NWLS No. 3	Experience 1 – (Brian-Based)	No	Yes
	Experience 2 – (Writing)	No	Yes
NWLS No. 4	Experience 1 – (Guided Reading)	Yes	Yes
	Experience 2 – (Coaching)	Yes	Yes
NWLS No. 5	Experience 1 – (Standards)	Yes	Yes
	Experience 2 – (Home-School Communication)	Yes	Yes
	Experience 3 – (Reading Series)	No	No

Table 27 indicates that most of the experiences initiated this year by "Non-Warning List" schools were first time experiences. Of the 9 experiences, 5 did not occur prior to the 2003-2004 school year and all but two initiatives are expected to continue in the future. Of the experiences that were not expected to continue, the administrators stated that the learning that occurred would be utilized in the classroom, but the school would not have teachers participate in any more professional development around that topic. As the one administrator stated, "they have learned everything they need to know."

4.3.6.3   Comparative Analysis of "Warning List" and "Non-Warning List" Schools Coherence

In comparing the two groups of schools, "Warning List" schools engaged in more activities that were implemented previously, while more "Non-Warning List" schools implemented programs or experiences for the first time.

Almost all experiences, in both groups were expected to continue. However, most administrators gave specific examples of additional experiences that were going to occur next year. It is uncertain if enough time exists to accommodate all experiences.

4.3.7   Use of Student Data

The use of student data in the planning process or during the implementation of an experience enables goals to be set that target deficient areas and gives participants insight into the learning process. Tables 28 and 29 identify the use of data before and during each experience. "Before" indicates whether the administrator acknowledged if state-level tests (PSSA/Terra Nova) or other forms of data were reviewed and had an impact on the design of that experience. "During" signifies if the administrator acknowledged that student assessments or data were reviewed as part of the implementation of that experience.

4.3.7.1   Analysis of Use of Student Data for "Warning List" Schools

Table 28 indicates "Warning List" schools that used data, either before or during, their professional development to make decisions during the 2003-2004 school year.

Table 28

"Warning List" Schools Use of Student Data

"Warning List" School	Name of Experiences	Use of Data "Before" Implementation of Experience	Use of Data "During" the Experiences
WLS No. 1	Experience 1 – (DIBELS)	Yes	Yes
	Experience 2 – (Writing Process)	Yes	Yes
	Experience 3 – (Coaching)	No	No
	Experience 4 – (Committee)	Yes	Yes
WLS No. 2	Experience 1 – (Instructional	Yes	Yes
	Experience 2 – (Guided Reading)	Yes	Yes
	Experience 3 – (Scoring Rubrics)	Yes	Yes
WLS No. 3	Experience 1 – (DRA)	No	Yes
	Experience 2 – (Curriculum Map)	No	Yes
WLS No. 4	Experience 1 – (Kindergarten Pull-	No	Yes
	Experience 2 – (First Grade Pull-	No	Yes
	Experience 3 – (Second Grade Pull-	No	Yes
	Experience 4 – (Third Grade Pull-	No	No
	Experience 5 – (Forth Grade Pull-	No	Yes
	Experience 6 – (Fifth Grade Pull-	No	No
WLS No. 5	Experience 1 – (Reading Series)	No	No
	Experience 2 – (PIGS)	No	No

Table 28 suggests that of the "Warning List" schools, only two utilized data as a guide in planning their professional development. One administrator stated that neither the district, nor

she, consciously thought about the PSSA during the planning of their professional development. Also indicated is that four out of the five schools stated that they utilized some type of student data as a part of their experiences. Data include DIBELS information, student writing samples and DRA data.

4.3.7.2   Analysis of Use of Student Data for "Non-Warning List" Schools

Table 29 indicates "Non-Warning List" schools that used data, either before or during, their professional development to make decisions during 2003-2004 school year.

Table 29

"Non-Warning List" Schools Use of Student Data

"Non-Warning List" School	Name of Experience	Use of Data "Before" Implementation of Experience	Use of Data "During" the Experiences
NWLS No. 1	Experience 1 – (Brain-Based)	No	Yes
NWLS No. 2	Experience 1 – (Character	No	No
NWLS No. 3	Experience 1 – (Brian-Based)	No	Yes
	Experience 2 – (Writing)	No	Yes
NWLS No. 4	Experience 1 – (Guided Reading)	No	No
	Experience 2 – (Coaching)	No	No
NWLS No. 5	Experience 1 – (Standards)	Yes	Yes
	Experience 2 – (Home-School	Yes	Yes
	Experience 3 – (Reading Series)	No	Yes

Table 29 suggest that although most of the administrators stated that PSSA data was reviewed, only one school actively used this data as they planned and designed their professional development. Of the five schools, three used some type of student assessments or data during the experiences. This included writing samples, DRA scores, and various software data.

4.3.7.3 Comparative Analysis of "Warning List" and "Non-Warning List" Schools Use of Student Data

In comparing "Warning List" schools to "Non-Warning List" schools, relatively few schools (two "Warning List" and one "Non-Warning List") used data to actively plan and design their professional development. However, most schools utilized data as part of their professional development experiences.

4.4 Summary of Findings for Research Question No. 2

In evaluating the data for Research Question No. 2, some differences became apparent in the manner in which "Warning List" and "Non-Warning List" schools implement their professional development in the areas of Form, Duration, Participation, Focus, Level of Active Learning, Degree of Coherence and Use of Student Data. The most significant differences were in the length of the experiences, content, continuation, and use of data.

Regarding the attribute of Duration, "Non-Warning List" schools were able to provide more time for experiences by mandating more hours, providing voluntary hours and having more Act 80/In-Service days. "Non-Warning List" schools also had more days dedicated to content-

based experiences, than did "Warning List" schools; however, more "Warning List" schools sustained experiences over time. Lastly, more "Warning List" schools used state data as they planned their experiences than "Non-Warning List" schools.

In summary, some degree of differences exists, but the degree to which one group is creating more meaningful experiences is minimal. In elements, such as Form, Participation, Active Learning, and Use of Student Data during experiences, very little meaningful difference is found between the two groups. It would appear that "Warning List" schools and "Non-Warning List" schools do not approach the manner in which they implement their professional development in any drastically different manner.

4.5   Findings Relevant to Research Question No. 3

Question 3: What differences exist, if any, between professional development planners' reflections of the impact of accountability on professional development programs in schools on the Pennsylvania "Warning List" versus schools not on the "Warning List"?

The data related to Research Question No. 3 was obtained through both the interview and survey process. In this section, findings are reported on the degree to which administrators report feeling pressured by the accountability movement as they planned and designed their professional development. Also addressed is how districts have responded to this pressure by increasing aspects that foster effective professional development, such as providing more time or money, or creating more substantive professional development experiences in response to accountability. In analyzing the data, evidence suggests that there is a tacit acknowledgement of

accountability in the manner that districts and schools are planning and implementing their professional development programs.

4.5.1 Influence of Accountability

In rating the significance of the influence of accountability on the decision to run each experience, the administrator either acknowledged that accountability had "No Impact", "Little Impact" or "Significant Impact." Tables 29 and 30 identify how "Warning List" and "Non-Warning List" administrators' rated the influence of accountability in the design of each experience. Also identified in these tables are what each administrator stated was the biggest influence in their planning for the 2003-2004 school year. Presenting this information, side by side, illustrates the administrators' overall beliefs about what factors are driving their programs and their acknowledgement of how each experience was influenced by accountability.

4.5.1.1 Analysis of Influence of Accountability for "Warning List" Schools

Table 30 identifies the degree to which each experience was influenced by accountability and the administrators' perception of the factors that were driving or impacting their professional development planning.

Table 30

"Warning List" Analysis of Influence of Accountability

"Warning List" School	Experience	Level of Impact of Accountability	Administrator's Reporting of the Driving Force for Decisions
WLS No. 1	Experience 1 – (DIBELS)	Little Impact	Accountability
	Experience 2 – (Writing Process)	Significant Impact	
	Experience 3 – (Coaching)	Significant Impact	
WLS No. 2	Experience 1 – (Instructional Strategies)	Significant Impact	Accountability
	Experience 2 – (Guided Reading)	Significant Impact	
	Experience 3 – (Scoring Rubrics)	Significant Impact	
WLS No. 3	Experience 1 – (DRA)	Significant Impact	Accountability
	Experience 2 – (Curriculum Map)	Significant Impact	
WLS No. 4	Experience 1 – (Kindergarten Pull-Out)	Little Impact	New Reading Series
	Experience 2 – (First Grade Pull-Out)	Little Impact	
	Experience 3 – (Second Grade Pull-Out)	Little Impact	
	Experience 4 – (Third Grade Pull-Out)	Little Impact	
	Experience 5 – (Forth Grade Pull-Out)	Little Impact	
	Experience 6 – (Fifth Grade Pull-Out)	Little Impact	
	Experience 7 – (Coaching)	Little Impact	
WLS No. 5	Experience 1 – (Reading Series)	Significant Impact	Coordination of Curriculum
	Experience 2 – (PIGS)	Significant Impact	

Table 30 suggests that more "Warning List" schools stated that accountability had significant impact on the planning that was done. As Table 30 also suggests, three of the five administrators identified accountability as *the* driving force for their overall program and each stated that the experiences were designed as a result. Though WLS No. 5 stated "coordination of curriculum," the administrator stated that she hoped to address accountability through their curriculum development process due to their high rate of teacher turn over.

It would appear that WLS No. 4's administrator was not too concerned about accountability, since she did not rate accountability as having a significant impact nor did she state that she planned any experience as a result of accountability. It should also be noted that WLS No. 4 did have three Act 80/In-Service days that were utilized for non-content-based experiences.

4.5.1.2   Analysis of Influence of Accountability for "Non-Warning List" Schools

Table 31 identifies the degree to which each experience was influenced by accountability and the overall driving force that each administrator stated was driving or impacting their professional development planning.

Table 31

"Non-Warning List" Analysis of Influence of Accountability

"Non-Warning List" School	Experience	Level of Impact of Accountability	Administrator's Reporting of the Driving Force for Decisions
NWLS No. 1	Experience 1 – (Brain-Based)	Significant Impact	Accountability
NWLS No. 2	Experience 1 – (Character Education)	Little Impact	Student Behavior
NWLS No. 3	Experience 1 – (Brian-Based)	No Impact	Student Achievement (Accountability)
	Experience 2 – (Writing)	Significant Impact	
NWLS No. 4	Experience 1 – (Guided Reading)	Little Impact	On-going District Initiatives
	Experience 2 – (Coaching)	Little Impact	
NWLS No. 5	Experience 1 – (Standards)	Significant Impact	Accountability and Involving Teachers into the Process
	Experience 2 – (Home-School Communication)	Significant Impact	
	Experience 3 – (Reading Series)	Significant Impact	

Table 31 suggests that of the five "Non-Warning List" schools, three stated that accountability was the driving force for their decision-making regarding professional development. Of those three schools, all rated the decision to implement each of the experiences as a result of accountability as "Significant."

Two schools did not feel accountability played much of a part in their decisions. They felt the driving forces for their decisions were "on-going district initiatives" and "student behavior" and rated accountability as limited in its influence on their decisions.

4.5.1.3   Comparative Analysis of "Warning List" and "Non-Warning List" Schools Influence of Accountability

Tables 30 and 31 suggest that accountability is pressuring "Warning List" and "Non-Warning List" schools to at least give "lip service" to the influence of the accountability movement. In comparing "Warning List" to "Non-Warning List" schools, three schools in each category cited accountability as the primary driving force for their professional development decisions. However, more "Warning List" schools cited that they had created more experiences in response to accountability then did "Non-Warning List" schools.

4.5.2   Responses to Accountability

To determine the responses of districts in providing more resources as a result of the pressures of accountability, district administrators were asked if the district had increased the amount of time, changed the focus of their professional development or provided more monies to funds to their professional development programs. Tables 32 and 33 outline those results. A "Yes" indicates that the administrator acknowledged or presented information regarding a change in Time, Focus, or Money due to accountability.

4.5.2.1   Analysis of Responses to Accountability for "Warning List" Schools

Table 32 identifies the responses from districts regarding increased time, money or change of focus as a result of the influence of accountability.

Table 32

"Warning List" Time, Focus, and Funding

"Warning List" School	Responses to Accountability		
	Time	Focus	Money
WLS No. 1	No	Yes	Yes
WLS No. 2	No	Yes	No
WLS No. 3	No	Yes	Yes
WLS No. 4	No	Yes	Yes
WLS No. 5	No	Yes	Yes

Table 32 indicates that none of the "Warning List" administrators stated that they or the district provided more time or experiences as a result of accountability (column 1). However, all schools stated that they felt that accountability has encouraged them to change the focus of their experiences (more content-focused) and all except one stated that funds were increased (columns 2 and 3).

4.5.2.2   Analysis of Responses to Accountability for "Non-Warning List" Schools

Table 33 identifies the responses from districts regarding increased time, money or change of focus as a result of the influence of accountability.

Table 33

"Non-Warning List" Time, Focus, and Funding

"Non-Warning List" Schools	Responses to Accountability		
	Time	Focus	Money
NWLS No. 1	No	Yes	No
NWLS No. 2	No	No	Yes
NWLS No. 3	No	Yes	No
NWLS No. 4	No	No	Yes
NWLS No. 5	No	Yes	Yes

Table 33 indicates that none of the "Non-Warning List" administrators or districts increased the amount of time dedicated to professional development. However, most (n=3) believed that their schools have sought to change the focus of the activities to be more academically oriented. One administrator stated that prior to accountability, the district did a lot of activities that were "not directly related to instruction." Now, she said, they were dealing with instruction and content and are more focused on the "nuts and bolts" and less on "theory and philosophy."

Three "Non-Warning List" schools believe that their districts are providing more money as a result of accountability. One administrator said that her district has spent a lot of money purchasing materials for students and another administrator stated that her district gave her two thousand dollars to do whatever she wanted to improve her scores.

4.5.2.3 Comparative Analysis of "Warning List" and "Non-Warning List" Schools Responses

   to Accountability

Table 34 identifies the differences between "Warning List" and "Non-Warning List" schools

responses towards accountability in the areas of money, focus and time.

Table 34

Comparative Analysis of Responses to Accountability

Responses to Accountability	"Warning List" Schools	"Non-Warning List" Schools
Time	0	0
Money	4	3
Focus	5	3

In comparing "Warning List" and "Non-Warning List" schools' responses to

accountability issues, all schools reported that no more time was available as a result of

accountability. "Warning List" schools seemed to receive more money than "Non-Warning

List" schools; however, the difference between the two groups was minimal. It should be noted

that most of the administrators stated that they utilized those monies for purchasing test prep

materials and not on professional development. The most significant difference appears to be

that more "Warning List" schools adjusted their focus as a result of accountability than did

"Non-Warning List" schools. One administrator stated that they previously made decisions based

on "gut feelings", now they looked at the data to determine their direction.

4.5.3   Summary of Findings for Research Question No. 3

In evaluating the data for Research Question No. 3, some differences became apparent in the manner in which "Warning List" and "Non-Warning List" schools reacted to the accountability movement. It appears that both groups of schools are experiencing some degree of pressure from accountability. However, more "Warning List" administrators stated that they have created more experiences to address accountability, that they are being provided additional money, and that they have changed the focus of their professional development due to accountability than have "Non-Warning List" schools.

There appears to be no differences between "Warning List" and "Non-Warning List" administrators' beliefs that pressure from the accountability movement is driving their programs or that the time allotted to or the number of experiences created are due to accountability. While both groups of administrators agree that the accountability movement has impacted their professional development decisions, there appear to be very little difference between the two groups of schools when it comes to time, money and focus on their professional development programs.

CHAPTER V: SUMMARY, DISCUSSION and RECOMMENDATIONS

4.6   Introduction

This study was designed to investigate if schools identified by the state as ineffective, plan and implement their professional development more effectively.   In doing so, two groups of schools, those under pressure due to accountability ("Warning List Schools") and those not ("Non-Warning List" Schools), were compared in regards to their planning processes, program implementation and reflections on the influence of accountability on their professional development experiences.   This chapter will summarize the findings, critically examine those findings in light of the literature on accountability and professional development and provide suggestions for future study.

4.7   Summary

This section highlights the findings for each research question and provides some overall conclusions which are the basis for the Discussion and Recommendation sections.

4.7.1   Research Question No. 1

Research Question No. 1 focused on identifying "Warning List" and "Non-Warning List" schools' planning procedures. In essence, it focused on the manner in which a school's status on the "Warning List" pressured its decision-makers to spend more time and effort in creating more meaningful experiences. To address this research question, data were obtained on schools' professional development decision-making, their choice of professional development delivery method, their goal setting procedures, and their plan for dealing with elements that assist or interfere with professional development (these include the knowledge base and perspectives administrators bring to the table as they plan experiences, their knowledge of effective strategies, and their understanding of contextual and critical issues).

In answering Research Question No. 1, some differences between "Warning List" and "Non-Warning List" schools were noted. "Non-Warning List" schools, on average, utilized more time for professional development than "Warning List" schools due to the fact that they mandated professional development hours through their contracts, offered more Act 80/In-Service days and provided professional development opportunities beyond their Act 80/In-Service days. "Warning List" schools, on the other hand, were more apt to be driven by achievement oriented goals (i.e., students doing better on the state-level test) than were "Non-Warning List" schools.

"Warning List" schools were also slightly more apt to use student achievement scores (PSSA) and outside experts in planning professional development experiences, whereas "Non-Warning List" schools tended to utilize teacher input. In other areas investigated, there were no

differences observed between "Warning List" and "Non-Warning List" schools (i.e., the knowledge base and beliefs of administrators in supporting professional development, their understanding of strategies, and their accounting for issues that could affect the success or failure of professional development).

The picture that emerges of schools identified as successful is that they are more teacher driven and as having more structures in place for professional development (i.e., Act 80 days, after school experiences, etc.). However, because this study did not look at professional development for more than one year, it is impossible to ascertain whether these patterns contributed to the schools status (i.e., did the teachers' input and relatively high number of professional development days lead to better instruction which, in turn, kept the schools off the "Warning List" or if they are a result of that status?).

It should be noted that the above differences do not represent statistically significant differences; they are derived from patterns in descriptive data and hence can only be seen as suggestive at best. Overall, few differences were found between "Warning List" and "Non-Warning List" schools in the manner they implement their up-front planning which, if done correctly, could lead to more substantial, responsive and meaningful experiences. In essence, accountability did not provide enough pressure to "raise the bar" on professional development planning.

It is interesting to note the relatively effective professional development that was provided by WLS No. 1. They had many of the indicators of effective professional development and all of which had continued over several years. This case is ripe for further examination because it represents a counter example to what one would expect to find in a "failing" school.

Closer examination of the school and its teachers, students, and programs would be needed to discern why this school was placed on the state's "Warning List."

4.7.2   Research Question No. 2

Research Question No. 2 focused on understanding the manner by which schools implemented their professional development. To do this, various attributes identified by Porter et al., (2000) (i.e., Form, Duration, Participation, Focus, Level of Active Learning, Degree of Coherence and use of Student Data) were investigated. At the heart of this question is whether "Warning List" schools were creating more effective experiences due to their status on the state's "Warning List."

Some differences were noted between "Warning List" and "Non-Warning List" schools in the area of implementation. Primarily, "Non-Warning List" schools created experiences with longer durations than "Warning List" schools. This was due to the "Non-Warning List" schools' ability to mandate additional professional development experiences. Professional development experiences of longer duration, as stated in the research, are a critical element of effective professional development (Little, 1999; Sparks, 2000; Killion, 2002; Loucks-Horsley, 1998). However, none of the experiences investigated in this study (average duration of 15 hours) began to approach the average benchmarks of effective programs (average duration of 140 hours) outlined in Porter, et al (2000). Also, "Non-Warning List" schools more often utilized their Act 80/In-Service days for content-based instructional learning opportunities (vs. non-instructional) which the research contends has a direct impact on student learning (Richardson, 2003; Kahle, 1997; Monk, 1994; Cohen, 1997). Lastly, "Warning List" schools were more apt to continue experiences from year to year, which is critical for sustainability (Loucks-Horsley et al., 1998).

Again, we find that schools not under threat of sanctions spend slightly more time on professional development and that they utilize that time in activities that are more directly related to instruction. However, more research needs to be done to understand if this pattern lead to their success in staying of the "Warning List" or was it the other way around?

In general, some variations between "Warning List" and "Non-Warning List" schools were noted in the areas of Form, Duration, Participation, Focus, Level of Active Learning, Degree of Coherence and use of Student Data; however, the differences were minimal and the caveat regarding their significance applies here as well. It would appear that a school's status on the "Warning List" had little influence on the manner in which schools implemented their professional development experiences.

4.7.3   Research Question No. 3

Administrators' reflections on their professional development program and the influences of accountability were investigated through Research Question No. 3. Central to this research question are the methods by which "Warning List" and "Non-Warning List" schools react to the pressures of accountability.

The responses indicated that, in general, both groups of schools have reacted to accountability and are making some accommodations in the area of increased funds and change of focus. In looking at the differences between the two groups, more "Warning List" administrators state that they are under increased pressure and acknowledged that they have responded to this pressure by creating experiences designed to address areas identified through "high stakes" testing. Also noted was that "Warning List" school administrators stated that they have received more funds since the inception of accountability although the differences were

minimal.   No other areas of difference exist between the two groups of schools due to accountability.

In responding to Research Question No. 3, some differences exist within both "Warning List" and "Non-Warning List" schools in the accommodations schools have made as a result of accountability.   For example, across all ten schools, most received more funds and noted an increased focus on creating content-based experiences.   However, there seems to be no concerted effort in either "Warning List" or "Non-Warning List" schools to develop additional time.

4.7.4   Overall Conclusion

The differences observed between "Warning List" and "Non-Warning List" schools, in the areas of planning, implementation and reflection, are minimal.   Where they do exist, it is sometimes difficult to untangle whether the differences were responsible for a school's status or the result of it.   What this study does suggest is that being placed on the state's "Warning List" does not necessarily lead to more effective forms of professional development.

4.8   Discussion

This study attempted to determine the relationship between accountability and professional development.   This section focuses on identifying broader issues that are involved in this relationship.

The "No Child Left Behind" Act as well as many other educational reforms and policies have attempted to change education in the United States.   But for any reform to be successful,

theorists suggest that it must: 1) change the "core of educational practices" (Elmore, 1996); 2) affect a "teacher's understanding of the nature of knowledge, the student's role in learning, and how this understanding is manifested in teaching, grouping practices, and teacher responsibilities" (Sparks, 1997, p. 20); or 3) be compatible "with aspects of district realities or with the dominant motivations, needs or interests of teachers responsible for implementation"(McLaughlin, 1989, p. 7).

But does the "No Child Left Behind" Act accomplish that and effect change? As discussed in Chapter 2, past accountability movements have failed to yield significant positive change in improving teacher motivation, increasing a school's capacity, or increasing student achievement. However, the "No Child Left Behind" Act is unlike the past reforms cited in the literature, in that it possesses strict sanctions for under performing schools and guidelines for improvement.

Many contend that the main mechanism for the "No Child Left Behind" Act to be an agent of change is through effective professional development (Birman et al., 2000; Joyce & Showers, 1995; Kahle, 1997; Little, 1993); historically, however, professional development has been perceived as unresponsive to the demands of teaching and has had a limited impact on student learning (Troen & Boles, 2003). The question remains, can the "No Child Left Behind" Act provide the impetus for change and create more significant and responsive professional development?

This study aimed to answer that question by examining the relationship between accountability and professional development to determine if the "No Child Left Behind" Act has been effective in encouraging schools to plan and implement more meaningful and higher quality professional development experiences.

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Unfortunately, if one examines only the differences between the "Warning List" and "Non-Warning List" schools, the findings of this study indicate a limited influence from accountability in pressuring schools to create more worthwhile professional development experiences. As noted above, few meaningful differences were found between these two sets of schools suggesting that placement on the "Warning List" did not increase the quality of professional development programs and the professional development in "Non-Warning List" schools did not have many characteristics of effective professional development programs.

4.8.1   The Accountability Environment

The impact of accountability can be examined more generally because all schools in this study were subject to the provisions of the "No Child Left Behind" Act and were aware of its sanctions, even if they themselves had not been singled out as a "Warning List" school. For the most part, looking across all 10 schools, one finds limited evidence of a more general impact of the "No Child Left Behind" Act. For example, across all schools, too few personnel were employed to direct professional development and these personnel often were assigned other duties that limited the amount of time they could spend on professional development. Also, very few schools employed staff to ensure classroom implementation of practices learned in professional development and often relied on teachers' "professionalism" for implementation. Schools also exhibited little concern for up-front planning, in that few schools utilized the resources available, both in-house (i.e., professional development committees and teacher input) and outside (i.e., University and Intermediate Unit Specialists) for any planning purposes. Also, little regard was placed on implementing experiences of higher quality and of appropriate durations.

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However, some findings suggest an impact of the "No Child Left Behind" Act in specific areas and are worth noting. Primarily, the atmosphere of accountability appeared to be encouraging schools to consider student learning. In making this statement, I cite the number of schools (both "Warning List" and "Non-Warning List") that were creating more focused content-based experiences. Of the schools studied, most steered away from activities that were of little relevance to the classroom. A majority of the experiences were content-based and dealt with changing teachers' behaviors by focusing on different instructional techniques and skills. As one administrator stated, "We focused less on philosophy and focused more on the nuts and bolts of reading." This, the research suggests, is more likely to change teacher behaviors and enhance student learning then is the amount of time, types or structure of professional development that teachers are involved in (Richardson, 2003; Kahle, 1997; Kennedy, 1998).

Accountability also appears to be a factor in how districts set their goals and design their professional development programs. A number of the schools in this study stated that the design of their experiences was significantly influenced by accountability. Regardless of their status, schools are feeling the pressures of accountability. One administrator stated "It's just the environment that we are in. We always have to be worrying about our test scores."

4.8.2   Professional Development

Though professional development has a history of being ineffective (Loucks-Horsley et al., 1998; Guskey, 2000), one positive finding from this study is worth noting. Of the administrators selected for this study, most were aware of major dimensions of what constitutes effective professional development. Most administrators discussed high-level forms and elements of effective professional development, suggesting that there is a knowledge base among

administrators of effective professional development practices. This would suggest that administrators, either through their certification course work, professional readings, seminars, or other means, have obtained some general understanding of what constitutes effective professional development. However, what was lacking for most of these administrators was an understanding of how to translate that knowledge into practice. This may be due to the administrators' misunderstandings or the lack of knowledge or supports in the implementation process of professional development. Also, past practices appear to be a factor in determining strategies for implementation, with schools continuing specific experiences from year to year, and seldom initiating new types of programs. Also contributing to the lack of creativity is that while organizations exist that promote more effective forms of professional development (i.e., ASCD and SDC), districts appear to need more immediate and higher intensity support where advisors are actively involved in the planning and implementation at the building/district level and are directly accessible to decision-makers. When districts are left to their own devices, administrators frequently fall back to what they know and have done in the past and tend to not use the resources and knowledge they seem to have (e.g., no prior planning, involvement of teachers, etc.).

4.8.3   Relationship Between Accountability and Professional Development

In closing, at the heart of this research are two components, Accountability and Professional Development and their relationship to one another. The diagram below (See Figure 3) identifies an ideal relationship that could exist by which each positively influences the other, causing the bar to be raised for both.

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The Influence of Accountability to
Drive Professional Development

State Level Supports

Professional
Development

Accountability

State Level Supports

The Ability of Professional
Development to Meaningfully Target
Issues Identified Through
Accountability
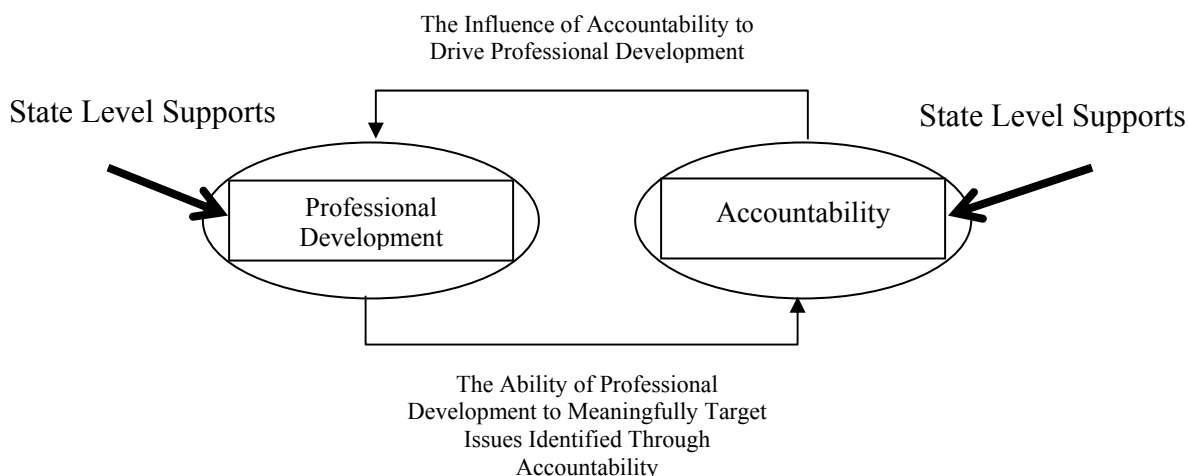
Figure 3. **Model for Improved Educational Environment and Student Achievement**

Figure 3 idealizes the symbiotic relationship that could exist between accountability and professional development. If accountability is to be a positive influence it must be effective in encouraging meaningful and substantive professional development; and through professional development, accountability can drive and positively influence the direction of education. However for this perfect relationship to occur, it is critical that we understand that accountability cannot accomplish this alone. The threats of sanctions, absent the provisions of resources, tools and supports, will not help schools improve. Policy makers need to think more about all that is required to help schools improve and provide the agencies and supports necessary to create effective professional development.

However, as demonstrated through this study, the relationship between the two components appears to be minimal due to the inability of accountability (on its own) to provide the pressure to force individual schools to create meaningful and substantive professional

development and because administrators are not "raising the bar" and meeting the challenges of accountability. Also inhibiting this relationship is the lack of supports in creating a meaningful connection between these two components. For this to change, more work must be done at the local and state level to create an environment which fosters a meaningful relationship between the two issues.

4.9   Recommendations

This section focuses on the need for change in the venues of policy and practice at a local and state level and identifies possible areas for future research.

4.9.1   Practice and Policy at the Local Level

The schools in this study have demonstrated that, at least at the local level, there seems to be a lack of commitment to creating more meaningful and effective professional development. As discussed in Chapter 2, effective professional development is directly linked to improved student achievement.

Several factors have emerged which impact a school's choices in delivering effective staff development. Schools are not devoting enough time to create meaningful professional development and are not effectively using the time that is available. A major hindrance appears to be teachers' contracts that restrict the amount of time available for professional development. At the district level, superintendents must first convince school boards of the link between student achievement and professional development and then use their influence with their boards

to change the language in teacher contracts to provide more time for such activities. In addition, creative approaches for using the time available must be investigated in order to maximize its effectiveness (i.e., release time for teachers, voluntary after school or summer experiences, or experiences that can be planned during the normal school day).

The experiences that schools offer appear to be "Traditional" in nature. Information seems to be presented with little emphasis on implementation. The people responsible for planning the experiences must be encouraged to implement more "Reform" type experiences and focus on teacher understanding of the information and its implementation in the classroom. This study has indicated that the people in leadership roles are aware of what constitutes effective professional development but still revert back to methods they have used in the past. Districts must break free of these constraints if they are to improve their programs.

As suggested in this study, schools do not appear to expend much effort in their up-front planning. This is evident in the limited number of schools that utilized an outside expert in their professional development planning. Schools should tap into the vast body of knowledge in both professional development and in content areas that are available through outside resources. Often, school district time is stretched so thin that they are unable to do the research needed to guide their planning and focus the scope of the content knowledge under study. Many organizations are available to aid in this process (i.e., professional organizations, universities, and Intermediate Units).

The lack of staff also impacts effective professional development through the lack of support available to assist teachers in applying what they have learned to the classroom. In this study, schools often relied on out-of-district consultants to conduct the professional development experience, but did little to ensure classroom implementation of the ideas presented except

through classroom observations by the principal. Though these observations can be an effective tool to ensure implementation, the number of observations that most administrators can do is limited by the number of staff and the number of times they must be observed which in turn is guided by the contract and state guidelines. It is essential that schools begin to think creatively about ways that teachers can be assisted to implement new information in the classroom (i.e., the use of teacher coaches and other support staff to help teachers by providing feedback and modeling of lessons). However, this requires a paradigm shift for teachers and administrators to see such programs as non-threatening and of benefit.

Pennsylvania through the PSSA provides each school district with a wealth of data on their students' achievement. Schools have the opportunity to view this data as well as their own district data to aid professional development planners in guiding the course of their professional development; however, of the schools in this study, few utilized any data in developing their plan. Though all schools in this study reported they examined data, few used it directly for planning purposes. The data should be used to drive the decisions that are made regarding what teachers need to know and do to help their students improve. This step does not require additional time or funding but requires only the determination to do so.

Participant buy-in, the process of getting teachers to see the need for a program, is essential for successful implementation. Few schools in this study involved teachers in the planning or implementation stages of their professional development experiences. It appears that administrators felt teachers would automatically see the merit of the programs and be motivated to use them and as Loucks-Horsley et al., (1998) and Little (1999) suggest, this does not necessarily occur. It is imperative that schools involve their teacher more in the planning stages to create ownership of the programs.

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If schools are able to find more time for professional development, create more effective experiences, utilize outside experts, employ staff to ensure proper implementation, utilize data in the planning process, and encourage more teacher buy-in, schools can begin to change professional development from ineffective and a poor use of time and effort to an effective process to improve classroom achievement. In order for this to happen, administrators need the support of the district level policy makers who must understand the relationship between professional development and achievement and support their districts' efforts.

4.9.2   Practice and Policy at the State Level

For professional development to become more effective, change is needed at the local level; however, the state must help schools see the merit of making professional development a priority since it is often cut during tight budget times. To encourage effective professional development, the state, through legislation, the Pennsylvania Department of Education and the local Intermediate Units, has the ability to provide the support and incentives needed by local districts. For districts to change, Intermediate Units must communicate to schools the role professional development plays in increasing student achievement and provide the supports and guidance to accomplish this. In order to do this, Intermediate Units need additional staff and resources which can be directed at helping districts implement their professional development.

Creating conditions for effective professional development is of critical importance. Primarily, the issue of time limits the potential of professional development. In the Porter et al., (2000) study, the authors provided examples of adequate durations of professional development. All the examples of effective approaches had duration times of 150 hours or more over a year. All of the experiences studied for this research were significantly lower than that benchmark (the

longest experience was 40 hours). School contracts appear to have the greatest impact on this issue. However, schools can circumvent this by providing more Act 80/In-Service days and the state could assist schools by increasing the mandated 160 hours of professional development time (Act 48).

4.9.3   Future Research

Since accountability is in its infancy, additional research is needed to determine its benefits and shortcomings. One area of concern that became apparent through the research is the use of funds to purchase "test preparation" materials. Instead of focusing on professional development and "raising the bar" for classroom teaching, some districts appear to be focusing on easy solutions such as prepared materials that promise to raise test scores. As McNeil and Valenzuela (2000) suggests, the over reliance on solutions like these can narrow the curriculum and work against overall student achievement. A study that focuses on district utilization of resources would further our understanding of the dynamics that operate within districts regarding the need to improve student achievement.

A second focus that would improve our understanding of the relationship between accountability and improved professional development would be a study of effective models of implementation. Even when they know better, districts too often revert back to what is both familiar and comfortable, especially when there are insufficient personnel to oversee an implementation plan. Finding ways to help districts improve implementation would help professional development to achieve its potential as an instrument of educational change.

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4.10 Conclusion

As we can see, much work remains to be done if student scores are to improve as a result of a genuine knowledge and understanding of the material tested. This can only happen if classroom teachers are given the opportunity to improve their skills to keep up with the demands of accountability. The schools in this study appear to be doing what they have always done. While their administrators can talk about effective professional development, we do not see that talk translated into positive action. Districts need support from the Institutions of Higher Learning, Intermediate Units and the Pennsylvania Department of Education to overcome their isolation and reliance on old solutions to address new problems. The State Department of Education could be instrumental in this endeavor by providing incentives to districts to expand their staff development options and by providing resources to Intermediate Units to lead the way. If we know that student achievement is a result of effective staff development as cited in Chapter 2 of this study, we have much to gain from supporting these efforts.

Appendix A

Materials Related to the Initial Telephone Questionnaire

Appendix A-1

Initial Telephone Contact

School Name: _____

Principal's Name: _____

Hello, my name is Benjamin Horn and I am a doctoral student at the University of Pittsburgh. I am currently conducting my doctoral study and would like to include your school in my study.

The purpose of my research is to determine how schools are planning and implementing professional development in this new age of accountability. More specifically, I am surveying elementary schools such as yours to identify how you are designing and implementing professional development in the area of language arts. The person involved in this study will be required to participate in two data collection activities. In the next month, they would need to participate in a face-to-face interview which will take approximately one hour. At the interview, I will give that person a survey, which is to be completed at their convenience, to determine how your professional development was implemented over the year. The entire time need by me for this study should be about an hour and half. There are no foreseeable risks associated with this project, nor are there any direct benefits to you or your school. I will see that you receive the results of my study. All responses are confidential, and the results will be kept under lock and key. Your participation is voluntary and you may withdraw at any time. Would you agree to have your school participate in this study?

The person participating should be the person most knowledgeable in regard to the planning, development, and implementation of all the professional development offerings in the area of language arts that will occur in your building this year. Who would that person be?

Name of Contact: _____

Position: _____

Contact Information: (phone) _____

                                  (e-mail) _____

                                  (fax) _____

Appendix A-2

Initial Telephone Interview of School Personnel

Hello, my name is Benjamin Horn and I am a doctoral student at the University of Pittsburgh. I am conducting my doctoral dissertation and would like your involvement. I've already spoken to _____, the principal at _____, and they recommended that I talk to you to see if you would participate in my study.

The purpose of my research is to determine how schools are planning and implementing professional development in this new age of accountability. More specifically, I am surveying elementary schools such as yours to identify how you are designing and implementing professional development in the area of language arts. I would like you to be involved in this study and if you agree you will need to participate in two data collection activities. In the next month, I will ask you to participate in an hour face-to-face interview. At the interview, I will give you a survey to fill out regarding your professional development experiences that occurred this year. I will leave the survey with you and you can complete it at your own convenience. The entire time needed by me for this study should be about an hour and a half. There are no foreseeable risks associated with this project, nor are there any direct benefits to you or your school. I will see that you receive the results of my study. All responses are confidential, and the results will be kept under lock and key. Your participation is voluntary and you may withdraw at any time. Would you be willing to participate in this study?

Appendix A-3

Questions for Interview

I will be asking you several questions regarding the planning of your professional development. Please try to answer the best that you can and I may be asking you several follow-up questions to clarify any answers that I may not understand.

1.   First off, I would like to talk to you about the process that went into the planning of your professional development. Can you tell me a little bit about that?
        a)   Who was involved in the planning of your professional development?
        b)   Who made up the decision-making team?
        c)   Is your planning done at the school level or district level?
        d)   Who is in charge of making decisions?
        e)   Who is responsible for implementing those decisions?
        f)   Were teachers involved in the decision-making process?
        g)   Were any outside experts used in the decision-making process?

RESTATE
2.   Now I would like to talk to you about your goals, if you had to identify the primary goal or goals of your professional development, what would it be?
3.   How did you decide to set your goal or goals?
4.   Can you summarize what you planned for your professional development this year in the area of language arts and tell me a little bit about each experience and as you tell me about each experience look at this sheet and tell me the purpose of that experience as they would fall into these categories? (Show Appendix A-6)
5.   Tell me about if you had an established time line and set of activities for your plan?
6.   There are certain factors that influence professional development planning. I would like to discuss several of them to see if they were discussed or considered during your planning. For instance, if you believe that children learn by active engagement you will set up experiences that will help teachers provide this. However, if you believe that children learn best by following teacher guidance and direction you will set up experiences to achieve that. Now, I have just given you two different philosophies. In developing your professional development for your teachers, were there any philosophical positions that drove your planning or your decisions? Take a look at the following areas and discuss any philosophies that may have driven the way you do things and talk to me about if these philosophies were ever discussed or were they just unspoken assumptions. (Appendix A-4)

Now I would like to ask you a few questions about the strategies that you considered in planning your professional development. By strategies I am referring to the method by which you are training your teachers, such as workshops, outside experts or peer coaching, etc.

Here is a list of different professional development strategies. Take a minute to look at the different strategies because you may have another name for them. Please ask any questions if you don't understand any of these headings. (Appendix A-5)

7. Of these, which professional development strategies did you consider using when you began planning your professional development?
8. Why did you consider using those strategies?
   a. Was there ever any discussion or thought about other strategies with which you could have trained your teachers? Tell me more.
   b. Did you ever have a discussion or thought about what method of professional development would help your teachers' better implement the content of the professional development? Tell me more?
   c. In what ways did your desired outcomes or goals suggest the use of certain professional development strategies or combinations of strategies?
9. Did the issue of follow-through or follow-up ever come up during the planning stages? Can you tell me more?
10. During the planning stages, how much influence did your teachers' personalities, expertise, philosophies have on the strategies selected? Tell me more.
11. As you talked about the different experiences you planned, what was the goal?

Now I would like to change my questions to focus on the context in which your professional development was planned. By the context, I mean specific features in the environment that might have influenced the way in which you planned your professional development.

12. I am going to show you a list of possible areas that may affect your professional development (See Appendix A-7). Could you please look at the list and talk about any of the areas that may have had an influence on the planning of your professional development?
   a. Did you specifically tailor anything because of your particular group of students, (such as the test scores or backgrounds)? Tell me more.
   b. Did you specifically tailor anything because of your particular group of teachers (philosophies, expertise, background, or disposition)? Tell me more.
   c. Did you specifically tailor anything because of any particular practices, such as your Curriculum, Instruction, Assessment, and the Learning Environment? Tell me more.
   d. Did you specifically tailor anything because of any state and local policies (NCLB, state regulations, or school board policies)? Tell me more.
   e. Did you specifically tailor anything because of the availability or lack of resources (Not enough money, books, or resources)? Tell me more.
   f. Did you specifically tailor anything because of your school's culture (For example, teachers don't work well together, or they respect one another)? Tell me more.
   g. Did you specifically tailor anything because of your school's structures (For example, contract, school day)? Tell me more.

    h. Did you specifically tailor anything because of the history of your schools professional development (past activities, what you saw work)? Tell me more.

Now, I would like to change gears and ask you about a few more aspects of professional development.

  13. Does the design of your professional development invite full engagement and learning by your teachers? Tell me more about that.
  14. How has the idea of building a community of learners been addressed?
  15. Is leadership development a goal of your professional development program? Tell me more.
  16. What supports are in place to develop professional learning?
    a. Are there people available to work with other teachers?
    b. Are there policies, resources, or structure in place that will support your goals once the professional development experience is done?
  17. How do you plan to implement your professional development across your entire faculty?
  18. How have you considered evaluating your professional development program?
  19. What do you plan to do with the evaluation?
  20. Have you considered ways to make more effective use of the time currently available?

Now I would like to change gears again and discuss how your professional development went this year.

  21. How successful was this year's professional development?
  22. If you could, what changes would you have made to this year's professional development program?
  23. Reflecting back, what had the most significant impact on your professional development planning?
  24. Would you have changed your professional development program in any way if you were (or were not) on the State's "Needs Improvement" list?
  25. How will you change your professional development program if your PSSA scores declined next year?
  26. How have the results of the PSSA affected the number of professional development experiences you are able to offer?
  27. How have the results of the PSSA put pressure on your school to think differently about your professional development?
  28. How have the results of the PSSA changed the content of your professional development?
  29. Because of the PSSA, do you feel your school has provided more resources for professional development? Can you elaborate?
  30. How has accountability influenced your school to examine and design its professional development differently?

Appendix A-4

Possible Areas about which Professional Development Designers may have Specific Knowledge and Beliefs

Teachers and Teaching	Learners and Learning
The Change Process	Professional Development

Appendix A-5

Possible Strategies for Professional Development

- Teachers participate in an in-district workshop or institute, meeting, in-service, or institute.

- Teachers participate in a college-level course

- Teachers attend an out-of-district workshop, meeting, in-service or institute

- Teachers participate in a teacher collaborative or network

- Teachers attend an out-of-district conference

- Teachers participate in action research or a problem solving event

- Teachers work with a mentor, coach, lead teacher, or observer

- Teachers participate in a resource center

- Teachers participate in a committee or task force

- Teachers participate in a self guided learning experience

- Teachers participate in a student assessment event

Appendix A-6

Possible Results of Professional Development Experiences

The experiences will develop your teachers' awareness.	The experiences will build your teachers' knowledge base
The experiences will provide new methods of teaching.	The experiences will help teachers reflect on their teaching.

Appendix A-7

Contextual Areas that may Influence Professional Development Planning

1.   Students

2.   Teachers

3.   Practices: Curriculum, Instruction, Assessment, and the Learning Environment

4.   State and Local Policies

5.   Available Resources

6.   Organizational Culture

7.   Organizational Structures

8.   History of Professional Development

Appendix B

Survey of Professional Development Experiences

Appendix B-1

Survey for Professional Development Experiences

Dear _____,

       Again, thank you again for participating in my study. This survey seeks to understand how you implemented your professional development. This survey will only take about 20 minutes to complete. Please answer only the questions for the language arts professional development experiences that occurred in your school this year. You need to fill out an individual survey for each professional development experience. The yellow sheets separate each survey. I included several surveys so you can provide information on each professional development experience. If you have any questions you can reach me at 814-434-4215.

Thanks again,

Benjamin Horn

Professional Development Survey

1. The table below provides 13 different professional development experiences. Think back to the professional development experiences your teachers were involved in this year. Please **CIRCLE one experience**. After you circle that experience, you need to answer 12 other question pertaining to that experience. Remember these experiences only pertain to the <u>LANGUAGE ARTS PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT EXPERIENCES THAT YOUR SCHOOL OR DISTRICT HAS SPONSORED</u>.

In-district workshop, staff meeting, or institute	College course	Out-of-district workshop or institute	Teacher collaborative or network
Out-of-district conference	Action research or problem solving event	Worked with a mentor, coach, lead teacher, or observer	Teacher resource center
Teachers committee or task force	Self guided learning experience	Student assessment event	Curriculum development or adaptation of the curriculum
Teacher study group	Other (please specify)		

2. Between September 2003 and the present, including the main activity and any preliminary activity or formal follow-up sessions, how many hours were your teachers engaged in this activity overall?
   _____ Hours

3. Over what period of time was this activity spread, including the main activity and any formal, preliminary or follow-up sessions?
   a. Less than one day
   b. One day
   c. Two-four days
   d. A week
   e. A month
   f. More than a month

4. Are there plans for this professional development activity or experience to continue next year?
   a. Yes
   b. No

5.	To what extent was the professional development experience tailored to meet the needs of individual teachers?
	a.	Not at all (all teachers received the same information)
	b.	Somewhat (teachers were provided with different experiences depending on their group)
	c.	Completely (each teacher received individual training)

6.	Which of the following characterizes the participants in this activity?
	a.	Individuals working to improve their craft or knowledge base (not a collective effort for improvement)
	b.	Teachers as representatives for their department or grade-level or school.
	c.	All teachers in department or grade level groups
	d.	Most teachers from your school
	e.	All teachers from your school

7.	What was the main focus of this activity?
	a.	General awareness of new information
	b.	Specific teaching strategies
	c.	Theory of how students learn to read
	d.	General information regarding reading instruction
	e.	Other (please specify) _____

8.	Were teachers given lessons or ideas to take back to their classrooms to use immediately?
	a.	Yes
	b.	No

9.	Have other teachers ever experienced a professional development activity on this topic before?
	a.	Yes
	b.	No

10.	What student assessments were used in this professional development activity?
	a.	None
	b.	PSSA scores
	c.	Student portfolios
	d.	Student writing
	e.	Student scores on other assessments
	f.	Other (please specify) _____

11.	To what extent was this professional development experience planned because of the PSSA?
	a.	The PSSA had no impact in the decision for this experience
	b.	The PSSA had a little impact in the decision for this experience
	c.	The PSSA had a significant impact in the decision for this experience

12. Circle the area that the professional development experience focused on. (Circle all that apply)
   a. Curriculum (e.g., units, tests, standards)
   b. Instructional methods
   c. Approaches to helping students do better on testing
   d. Information important to students doing better on the test
   e. Use of technology in instruction
   f. Strategies for teaching diverse student populations (students with disabilities, underrepresented populations, economically disadvantaged, range of abilities)
   g. Deepening knowledge of reading skills
   h. Leadership development
   i. Adapting teaching to meet state assessment requirements
   j. Adapting teaching to meet state standards or curriculum framework requirements
   k. Learning about state assessments
   l. Learning about state standards or curriculum framework
   m. Other (please specify)

13. During the professional development experience which of the following did the teachers engage in during the activity? (Circle all that apply)
   a. Teachers listened to a speaker or lecture
   b. Teachers observed a demonstration of a lesson or unit
   c. Teachers participated in a whole group discussion
   d. Teachers participated in a small group discussion
   e. Teachers gave a lecture or presentation
   f. Teachers conducted a demonstration of a lesson, unit or skill
   g. Teachers led a whole group discussion
   h. Teachers led a small group discussion
   i. Teachers engaged in extended problem solving
   j. Teachers wrote a paper, report or plan
   k. Teachers practiced using student materials
   l. Teachers developed or reviewed materials
   m. Teachers reviewed students' work
   n. Teachers scored assessments
   o. Teachers collaborated with a colleague in the subject of reading
   p. Teacher were able to observe a fellow colleague
   q. Teachers were given feedback on performance
   r. Teachers used technology (computer, internet, etc)
   s. Teachers completed paper and pencil problems or exercises
   t. Teachers assessed participant knowledge or skills
   u. Other (please specify) _____

Appendix C

Codes for Categorizing Data

Appendix C

Codes for Categorizing Data

1. Goal Setting
    Decision Making
    Delivery Methods
    Goals
2. Planning Inputs
    Knowledge and Beliefs
        Learning and Learners
        Teachers and Teaching
        Effective Professional Development
        Change and the Change Process
    Strategies
    Contextual Issues
        Students
        Teachers
        Practices
        State and Local Policies
        Available Resources
        Organizational Culture
        Organizational Structures
    Critical Ideas
        Professional Culture
        Capacity for Sustainability
        Use of Standards
        Time
        Evaluation and Assessments
3. Seven Attributes of Effective Professional Development
    Form
    Duration
    Focus
    Coherence
    Level of Active Learning
    Participation
    Student Data
4. Reflection
    Significance of PSSA
    Significance of Experience
    Time
    Money
    Focus

Appendix D

Summary Reports of "Warning List Schools"

Appendix D

Analysis of Data of Warning List Schools

Warning List School No. 1:

Profile

Warning List School No. 1 (WLS No. 1) is located in a rural school district in Northwestern Pennsylvania which has ten elementary schools that feed into two high schools. WLS No. 1 services 492 students from kindergarten through grade seven. Thirty-four percent of the students at WLS No. 1 qualify for the "Free and Reduced Lunch Program," which makes this school eligible to receive federal Title I monies for additional support in reading and math instruction.

District's Professional Development Profile

WLS No. 1's school district employs a Supervisor of Curriculum and Instruction that oversees all professional development experiences from kindergarten through twelfth grade. This person's duties include overseeing the district's professional development programs as well as aiding principals and teachers in planning and implementing activities. In addition to the Supervisor, this district also employs six content-area Specialists to aid in professional development. These staff members supervise specific content-areas as well as coach teachers, write curriculum and conduct professional development experiences. Three of the supervisors target the elementary language arts program.

The district has a professional development team called the Instructional Management Team (IMT), which is made up of the Supervisor of Curriculum and Instruction, the Superintendent, the Assistant Superintendent, representative elementary, middle and high school principals and several specialists. The team examines district initiatives, student data and

computer-based teacher assessments to determine the needs of teachers and the focus of their professional development.

The district offers both district-level and school-based professional development. The Administrator stated that the district-level professional development helps focus the district on the on-going initiatives set up by the IMT, and the school-level experiences enable the district to be responsive to the needs of individual schools.

The district has several methods in place for providing professional development. First, the district has four Act 80 days and utilizes all of them for teacher learning. The district also utilizes before and after school professional development opportunities and has a mandated contractual obligation for teachers of three hours a month that building principals or district officials can use for professional development.

WLS No. 1's Professional Development Profile

Due to WLS No. 1's status on the "Warning List", the two building principals decided to work with the staff and create an improvement plan for the school. This process, though not mandated by the state until obtaining the "School Improvement I" status, was initiated as a proactive step to address community concerns and to raise PSSA scores in hopes of getting off the "Warning List."

The professional development offerings at WLS No. 1 were carried out both through their Act 80 days and their before/after school experiences. During the 2003-2004 school year, WLS No. 1 used all four Act 80 days for some type of professional development. Of the four days, one and a half days were used for school-level professional development focused on understanding the information obtained from DIBELS testing and strategies for remediating students utilizing this data, as well as coordinating the school's writing program. These

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experiences have been a district initiative for several years and the teachers, through their planning, decided to focus on these areas as a school. Other opportunities were offered on these experiences, but were carried out using contractual time after school. The remainder of the Act 80 days were devoted to district-level professional development experiences. One half-day was dedicated to helping district employees understand "No Child Left Behind" issues and their ramifications. The Administrator stated that the superintendent thought it was important that all staff knew the consequences of the "NCLB" legislation. The remaining two Act 80 days focused on implementing technology and other district-level initiatives.

Research Question No. 1: An Analysis of School No. 1's Goal Setting and Planning

Goal Setting. During the interview, the Administrator stated that the primary goal of WLS No. 1 professional development was to help the school raise their PSSA scores so that the school could get off the "Warning List." This goal was established by the building-level principals who, in doing so, decided to forego the traditional IMT initiatives and create a School Improvement Plan. This decision was done at the administrative level and did not involve teacher input. The Administrator acknowledged that there were no other goals other than to raise achievement scores. The Administrator stated:

> "It's pretty impactful when you get that notice from the state, which says that next year you could go into program improvement, which of course kicks in school choice and all of those kinds of issues. The building principals are not naïve and when they sit down with our Director of Instruction, they knew this is what we needed to do."

Planning. The goals of WLS No. 1 provided the impetus for the school to complete a School Improvement Plan. In doing so, the administrators met with the staff once or twice a week during which time they were able to "brainstorm, punch the numbers as far as all of the data that they had, and then as a group, planned the professional development. They spent the

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first month of school planning a whole year's worth of professional development." During this planning stage, teacher input was gathered and used to design the professional development experiences.

The experiences that were planned addressed two major concerns of the faculty: the need for their students to write more, for teachers to have more instruction in and coordination of their writing program; and secondly, a need for more training in DIBELS. These experiences occurred during their two Act 80 days and their after school contractual hours.

For the actual implementation of these experiences the administrators worked with the Director of Professional Development to get topics and presenters ready. The presenters were all in-district employees who had specialized knowledge in both the writing process and DIBELS.

1.   <u>Knowledge and Beliefs</u>. The District and the Professional Development Coordinator appeared to have a solid knowledge base on what constituted effective professional development. The knowledge and beliefs of the district, though not stated publicly, are evident in the design and implementation of their professional development.

This district has structures and supports in place that demonstrate the District's philosophy about the importance of professional development and the manner in which it should be implemented. The district funds one full-time Supervisor of Curriculum and Instruction who focuses primarily on professional development and six Curriculum Specialists/Coaches. This is an unusually large allocation of funds directed at providing professional development and coaches. None of these staff members have any assigned teaching duties and their only responsibilities are to coach staff and plan, implement and coordinate district-level initiatives. This demonstrates the district's support of their

professional development, their curriculum and their commitment to embedding professional development into the teacher's workday.

Another belief of the district, the Administrator acknowledged, is that professional development is "never-ending" which is demonstrated by the district-initiated optional experiences which teachers are encouraged to attend. The administrator feels this has led to a professional culture where teachers are encouraged to be self-motivated, lifelong learners.

The Administrator acknowledged the belief that teachers need to differentiate their instruction and that teaching styles need to meet the learning styles of the students. The administrator feels that this belief is demonstrated by the manner in which the district performs its own professional development. In the past, the district provided the same professional development experiences for all teachers (kindergarten through twelfth). Only recently has the district moved to separate middle/high-level experiences and elementary-level experiences. The focus on individualized instruction is seen in the professional development experiences at WLS No. 1, in that they are focusing on utilizing DIBELS information to drive their learning centers, which, in turn, helps meet the needs of all the participants.

The Administrator also stated the district's beliefs about the idea of change and the change process. The administrator acknowledged that too many experiences were occurring and the staff was becoming overwhelmed and burned out. The district decided to back away from many of the initiatives. Though the Administrator did not directly discuss the funding of specialist/coaches when discussing change and the change process, this method can have a positive impact on easing the change process.

Finally, the Administrator stated that the district promotes professional development that is "needs-based, data-based and student-centered."

The beliefs and knowledge of the district and the decision-makers, though never formalized or publicized, seem to positively influence the design of the professional development at WLS No. 1. The commitment to differentiating teaching, supporting the change process with coaches, and using student data are apparent in the various experiences.

2. Strategies. The district utilized a variety of strategies in its professional development and the Administrator acknowledged a high degree of understanding and knowledge of "Reform" type experiences. The manner in which the experiences were run appears to be related to the administrators' understanding of what effective professional development should be; however, the Training Model is still the main form of professional development.

3. Contextual Issues. The Administrator implicitly and explicitly acknowledged several Contextual Issues that the district had either accounted for or ignored during their professional development for the 2003-2004 school year.

    i. Students. The Administrator did discuss how the administration and staff, through their work with the School Improvement Plan, reviewed test data to make decisions regarding their students' deficiencies. They also acknowledge that the professional development that occurred at WLS No. 1 is promoting the collection of on-going data by teachers on students by which they will specifically address students' needs. It is apparent that the issue of who the students are has been

addressed to some degree by the staff and administration in the design and planning of their professional development

ii.   <u>Teachers</u>.   The Administrator acknowledged that through the professional development plan, WLS No. 1 has focused on offering experiences in perceived deficiency areas of the staff. The staff felt they needed more instruction focused on the writing process and learning centers. The district also implemented an on-line teacher needs assessment. She stated that the IMT examines information obtained from this assessment to guide their initiatives.

iii.   <u>Practices: Curriculum, Instructional and Assessments</u>. Through the professional development plan, the staff focused on learning new instructional methods and assessment (Writing Process and DIBELS).

iv.   <u>State and Local Policies</u>. The Administration addressed the issue of state policy by creating a School Improvement Plan. This plan, though not mandatory, responded to the accountability issue by establishing a course of action.

v.   <u>Available Resources</u>. The Administrator acknowledged many areas that the district and staff have pursued to provide additional resources.

vi.   <u>Organization Culture</u>. The Administrator felt that the district has attempted to positively address the culture of the school by providing voluntary experiences on topics of interest to them. She feels the district's superintendent has moved away from the belief that "teachers must attend these sessions" to "here it is, but we are not going to drag you kicking and screaming to it." This new approach, the Administrator believes, has created a professional culture that promotes a collaborative, supportive working environment.

vii. <u>Organizational Structures</u>. The Administrator stated that she could not identify any structure that would limit their professional development. It seems that the district has actively implemented many structures that encourage professional development (Supervisor of Professional Development, coaches and contractual time).

4. <u>Critical Issues</u>. The Administrator acknowledged various Critical Issues that the district has either addressed or ignored that could have a dramatic affect on professional development. Below is a listing of some critical issues and an analysis of the manner in which the district has addressed these issues.

i. <u>Professional Culture</u>. The Administrator stated that the district has encouraged a culture of professionalism by offering, not forcing, teachers' professional development experiences on an on-going basis.

ii. <u>Capacity for Sustainability</u>. The district has many structures in place that addressed sustainability. The employment of one staff member to oversee professional development and six coaches who provide support for teachers help to sustain district initiatives. The district also has contractual hours dedicated to professional development.

iii. <u>Time</u>. The Administrator stated that the district offers both mandatory and voluntary professional development experiences and has time within the schedule to bring teachers together to focus on professional development. The district also has a coaching element that embeds professional development in the teacher's workday. The experiences that the district offers show, to some degree, an

attempt to maximize the professional development opportunities within the structure of the normal school day.

iv. <u>Evaluation and Assessment</u>. The Administrator stated that they had discussed evaluating the program's effectiveness by bringing in people to critique the coaching experiences. Though not done, this was the only interview in which the issue of evaluating a program's impact has been articulated. The administrator stated that each experience is evaluated through staff surveys.

Research Question No. 2: An Analysis of School No. 1's Implementation of their Professional Development

Form. During the 2003-2004 school year, WLS No. 1's teachers were involved in six types of professional development experiences. Of the six, three will be reviewed for this study.

1. Committee or Task Force

The first strategy used during the 2003-2004 school year was a committee or task force which was used to create the School Improvement Plan. During this endeavor, teachers and administration met several times over the course of a month to examine student data, create the School Improvement Plan and determine the professional development experiences for the year. Though it qualifies as a "Reform" type activity, the method and manner in which it was conducted does not lend itself to changes in the classroom, and it appeared to be limited in duration, focus and intensity; however, it could help coordinate practices and expectations within the staff.

2.   Workshop or In-Service.

The strategies used for the DIBELS training and the Writing Process were of the "Traditional" type. Though the Writing experience was the district's first attempt to address writing in years, the DIBELS training has been a district initiative for the last two years.

3.   Coaching/Mentoring

This professional development strategy is a district initiative that began several years ago. One issue that may limit the effectiveness of the coaching/mentoring program is the fact that two of the coaches/mentors who focus on elementary language arts service several building and many teachers. If their workload limits contact time with teachers, this in turn, will limit the program's effectiveness.

Duration. The total contact time for the committee experiences was 5 hours. Though this experience qualifies as a "Reform" type experience, its duration was considerably shorter than the other "Reform" experiences studied.

The total contact time for the DIBELS training totaled 10 hours and for the experience on the Writing Process, 20 hours. However, it should be noted that the experiences were carried out over several months, giving teachers a chance to practice the strategies learned and bring issues back to the training to discuss.

The duration of the coaching/mentoring experience cannot be fully discussed in this limited venue. During the interview, the Administrator did state that these individuals had no teaching duties and that their time was to be engaged in the coaching/mentoring process. The amount of time spent varied per teacher, the Administrator stated, and certain individuals were targeted during the year.

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Participation. The level of participation of the schools experiences focused on the entire group of teachers from kindergarten through seventh grade. This manner of participation caused some of individuals to be involved in an experience that had little or no meaning.

The level of participation for the coaching/mentoring experience was done on an individualized manner which maximized its effectiveness by creating a level-specific needs-centered experience.

Focus. Both the Writing and DIBELS experiences were designed for teachers to obtain information they could take back to their classrooms and focused on information directly relevant to the teacher's classroom practices.

The focus of the coaching/mentoring experience encouraged teachers to reflect on practices as they occurred and teachers were given feedback which could be used immediately to adjust or change their teaching styles or methods.

Level of Active Learning. The level of active learning, as it pertains to the workshop/in-service experiences, was limited. Though teachers did experience some degree of active participation (i.e., scoring student assessment, reviewing student work, practicing using student materials) most of the activities were of a passive nature.

The level of active learning for the coaching/mentoring and the committee experiences were high and enabled teachers to actively reflect on their teaching.

Degree of Coherence. The committee experience was designed to address the schools new "Warning List" status and such a committee was not implemented in previous years and is not expected to continue once they are removed from the list.

Regarding the other experiences, the Administrator stated all except the Writing, were continued from previous years and were expected to continue.

Use of Student Data. Student data was used in several situations. In the committee/task force experience, teachers looked at student data and made decisions regarding what professional development experiences should occur.

The use of student data was apparent in the DIBELS experience, in which teachers investigated how to interpret data from the DIBELS tests to use it to drive instruction. The same holds true for the Writing Process experience. Teachers reviewed student writing samples and used that information to focus their instruction.

Research Question No. 3: An Analysis of School No. 1's reflection on the impact of

Accountability on their professional development program

The Administrator stated that the most significant impact on professional development at WLS No. 1 was accountability. This issue dramatically impacted goals that were set and planning that was carried out.

The Administrator was hesitant to say if the experiences were beneficial and wanted to wait until the 2003-2004 PSSA scores were returned before she made a determination.

When asked if anything should have been done differently, the Administrator felt she would have brought in outside consultants to conduct the workshops. She felt that the curriculum specialists that taught the courses were not considered credible by the staff and the information was not widely accepted. During the interview, the Administrator hinted several times about the difficulty of getting the staff on board with the information provided through professional development. It would seem that even with the pressures of accountability, teachers were not motivated to work towards the goals of both the professional development and the school.

The Administrator discussed how pleased she was with how they reacted to being on the "Warning List" and felt they were proactive in addressing the community's concerns and were working to increase student achievement. She felt that the construction of a School Improvement Plan was a step in the right direction.

The Administrator also felt that accountability forced the district to increase the amount of monies available for professional development and focused the district's efforts on creating content specific experiences directed at improving teachers' abilities in the classroom. However, the district did not increase the amount of time for professional development.

Warning List School No. 2

Profile

Warning List School No. 2 (WLS No. 2) is located in a rural school district north of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. This district has five small elementary schools that feed into one high school. WLS No. 2 is the one of the larger elementary schools in the district and services 256 students in grades kindergarten through sixth. The school has forty-three percent of its student population eligible for the "Free and Reduced Lunch Program," which makes this school eligible to receive federal Title I monies for reading and math instruction.

District's Professional Development Profile

WLS No. 2 employs no staff to oversee or run the district's professional development program; however, the district does dedicate monies for professional development and for bringing in speakers. The main method of implementing professional development is through the district's four Act 80 days. The district does not provide any other time for professional development experiences due to contractual issues.

The Administrator stated during the interview that the district's Assistant Superintendent in previous years oversaw the program, but for the 2003-2004 school year, the responsibility for planning and implementing the school's professional development fell to the building principals. During the 2003-2004 school year, different professional development experiences occurred at the various elementary schools with two schools working together on specific topics.

WLS No. 2's Professional Development Profile

The professional development offered at WLS No. 2 was done solely through the district's four Act 80 days. However, only three were utilized for actual content-related professional development experiences.

Of the three Act 80 days, the teachers at WLS No. 2 attended workshops on Guided Reading, Scoring Using Writing Rubrics, and Instructional Strategies. These experiences occurred in half-day sessions over the course of the three Act 80 days. No other time was allocated for these experiences. The rationale for offering Guided Reading and Instructional Strategies was related to past professional development experiences on these topics. The decision to focus on coordinating the writing curriculum and the use of the state's scoring rubric was made as a result of an analysis by the administration of the district's low achievement scores in writing.

Research Question No. 1: An Analysis of School No. 2's Goal Setting and Planning

Goal Setting. The Administrator stated that he and his Head Teacher worked together to develop the plans of the school's professional development. He stated that the main driving influences for the experiences were to raise scores and to give teachers "professional development that they could actually use and implement. Something that would be effective and useful for the classroom, so that we didn't have the issue of it being a waste of time."

The decisions to focus on areas of deficiency on the PSSA and to provide content based experiences appeared to correlate with the goals.

Planning. The planning of the professional development forced both the principal and head teacher to look for presenters at the local universities that could in-service their staff on predetermined topics developed by the head teacher and principal. The decision to focus on these topics appeared to address the fact that WLS No. 2 is on the "Warning List" for poor performance in language arts.

During the planning stages, no teacher input was sought except for input from the Head Teacher. The decision to offer the experiences in half-day sessions, over the course of three

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days, was done as a way to revisit topics over time so teachers could attempt to utilize some of the skills or strategies in the classroom and then return for more instruction on the topic. The ability to revisit the topics, the Administrator thought, helped the teachers better understand and implement these topics.

1. Knowledge and Beliefs. In assessing the Knowledge and Beliefs of the district and of the school's primary decision-maker, the district and the principal both demonstrate a lack of understanding and support which limits the effectiveness of the professional development program.

The district fails to have any supports in place to foster professional development. It leaves the responsibility for planning and implementing professional development to the building principal. The district also has never formalized or publicized a mission statement or goal statement about the purpose of professional development. However, the Administrator believes that through their work on the strategic plan, such a statement should soon be available. This lack of support appears to demonstrate the district's misunderstanding of professional development.

The Administrator's beliefs about the relationship between how teachers should teach and how professional development is designed was that "teachers need to teach every kid, where they are." He felt that the traditional method of lecturing is ineffective in changing student learning and that teachers need to do whatever is necessary to encourage students to learn. He stated teachers "need to be able to use music, dress up if they have to, bring speakers in and do cooperative learning. They need to hit all of Bloom's Taxonomies." The

Administrator thought that this philosophy encouraged his teachers to move from the traditional lecture and textbook ideologies to focus on learning better ways to meet the individual child's needs (i.e., offering Guided Reading and Instructional Strategies).

The Administrator acknowledged that students learn best when they are actively engaged and "doing". He believed that his teachers need professional development to feel comfortable with more hands-on activities. He stated that the design of his professional development gives teachers the tools they need to make that happen. With the experiences offered during the 2003-2004 school year, the issue of actively engaging teachers did not seem to be evident.

The Administrator did not note any supports in place that would encourage change through professional development. During the interview, he noted that administrative pressure applied through classroom observations was the only method available to promote change.

The Administrator stated that professional development should not be a "one-shot thing." He stated:

> "In good professional development, there is a preview, an explanation, training, and implementation. While you are doing it, you need to evaluate what you are doing. At the end you need to review and make some changes. It's a long process and you do that by letting people know up front that it is a long process, not just a one-time thing. You explain to them exactly the steps involved so you change their mind-set from thinking 'I've been through this before, I've seen it before, done it before, and the results are going to be the same.' A lot of up front work has to be done to get the people to change."

Though the Administrator had solid beliefs regarding what constituted effective professional development, his ability to implement his beliefs in a district that provides limited support is questionable.

2.   Strategies. The Administrator discussed various types of strategies, though the types that were implemented in WLS No. 2 were those of the basic "Training" model. He appears to lack the knowledge of the "Reform" types of experiences. This coincides with the manner in which the professional development was designed and implemented. The purpose for utilizing the Workshop or In-Service model was to "help the teachers get what they need to be more effective, better planned, more confident and believing that they can implement the curriculum which will help us meet the standards."

3.   Contextual Issues. The Administrator implicitly and explicitly acknowledged several Contextual Issues that the district had either accounted for or failed to address properly during their professional development for the 2003-2004 school year.

    i.   Students. The Administrator believes that to meet the students' needs through the professional development, it is important to impact teachers. The administrator did say that they chose to focus on writing because of their low PSSA scores; however, other than that, the issue of who the students are and the impact students scores had on the program did not seem to be addressed in the planning and implementation of the professional development.

ii.   Teachers. The Administrator acknowledged this as the main issue to   be addressed by the professional development. He thought by meeting the needs of the teachers, they would meet the needs of the students.

iii   Practices: Curriculum, Instructional and Assessments. The Administrator stated the focus of the professional development was addressing specific practices that would improve teachers' effectiveness.

iv.   State and Local Policies. The Administrator acknowledged the pressures of accountability and stated that he looked at the state level data and made decisions (with his lead teacher) to address these deficiencies.

v.   Available Resources. The Administrator felt that the district provided the resources needed to adequately address their professional development needs; however, the expenditure of funds in this district is minimal compared to other districts in this study. Also, the issue of lack of time limits the ability to affect change.

vi.   Organizational Culture. The issue of the organizational culture was not addressed by the Administrator either explicitly or implicitly.

vii.   Organizational Structures. The district has no organizational structures that will support future experiences. If the present Administrator leaves, the experiences may not continue. Lack of time is another structural issue that should be addressed.

4.   Critical Issues. The Administrator discussed various Critical Issues that the district has either addressed or ignored that could have a dramatic affect on the effectiveness of the professional development.

i. Professional Culture. The issue of professional culture was not addressed or evident in the interview.

ii. Capacity for Sustainability. The district has few supports in place that address sustainability. If the present Administrator leaves, the future of the existing professional development offerings are in jeopardy. Also the issue of lack of time for professional development is an issue that directly affects sustainability.

iii. Time. The Administrator acknowledged that the lack of time significantly impacts the ability to provide effective professional development. It did not seem that the principal or the district were looking for ways to increase the time for professional development.

iv. Evaluation and Assessment. The experiences were evaluated informally. No other evaluations or assessment of the experiences were done.

Research Question No. 2: An Analysis of School No. 2's Implementation of their Professional Development

Form. During the 2003-2004 school year, WLS No. 2's professional development utilized the workshop/in-service strategy for all of their experiences. This appeared to be due to the past practices of the school and to the perception of the principal.

Duration. The total contact hours for each activity were approximately 8 hours. It should be noted that though the duration of the activities was limited, the activities were spread over the course of three days which enabled teachers to attempt the new strategies and then return to revisit the topic.

Participation. The teachers who participated were broken up into primary and intermediate groups. The same information was presented, but "tweaked" according to the group.

Focus. All the experiences were designed to help teachers understand and better implement specific strategies in their classrooms. The Administrator stated that the teachers were able to take information back and implement strategies in their classroom that helped their students.

Level of Active Learning. The Administrator did state that teachers were involved in several active learning experiences, such as reviewing and scoring student assessments, observing lessons in the context of the professional development, practicing using student materials, taking part in small/large group discussions, and creating a lesson. But when questioned further, it became apparent that most of the experiences revolved around passive learning experiences such as listening and watching.

Degree of Coherence. The Administrator stated that the experiences of Guided Reading and Instructional Strategies have been on-going district initiatives and that the teachers received some training on this topic previously. He stated that it will continue next year also. The experience of Scoring Rubrics has not been carried out in the district prior to this year, but the Administrator stated that it will continue next year.

Use of Student Data. Student data was used as the administrators examined the weakness of their school's curriculum. This was done only at the administrative level, in which teachers were not involved, and resulted in the focus of the experiences during the 2003-2004 school year.

The teachers used student works as they graded their students' papers with a scoring rubric. This helped teachers better assess their students' progress and helped them make adaptations in their teaching.

Research Question No. 3: An Analysis of School No. 2's Reflection on the Impact of Accountability on their Professional Development Program

In reflecting back on their professional development experiences, the Administrator felt that accountability had the most significant impact on professional development, but was reserved in his evaluation of the overall success of the 2003-2004 experiences. He felt the teachers enjoyed the experiences and found them worthwhile; however, he was unsure of the degree that the strategies were implemented in the classrooms. He expressed that the only way to reinforce the information obtained through the professional development was through his encouragement during the observations, and noted that the amount of time for observations was limited.

The Administrator noted that Time was the main factor that limited effective professional development. The Administrator felt that four days spread throughout the year was a start, but was not enough. It should be noted that no attempts were made to offer professional development other than the Act 80 days.

Though the district was on the state's "Warning List", the Administrator noted that this situation did not encourage the district to dedicate any more time, money, or energy to their professional development.

He also stated that even if their scores continued to drop, they would continue their professional development in the same manner. He noted that they would focus more on understanding the frequency of topics of the tested questions.

Warning List School No. 3

Profile

Warning List School No. 3 (WLS No. 3) is located in a rural school district in Northwestern Pennsylvania. The district has six elementary schools that feed into one high school. WLS No. 3 services 299 students in kindergarten through sixth grade. Sixty-three percent of WLS No. 3's students qualify for the "Free and Reduced Lunch Program," which makes this school eligible to receive federal Title I monies for additional support in reading and math instruction.

District's Professional Development Profile

WLS No. 3's school district employs several staff who have the responsibility to oversee the district's curriculum and professional development plan. The person with the majority of responsibility for the professional development is the district's Supervisor of Curriculum and Instruction. Her job is to address curriculum concerns, work with teachers to align curriculum with the state standards, and to work with the administrative staff in planning and implementing the district's professional development program. The district also employs two elementary supervisors to oversee the district's six elementary buildings; however, these individuals are principals with building of their own and have limited time to devote to professional development.

The district has an administrative team that meets to discuss and plan the professional development offerings for the district. This team is made up of the Superintendent, the Supervisor of Curriculum and Instruction, and the two elementary supervisors. The Administrator stated that this group meets annually to review data gathered and to plan the focus for the year's professional development. This committee did not meet during the 2003-2004 school year due to the pre-established plans for curriculum mapping in all content areas.

The professional development that occurs in the district involves all teachers and the same content for everyone. The Administrator noted that in past years, certain schools have wanted more specific professional development offerings at the building-level; however, she stated that this was rare and had not occurred in the 2003-2004 school year.

The district is only able to offer its professional development through their Act 80 days and offers no other opportunities. For the 2003-2004 school year, the district had two Act 80 days which were used for professional development.

WLS No. 3's Professional Development Profile

The district administrator acknowledged that due to WLS No. 3's status on the "Warning List", the principal, head teacher and representatives from each grade level will be reviewing their school's scores to begin to look at program improvement, but stated that they were not going to do this until late April.

The teachers at WLS No. 3 did not participate in any more professional development experiences than teachers at other elementary schools in the district. The experiences that occurred during the 2003-2004 school year consisted of two Act 80 days focused on curriculum mapping of all the district's content areas and on training teachers to administer the Diagnostic Reading Assessment (DRA).

The decision to focus on curriculum mapping was an administrative decision and involved all teachers working in small groups to design the curricula and assessments for each grade level. The DRA training was also an administrative decision in which all teachers, kindergarten through sixth, were trained in administering and scoring the DRA.

Research Question No. 1: An Analysis of WLS No. 3's Goal Setting and Planning

Goal Setting. The Administrator stated the primary goal of the professional development was to provide teachers with a curriculum map for all subjects. She stated that many initiatives have been started by the district (Guided Reading and Four Blocks), but were not implemented by the classroom teacher; and she hoped that by creating a district-level document, classroom's practices would become coordinated. She also stated that the district did not have a goal statement or vision statement to drive their professional development.

Planning. The goal of coordinating the district's curriculum directly affected the district's plan for the professional development. In planning the experiences, the Curriculum Coordinator set up groups of teachers to work on specific curriculum topics. In doing so, the district did not involve any outside experts nor have any administrators involved in the groups. All materials were collected, compiled and reviewed by the Curriculum Coordinator and then packaged for teacher use. Teachers worked only on the curriculum area assigned and did not have input into the process of other curriculum mapping experiences.

The experience on DRA training correlated with the curriculum mapping in that it was part of the assessment component for reading. This experience seemed connected to the goal of developing a knowledge of and ability to use the assessments to guide instruction. The DRA training was designed to ensure that all staff knew how to properly administer the DRA.

All aspects of planning and implementation for both experiences were supervised and carried out through the Curriculum Coordinator's office.

1. Knowledge and Beliefs. In assessing the Knowledge and Beliefs that influenced the planning and design of their professional development, the district's top-decision-maker appeared to have adequate knowledge of ideal and effective

professional development and her Knowledge and Beliefs are evident in the implementation of the professional development.

The Administrator acknowledged that the district has not produced a public statement (mission or vision statement) regarding professional development, but discussed initiatives that she has been promoting through her office.

The Administrator related that the district has been encouraging experiences that get teachers "to provide instruction based on assessments." She also stated that "we need to be reflective of what are the needs that are sitting in front of us." This belief appears to be related to the manner in which this district designed their professional development. Both experiences focus on developing assessments to guide instruction.

The Administrator also felt that the district (and she) have been planning experiences that will continue over time. She acknowledged that in the past the district has offered "one-shot workshops" which teachers felt were ineffective. She now is focused on creating initiatives that will last over time. This practice, she believes, is at the heart of why the district is trying to coordinate their experiences by curriculum mapping, through which they are developing a list of practices that can be focused on as district initiatives in the future.

The Administrator also acknowledged the belief that teachers need to be actively engaged in activities. By doing so, teachers can see the workshop strategy in action and are better able to implement it in the classroom. She also acknowledged the effectiveness of coaching in aiding the implementation process.

But through further discussion, she referred to coaching as an ideal, not something that the district has done nor is presently considering.

Another belief that the Administrator stated is the idea of management. She feels that many of the initiatives have not been implemented correctly because of classroom management issues. She feels that this issue is critical and feels that the district needs to address this more in future professional developments.

She also recognized that teachers have to feel ownership in practices and programs before they use them effectively. She hopes that by having the teachers working together on curriculum mapping, they will better understand and have ownership of what they are doing.

The ideals the Administrator stated about professional development demonstrate an understanding of what effective professional development is; however, that awareness has not been translated into practice.

2. Strategies. The Administrator acknowledged and utilized both "Reform" and "Traditional" types of professional development. Her knowledge-base appeared adequate regarding the effectiveness of strategies; however, she noted that she was limited in the resources she could use to implement alternative types of professional development. Of the two experiences offered during the 2003-2004 school year, one was a "Reform" type and the other "Traditional." It should be noted that, through the interview, she stated that in the past most experiences were of the "Traditional" type (workshop/in-service).

3. <u>Contextual Issues</u>. The Administrator implicitly and explicitly acknowledged several Contextual Issues that the district had either accounted for or failed to address properly during their professional development for the 2003-2004 school year.

i.   <u>Students</u>. During the interview, the Administrator acknowledged that students were negatively impacting the effectiveness of instructional changes in the classroom. She noted that they have tried many types of professional developments, but because of the disruptiveness of their students, they had problems properly implementing experiences in the classroom. She noted that this was going to be addressed in future professional development programs, but it was not addressed in any form during the 2003-2004 school year.

ii.   <u>Teachers</u>. The decision for implementing the experiences was due to the lack of coordination between teachers and classroom practices. The administration felt that it was important to address these issues.

iii.   <u>Practices: Curriculum, Instructional and Assessments</u>. This Contextual Issue was the driving force behind this year's profession development. The Administrator acknowledged that teachers did not have a coordinated curriculum, common practices or assessments that could drive instruction. Addressing these issues can have a profound impact on what is actually occurring in the classroom and can positively influence future professional developments.

iv. State and Local Policies. The Administrator noted that state policies (PSSA tests scores) have impacted the district significantly. Though she rated this as an important issue, the degree, focus and intensity of the professional development appear to not immediately address the issue of accountability.

v. Available Resources. The Administrator stated that this Contextual Issue negatively impacts the amount and the quality of professional development and noted that the district has done little to address this issue.

vi. Organization Culture. The Administrator acknowledged that the culture of the organization is negatively impacting the professional development experiences, and the district did not address this issue during the 2003-2004 school year.

vii. Organizational Structures. The district does employ staff whose responsibility it is to design and run the district's professional development programs. Though these individuals have other duties, they attempt to create cohesion in the programs being offered. Although the structures could provide more support, those that are present are of a positive nature.

4. Critical Issues. The Administrator acknowledged various Critical Issues that the district has either addressed or ignored that could have a dramatic affect on the effectiveness of the professional development.

i. Professional Culture. The Administrator acknowledged the staff's lack of effort to implement past professional development due to both a negative

perception of the students and the inability to create change. She also noted the difficulty of getting teachers to attend professional developments offerings because of contractual time and lack of interest.

ii. <u>Capacity for Sustainability</u>. The Administrator felt the district has addressed the issue of sustainability by continuously revisiting professional development issues. She thought that this year's work on curriculum mapping would help by coordinating experiences and build consistency over time. The district does employ a Curriculum Coordinator whose duties include professional development. This individual has been overseeing professional development for seven years and builds on past experiences. She also acknowledged that there may be a turnover in administration in the 2004-2005 school year that may change the sustainability of their pre-existing district initiatives.

iii. <u>Time</u>. The lack of time is a Critical Issue that the district has not addressed. During the 2003-2004 school year, they were limited in that they could only use two Act 80 days and were unable to use other times during the day for mandatory professional development due to contractual restrictions.

iv. <u>Evaluation and Assessment</u>. The Administrator stated that no assessments were done to evaluate the professional development experience during the 2003-2004 school year. Though a document was created that will be reviewed in future years, the fact that no evaluations were done

significantly limits it benefit, sustainability and the impact that such a document may have.

Research Question No. 2: An analysis of School No. 3's Implementation of their Professional Development

Form. During the 2003-2004 school year, the district involved teachers in two types of experiences. The first experience, a committee/task force is a "Reform" type experience; however, it was not an in-depth investigation of ways to improve teaching, but a process of curriculum mapping that focused on aligning curriculum and teaching strategies. The experience did nothing to improve the current strategies being employed.

The DRA training was done through a workshop/in-service and is a "Traditional" type experience. Since this experience was the first exposure to the material, it may have been beneficial that it was introduced in this way. This experience took place over one day.

Duration. The experience on DRA lasted approximately one day with a contact time of five hours. The curriculum mapping experience lasted twenty hours over the course of the year. The Administrator stated that these experiences will continue in future years.

Participation. Participation was different for each experience. The teachers were in grade-level groups during the curriculum mapping. This was done for making grade specific decisions and maximized the meaningfulness of the experience for all participants; however, not all participants engaged in the activity.

The DRA training brought all teachers together to learn about a common topic. Since all teachers were responsible for learning this information, it may have been useful to have all teachers together; however, it may have been more meaningful if at some point, teachers were grouped by level to focus on grade-level specific concerns.

Focus. Both experiences were directly focused on strategies and practices that could be implemented in the classroom.

Level of Active Learning. The curriculum mapping experience had a high degree of active learning, in that they broke into groups and actively engaged in conversation (small and large group), planned, reviewed student work, and constructed and completed a plan for coordinating the curriculum. The experience on DRA involved listening, watching a demonstration lesson and other passive learning. Though the experience did involve some active participation, the extent of it was limited.

Degree of Coherence. The Administrator acknowledged that the experiences were in their first year of implementation, but stated that they will continue in future years.

Use of Student Data. Though both experiences are designed to obtain student data, only one used student data in the process of the professional development. In the curriculum mapping experience, teachers used writing samples to design and fine-tune a writing rubric.

Research Questions No. 3: An Analysis of School No. 3's reflection on the impact of accountability on their professional development program.

In reflecting back on the year's professional development, the Administrator felt that accountability played the most significant role in their choices. However, she felt that given their student population, there was a chance that more of their schools would be on the "Warning List" despite any of their efforts. She mentioned that she heard staff make derogatory statements such as, "what's the point, our population is very difficult, and there are not a lot of kids that are going to go very far." She said that she and the staff sense a feeling of doom and helplessness.

The Administrator felt that their "Warning List" status increased the pressure she feels in offering professional development opportunities and to do them in a different manner, but neither

the district, nor the teachers have actively sought more time for these opportunities. She also noted that although she has felt more pressure, she did not know exactly what to do or what to offer.

In reviewing the success of the program, the Administrator was hesitant to report any success and noted that little change actually occurred in the classroom. She also noted the staff's resistance to district-sponsored professional development this year.

When asked if accountability had affected the amount of resources the district provided for professional development, she felt that the district had provided her with more funds, but she cannot utilize them due to the substitute shortage and the lack of time.

The Administrator felt that accountability has changed the focus of the professional developments that the district is offering. She believes they are looking more at programs that will raise student scores, coordinating teacher practices, and trying to eliminate unnecessary or ineffective programs.

Warning List School No. 4

Profile

Warning List School No. 4 (WLS No. 4) is located in a rural school district in Central Pennsylvania. The district has seven elementary schools that feed into one high school. WLS No. 4 services 190 students in grades kindergarten through fifth. Fifty-nine percent of WLS No. 4's students qualify for the "Free and Reduced Lunch Program" which makes the school eligible to receive federal Title I monies for additional support in reading and math instruction.

District's Professional Development profile

During the 2003-2004 school year, WLS No. 4's school district employed two staff that were involved in overseeing the district's professional development program: the district's Supervisor of Curriculum and Instruction, whose job it is to oversee all district's curricular initiatives and coordinate the professional development program and the district's Reading Supervisor. This person helped the Supervisor oversee the reading program and also participated in leading many of the district's experiences. It should be noted that the district has since cut the position of the Reading Supervisor for the 2004-2005 school year.

The Administrator stated that the district had a steering committee composed of the Supervisor of Curriculum and Instruction, the Reading Supervisor, and one teacher representative from each of the seven elementary schools. Traditionally this committee meets to discuss the direction of the elementary program and determine the professional development offerings for the year.

During the 2003-2004 school year, the steering committee did not meet, so the decision-making responsibility fell to the Supervisor of Curriculum and Instruction and the Reading Supervisor, who worked together to plan the professional development experiences for the year.

The decisions for the year were made by these two individuals and did not involve any teachers in the decision-making process. The process of planning the experiences was influenced by the two Supervisors' beliefs that teachers needed to become familiar with the new reading series that was adopted for the 2003-2004 school year. They planned experiences that focused on this, as well as other district initiatives.

The professional development that occurred in the district occurred district-wide and individual buildings did not have their own agendas independent of the district's.

The district had three methods of offering professional development experiences during the 2003-2004 school year. First, the district offered three Act 80 days, all of which were used for teaching learning opportunities. The Administrator stated that these days were used for district topics that were identified by the Act 48 team. The topics this year included sexual harassment and English as a Second Language. The district did not use any of the Act 80 days for content-based professional development. The district also offered two release days during the 2003-2004 school year that were used to bring all teachers together by grade-level. The district provided all the language arts professional development during these release days. The district also has one hour per day that can be utilized for professional development experiences; however, the administrator acknowledged that this time was seldom used for those purposes.

WLS No. 4's professional development profile

The teachers at WLS No. 4 participated in the same district-level professional development as the rest of the district. It should be noted that neither the district, nor the staff at WLS No. 4 did anything at the building level to investigate the reason for their "Warning List" status.

Research Question No. 1: An Analysis of WLS No. 4's Goal Setting and Planning

Goal Setting. The Administrator acknowledged that the goal for the teachers at WLS No. 4 was to better understand the newly adopted reading series and to offer experiences that would help the teachers understand what was expected of them and how to utilize the resources available with the series.

It should be noted that student achievement or test score improvement was not reported, though one can argue that it may be an implied result.

Planning. The planned experiences were a direct result of the goal of "getting the teachers familiar with the series." As stated earlier, the decision-making team was the Supervisor of Curriculum and Instruction and the Reading Supervisor. They met with the reading series representatives and contacted the local I.U. to determine what each could provide. They consequently decided to focus the experiences on Implementing the New Reading Program, Flexible Grouping, Assessments, Writing and Fluency.

1. <u>Knowledge and Beliefs</u>. In assessing the Knowledge and Beliefs that influenced the planning and design of the professional development, the district's top decision-maker seems to have a good understanding of effective professional development practices. Throughout the interview, the Administrator acknowledged several beliefs that drive the district's offerings.

    First, the Administrator acknowledged that teachers needed to examine their assessment and use that information to drive their teaching. She also noted that in doing so, one needs to be aware of developmentally appropriate practices in order for teachers to meet students at their level. She stated that in doing so, teachers need to get away from the book and focus on individualizing their instruction as much as possible. She noted that she is pushing teachers to examine

assessment so that they can better determine student skills; which in turn, should drive instruction.

The Administrator also acknowledged her beliefs about students as they are incorporated in the professional development. She stated that students should be engaged and actively involved, and that their learning should be meaningful and at their level. However, she noted that the professional development the district offers to teachers is not carried out in the manner in which the district expects teachers to teach students. However, she did note that the district (and she) attempts to make the experiences as meaningful as possible by breaking participants up into grade-level groups.

The Administrator also acknowledged her beliefs about the change process. She acknowledged that the district was going too fast and needed to slow down in order to keep the teachers with them. She also discussed how the administrators aided in the change process by giving timelines to teachers to help them fully implement certain practices. This, the Administrator thought, would help in the change process. Though she did not discuss the issue of the Reading Supervisor as an agent of change, the support this person can offer could be a positive influence in the change process.

The Administrator also acknowledged her belief about what good effective professional development should be. She noted that it should be teacher driven, in order for teachers to develop a commitment to it. She also noted that it should be tailored to meet teachers' needs. The Administrator did attempt to tailor the various experiences by breaking them up into grade levels. However,

the other aspects of good professional development stated by the administrator could not be identified in the manner that the professional development was carried out during the 2003-2004.

2. Strategies. The Administrator acknowledged several strategies that were considered, but stated that the methods chosen were done so, not because they were the best method, but because they were "most practical." One of the experiences implemented was coaching, utilizing the Reading Supervisor. This falls in the category of a "Reform" type experience. However, the degree to which this experience was carried out remains a question. The Reading Supervisor had several other duties which would affect the amount of time available for coaching. All the other experiences were workshop/in-services which fall under the "Traditional" experiences.

3. Contextual Issues. The Administrator implicitly and explicitly acknowledged Contextual Issues that the district had either accounted for or ignored during their professional development for the 2003-2004 school year.

    i. Students. The Administrator did not acknowledge how the professional development addressed students or how students impacted the professional development.

    ii. Teachers. The Administrator acknowledged that getting teachers what they needed was the focal point of the professional development. She acknowledged that teachers needed certain supports to aid them in understanding their students and the new reading curriculum.

iii. <u>Practices: Curriculum, Instructional and Assessments</u>. The Administrator felt that curriculum and instruction were the main issue around which the district designed their professional development program. The district wanted practices coordinated among teachers.

iv. <u>State and Local Policies</u>. The Administrator acknowledged standards as the driving force and the PSSA as the measure of school progress on those standards; but she did not discuss, nor was it evident, how this issue was addressed as they planned and implemented their professional development.

v. <u>Available Resources</u>. The Administrator did state that most of the resources obtained for their professional development were obtained through different grant monies. She was able to go beyond the typical professional development by supporting release time for the teachers and making other resources available to the teachers.

vi. <u>Organization Culture</u>. The Administrator noted that it was difficult to get the teachers to attend after-school and summer professional development experiences even when paid, and counteracted this by giving teachers release time to force them to attend the professional development.

vii. <u>Organizational Structures</u>. During the 2003-2004 school year, the district employed two individuals to aid in coordinating the district's professional development. These positions helped create meaningful, consistent and supported experiences.

4. <u>Critical Issues</u>. The Administrator acknowledged various Critical Issues that the district has either addressed or ignored that could have a dramatic affect on the effectiveness of the professional development.

i. <u>Professional Culture</u>. The Administrator stated that the district has tried many approaches to encourage teachers to come to after school professional developments. The district has even offered to pay teachers for after school professional development, but admitted that they could not get many of the staff to attend. This gives insight into the culture and beliefs about professional development. It is apparent that the district needs to address this issue for effective professional development.

ii. <u>Capacity for Sustainability</u>. The Administrator acknowledged the aspect of sustainability in her district. She noted that the district has supplied adequate funds to buy supplies and resources for teachers so that they can implement the programs. She felt that her commitment to provide resources has adequately supplied teachers with everything they need. She also noted that teachers felt ownership to many of the programs that they have implemented.

The district also addressed the issue of sustainability in that it maintained a position of Supervisor of Curriculum that oversees the professional development program, and for the 2003-2004 school year also had a Reading Supervisor. These positions aid in maintaining and continuing the initiatives that have already begun. However, the district has cut the position of Reading Supervisor for the 2004-2005 school year.

iii. <u>Time</u>. The district has addressed the issue of time, in that they provide release time to teachers during the day (by providing substitutes) to focus on professional development. The Administrator also acknowledged other ways the district has tried to address this, i.e., by providing pay for teachers for after-school and summer experiences. Though the district has addressed this issue, it requires additional efforts.

iv. <u>Evaluation and Assessment</u>. The Administrator did state that after each professional development experience, they have teachers evaluate the experience. This evaluation is a "likeability" type rating form and gives feedback to the district on what the teachers liked and disliked about the experience. It might be noted that no evaluation was done to determine to what extent the initiatives were being implemented.

It is apparent that the administration has attempted to address some of the Critical Issues that are essential to effective professional development; however, more needs to be done to address the issues of time and culture.

Research Question No. 2: An analysis of School No. 4's Implementation of their Professional Development

Form. The experiences that occurred in this particular district were workshops or in-services which fall into the "Traditional" category of strategies. On the positive side, some of the grade level experiences, though of "Traditional" nature, did take place over several days during the year.

The Administrator did acknowledge the use of coaching as a form of professional development. This type of experience falls into the category of "Reform" type experience;

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however, the scope of this program was limited in that there was only one coach for the entire building and this individual had other duties, thus limiting the amount of time she could dedicate to coaching.

Duration. The durations of the experiences varied by grade level. The kindergarten teachers participated in 24 hours of professional development, first grade teachers participated in 24 hours, second grade teachers participated in 16 hours and third through fifth grade teachers participated in 8 hours.

Participation. The teachers participated in grade-level specific experiences. This enabled teachers to ask questions, coordinate grade specific activities and problem solve as a group.

Focus. The focus of the Act 80 days did not have a content-specific focus. The experiences at the district-level were topics such as ESL and sexual harassment. The focus of the release time professional development experiences were directed at teacher learning of grade specific information.

Level of Active Learning. The level of active learning for teachers varied according to the grade-level experience. The kindergarten through second grade experiences involved teachers in listening to a lecture, participating in a whole group discussion, engaging in problem solving experiences, writing curriculum, reviewing and practicing using student materials. Though some of the experiences actively engage teachers, the Administrator noted that the method and manner in which the professional development engages teachers is not the manner in which they expect teachers to engage students. The third through fifth grade experiences focused more on fluency and engaged teachers through using student work and the computer. These experiences were more hands on and would qualify as active learning experiences.

Degree of Coherence. The Administrator stated that the experiences that occurred were continuations of past experiences and noted that she expected the initiative to continue.

Use of Student Data. The administrator stated that they reviewed the PSSA results but did not utilize it in the planning of their professional development. However, student data was used in most of the experiences.

Research Questions No. 3: An Analysis of School No. 4's reflection on the impact of accountability on their professional development program.

In reflecting back on the experiences that occurred during the 2003-2004 school year, the Administrator did not cite any impact from the PSSA or accountability. In fact, she noted that the experiences that occurred this year were less intense than experiences in past years.

The Administrator did not feel that the experiences that occurred this year would have any true impact on the students' scores on the state tests and placed the blame for the low test scores on low functioning students. She also noted that she was happy with the experiences that occurred and would not change anything except to offer more if scores continued to drop.

When asked what had the most significant impact on their professional development, the Administrator stated that the offerings were due more to the resources they had then to any other factor.

The Administrator felt that accountability did little to change the number of experiences that the district offered or the focus or content of the experiences. However, she did feel that the district has dedicated more funds to her programs. She also thought that accountability has had a positive effect in that the district is focusing more on students than teachers. However, she did note frustration and a sense of helplessness among the teachers because of the low performing students.

Warning List School No. 5

Profile

Warning List School No. 5 (WLS No. 5) is located in suburb of a major city in Pennsylvania. The district has seven elementary schools that feed into one high school. WLS No. 5 services 393 students in kindergarten through fifth grade. Forty percent of WLS No. 5's students qualify for the "Free and Reduced Lunch Program" which makes the school eligible to receive federal Title I monies for additional support in reading and math instruction.

District's Professional Development Profile

The district in which WLS No. 5 is located employs one Director of Professional Development and an assistant who is responsible for planning and organizing the district's professional development. The Director is contractually considered a teacher, but works in an administrative role for the district. The Assistant Superintendent and the Director of Instructional Services oversee this department for the district. The Director of Professional Development does not engage in actual professional development activities, but works with the administrative team, especially the building principals, in determining the activities and how they will be implemented. Other than the Professional Development Office, the district has no other personnel involved in professional development, i.e., coaches, supervisors, etc.

For the 2003-2004 school year, the district implemented their professional development district-wide for all teachers. The Administrator stated that for the 2004-2005 school year, the district will implement their professional development at a building-level.

WLS No. 5's school district made the decisions for the 2003-2004 professional development offerings at an administrative level and no teacher had input into the planning process. Those individuals that made up the decision-making team were the Assistant

Superintendent, the Director of Instructional Services and the Director of Professional Development.

The professional development had been previously determined and the administrative team did not have any discussions on or before the 2003-2004 school year about what experiences should be offered.

The district has two methods of implementing the district's professional development, the district's Act 80 days and after school voluntary experiences. No other district-sponsored teacher learning opportunities were available beyond two methods.

WLS No. 5 Professional Development Profile

The teachers at WLS No. 5 participated in and received the same professional development experiences as the rest of the teachers in the district.

The Administrator also acknowledged that the staff of WLS No. 5, with the aid of an outside advisor, completed a School Improvement Plan because of their status on the state's "Warning List." When asked about the professional development component of this plan, she reported that the plan did not address that as an aspect. The team that worked on the School Improvement Plan was made up of the principal and five representative teachers.

Research Question No. 1: An Analysis of WLS No. 5's Goal Setting and Planning

Goal Setting. When asked about the goals for WLS No. 5's professional development program, the administrator stated that the district has a high turnover in teachers and felt the need to develop a document that would help teachers know what to teach and when to teach it. The administrator felt that this was a pressing issue in the district and would help not only new teachers, but all teachers.

Planning. The district's main thrust for their professional development for the 2003-2004 school year was the development of the district's Planned Instructional Guides (PIGS). The construction of the PIGS began the previous year, and the goal is to have them finished for the beginning of the 2004-2005 school year. Professional development experiences revolved around the development of these documents. To facilitate this process, the district brought in an outside expert to guide the teachers. The teachers were broken into Standards Teams and collaboratively worked to outline strategies and methods of teaching, create lesson plans and local assessments for each standard. Teachers had no input in the planning stages of this experience but did have input into the implementation. This experience took three and a half days to complete.

The teachers were involved in another experience when the district brought in representatives from the Scott-Forseman, the publisher of the district's reading series, to instruct teachers in the use of there new series. This is the second year of the reading series and the decision to bring in these presenters was done by the Director of Professional Development and the Assistant Superintendent. The teachers were divided into grade-level groups and given grade-specific information.

The district also offers four or five after school professional development experiences each month, in which all teachers can, but are not mandated to, attend. During this time, the district focuses on issues the teachers requested via a district-wide teacher assessment form that is completed by each teacher at the end of each year.

The teachers at WLS No. 5 were also involved in a Health Fair, which lasted an entire day. The Administrator acknowledged that the teachers in the district were "stressed out" and needed to focus on themselves for a day.

1. <u>Knowledge and Beliefs</u>. In assessing the Knowledge and Beliefs of the district's top professional development decision-maker and in reviewing the manner and method the district implements their professional development, it is apparent that the Administrator does have a good understanding of what constitutes good professional development and that the district supports professional development to some degree.

    The district places a value on professional development as seen in its funding of two staff members dedicated to running the district's professional development program. The district also has developed a goal statement regarding their professional development program. She stated that her goal is to communicate and collaborate the district's efforts.

    The Administrator stated that ideal professional development should help teachers meet the individual needs of students, and that teachers should feel ownership in it. The Administrator also acknowledged that it should be focused across curricular areas and help teachers understand the different learning styles of students. The Administrator stated that she believes that professional development should be focused on individualizing instruction and support teachers attempts to do so. Lastly, the administrator stated that good professional development is needs-based and should strengthen areas where teachers are weakest.

    The Administrator felt that much of what they were doing (i.e., creation of the PIGS) did not lend itself to what good professional development should be; however, she felt that it was a process that needed to be completed.

She also stated that the district had not done a good job of focusing on change and the change process and feels her job is helping to smooth the transition to the district's new initiatives.

2.   Strategies. The Administrator acknowledged many activities that teachers were able to participate in. She (and the district) seemed to understand the purpose and effectiveness of the different activities.   In implementing the professional development, the district, through their development of the PIGS, utilized the committees or task force strategy, which falls into the "Reform" type of experience. However, all of the other trainings were of the workshop/in-service method.

3.   Contextual Issues. The Administrator implicitly and explicitly acknowledged several Contextual Issues that the district had either accounted for or ignored during their professional development for the 2003-2004 school year. Addressing these issues is critical in creating responsive and meaningful professional development.

   i.   Students. The Administrator felt that the purpose of the professional development was to help the students, but did not discuss how professional development addressed student's need nor how students affect the purpose and planning of the professional development.

   ii.   Teachers. The Administrator acknowledged that staff morale was suffering this year. She stated that teachers were not showing up for professional development which is consistent with other teachers from schools on the "Warning List." The Administrator also stated that the

focus of the professional development (developing PIGS, after school experiences, and the Reading Series experience) were all designed to focus on the teacher's needs. However, it can be argued that the experiences do not address the individual needs of the teachers, but of perceived needs of the teachers by the administration.

iii. <u>Practices: Curriculum, Instructional and Assessments</u>. Through the development of the PIGS, the Administrator felt the district was trying to coordinate and address these issues.

iv. <u>State and Local Policies</u>. The Administrator acknowledged the pressure from the accountability movement, but it is not evident that the district addressed this issue. In fact, she stated, "I don't think that it was even a thought."

v. <u>Available Resources</u>. The district made several resources available for their professional development. First they have a significant amount of time available (although it could be argued that this district does not efficiently use their time). The district also has resource people who are responsible for running the district's professional development program. The Administrator also stated that funds were not an issue in designing and implementing their professional development.

vi. <u>Organization Culture</u>. The Administration noted that teachers are frustrated by their poor performing students and are not attending professional development experiences. The district needs to address this issue more than they did during the 2003-2004 school year.

vii. Organizational Structures. The district funded and staffed the Professional Development Office, a significant factor in this district's professional development program. The district also offers five days of professional development each year.

4. Critical Issues. The Administrator cited various Critical Issues that the district has either addressed or ignored that could have a dramatic affect on the effectiveness of the professional development.

   i. Professional Culture. The Administrator noted that she has been attempting to create a culture of cooperation and coordination. However, she stated that the morale of the teachers in the poor performing schools is low. She discussed how teachers were not attending the district's Act 80 days.

   ii. Capacity for Sustainability. The district is in the process of a turnover in administration and the Administrator believes that might change everything in the district. However, the PIGS could help in transitioning the administrative changeover without an impact on the programs and focus. The district's Professional Development Office will also sustain the district's programs and focus.

   iii. Time. The district provided five days during which professional development could occur. The Professional Development Office has also offered after-school experiences focused on teacher needs.

   iv. Evaluation and Assessment. The experiences were assessed by the participants through a "Likeability" rating form. However, the district has

no plans to evaluate or assess the degree of implementation of the experiences.

Research Question No. 2: An analysis of School No. 5's Implementation of their Professional Development

Form. The district provided two different experiences for the 2003-2004 school year that will be analyzed for the purposes of this study. The first is the creation of the Planned Instructional Guides (PIGS). This experience was implemented through the use of a committee or task force. This falls under the category of a "Reform" type experience.

The second experience was the Reading Series workshop. This experience was implemented through a Workshop or in-service and lasted one day.

Duration. The PIGS experience took place over the course of two years which would appear to be more effective, and during the 2003-2004 school year used 30 hours of contact time.

The Reading Series experience was more limited. The total contact time for the experience was seven hours over the course of one day.

Participation. The Administrator stated that the PIGS experience arranged teachers as representatives from buildings to create the curriculum documents. Not all teachers participated in all the experiences. The method of participation for the Reading Series was by grade level.

Focus. The focus of both experiences was on content specific strategies and assessments that could be used once a teacher returns to the classroom.

Level of Active Learning. The level of active learning was high for the PIGS experience. Teachers were involved in teacher-lead small group discussions, extended problem solving, writing a report or plan, practicing student materials, reviewing student work, scoring

assessments, collaborating with colleagues and creating assessments. Though there were some passive learning experiences, the approach focused on active learning experiences.

The Reading Series workshop involved several experiences that actively engaged participants (i.e., teachers involved in small and large group discussions, practicing using student materials, and engaging in extended problems solving). However, more of experiences were passive learning experiences (listening to a speaker, observing a lesson).

Degree of Coherence. The Administrator stated that both experiences were begun last year and continued into the 2003-2004 school year.

Use of Student Data. The Reading Series experience did not utilize student data in any manner. However, the PIGS experiences involved creating and using student assessments. As part of the one experience, teachers had to score students' work based on the state's writing rubric.

Research Questions No. 3: An Analysis of School No. 5's reflection on the Impact of Accountability on Their Professional Development Program.

The Administrator stated that the experiences for the year went well and felt the driving force for their professional development was the development of the PIGS. She noted that, this year in particular, the teacher's attitudes were challenging and in order to get certain teachers to attend, she had to get the Superintendent to write a letter to inform teachers that they must provide a doctor's excuse if they missed any of their Act 80 days.

The Administrator stated that though they were on the state's "Warning List," she felt that the district and she never even thought about their "Warning List" status when thinking about their professional development.

The Administrator stated that if she could have changed anything in this year's professional development, she would have arranged for more content-specific experiences and would have made the experiences more building specific.

She felt that the district has provided more resources to address accountability, but has not pushed to offer more professional development opportunities. She did note that she felt that she was changing the focus of their professional developments to more assessment and charting of student progress. She felt that the state has forced them to focus more on student progress and that she needed to help her teachers understand what to do with student assessments.

Appendix E

Summary Reports of

"Non-Warning List" Schools

Appendix E

Analysis of Data of Non-Warning List Schools

Non-Warning List School No. 1

Profile

Non-Warning List School No. 1 (NWLS No. 1) is located in a small suburban school district with two elementary schools; grades kindergarten through third are contained in the first building and fourth through sixth grades are serviced at the second. The primary building services 284 students and the Intermediate building services 368 students. Thirty-six percent of the students at NWLS No. 1 qualify for the "Free and Reduced Lunch Program," which makes these schools eligible to receive federal Title I monies for additional support in reading and math instruction.

District Professional Development Profile

NWLS No. 1's school district does not employ any staff that have the sole responsibility for designing professional development. The responsibility for overseeing the program falls on the building-level principals.

Both building principals are new administrators (total of four years of experience) and work together to coordinate professional development activities between both buildings. The primary goal of both administrators was to establish a cohesive professional development program that links the schools together and coordinates practices between the two schools. As the Administrator stated, "In the past, I heard many of the professional development experiences were done at the building-level and we (the district) had no consistency."

The district has a district-wide professional development committee made up of the Superintendent, building principals and representative teachers. For the 2003-2004 school year, NWLS No. 1 failed to use this committee for goal setting or planning purposes. The

Administrator did make reference to the fact that the committee was convened during the year, but only as a means to report the professional development plans.

NWLS No. 1's Professional Development Profile

This particular district offered their content-related school-sponsored professional development only through their Act 80 days. During the school year, this district was able to schedule five Act 80 days. Of the five Act 80 days, one was dedicated to classroom preparation, one to school visitations (due to plans for new school construction), and three were reserved for teacher learning opportunities.

The thrust of the three professional development days was on evaluating their language arts program in relation to the state standards, focusing on recent research on how students learn (Brain-Based), and investigating how teachers can best facilitate learning through learning styles.

Research Question No. 1: An Analysis of School No. 1's Goal Setting and Planning

Goal Setting. The Goal Setting for this school was done entirely at the administrative level with no teacher input. The goals were developed by the two building principals, but primarily reflect the philosophical beliefs of one administrator in particular. The Administrator acknowledged that since her background was in Reading Recovery, she wanted to emphasize reading and stated that the topics and workshops used in her old school would be relevant in her new placement. She stated:

> "I wanted to talk about "Brain Based" research. I felt that that was an important area where a lot of teachers just weren't taking advantage of some of the things that they could do to enhance learning, just by changing…you know, providing a variety of activities, that sort of thing. Adding some movement to the lesson, and I think that 4th, 5th and 6th grade teachers especially have a difficult time remembering that they are still kids and they still need movement. So I wanted to concentrate on "Brain Based", and a lot of this was my own personal experiences and in-services we had been working on for a couple of years at my old building and I valued that."

As stated earlier, the primary goal of the administrators was to establish a professional development program that would began to coordinate the experiences and programs between buildings and focus on reading. Last year they had focused on math. Another goal of the administrators was to establish a meaningful program that gave teachers information that they could take back to their classroom and use. The Administrator stated, "I did not want to create something that teachers felt would be a waste of their time." The administrators also felt that it was important to create a meaningful program that continued over time. As the Administrator stated, "We definitely did not want any one-hit wonders." Consequently they planned their professional development over the remaining Act 80 days.

Through the interviewing process, it was apparent that the district has never developed a goal or vision statement for its professional development. The professional development was and is done at the discretion and the ability of the building principals and reflects their areas of interest. There is no evidence of any supports that the district has in place that would continue the professional development goals and experiences that were begun during 2003-2004 school year.

Planning. The planning and implementation of the professional development were guided by the goals that were set early on by the administrators. The administrators assumed full responsibility for the planning of the professional development and contacted presenters from the local Intermediate Unit to discuss how and when they would present these workshops. The administrators met with the two presenters before the initial workshops to discuss the topics that were to be covered. It was at that time that the administrators decided to continue the experiences over three days. No teacher input was received at this time. During the planning

stages, the administrators discussed evaluating the professional development experiences with a survey and discussed how the surveys could focus the direction of future workshops.

1. <u>Knowledge and Beliefs</u>. In assessing the beliefs of the district and the Administrator in regards to their professional development program, the principal stated several beliefs about how teachers should teach that guided the design of their professional development. She felt that teachers need to create an environment that incorporates movement, where students change activities in short time increments. She also feels that teachers need to understand more about what we already know about the brain. She felt that her beliefs lead her to bring in presenters on "Brain-based" instruction and focus the instruction in this direction.

    The Administrator also felt that students learn best when teachers understand different learning styles and create lessons engaging all students in the way they learn. Again, she feels her decision for the topic of "Brain-Based" helped teacher these concepts.

    The Administrator discussed her beliefs regarding change but did not display a deep understanding of the change process. She feels change needs to come from administrative encouragement. She stated that her beliefs encouraged her to create change through sending e-mails to staff and making recommendations during observations. The Administrator did not display a knowledge of how effective change occurs.

    The Administrator felt that good professional development needed a degree of teacher input and provided teachers with information that they can take

back into their classroom tomorrow. These issues, she felt, were addressed in the manner in which she planned her professional development.

This Administrator's knowledge and beliefs demonstrate an understanding of some principles of effective professional development and the method of design correlated with her beliefs.

2.   Strategies. The strategies that were utilized in these professional development experiences were those of a Traditional nature (in-service or workshop method). The Administrator did not demonstrate a high degree of knowledge of the research on "Reform" varieties of professional development. However, the Administrator seemed to understand the limited nature of the "one-shot workshop" and worked to provide a cohesive experience that lasted over several days in which the topic could be revisited several times. The decision to conduct the professional development, in the manner it was, appeared to be related to both the Administrator's lack of knowledge of other practices and the district's historical approach to professional development.

3.   Contextual Issues. The Administrator implicitly and explicitly acknowledged several Contextual Issues that the district had either accounted for or ignored during their professional development for the 2003-2004 school year.

i.   Students. The Administrator acknowledged that she felt that the manner in which professional development was planned addressed students by helping them do better on the test by creating more competent teachers. Though she felt she took students into mind, the manner in which she

planned did not seem to address student needs and their impact on professional development.

ii. Teachers. The Administrator thought that she consciously created activities to improve teacher quality by creating experiences that gave teachers strategies to take back into the classroom. In doing so, the Administrator focused on perceived deficiencies of the teachers.

iii. Practices: Curriculum, Instructional and Assessments. The content-based nature of the experiences accounted for the practices the Administrator believed would aid teachers in improving their effectiveness and their use of strategies in the classroom.

iv. State and Local Policies. The Administrator did account for the accountability and standards movement by having teachers focus on the state standards and the PSSA through their professional development.

v. Available Resources. The Administrator acknowledged that the lack of resources dramatically impacted professional development. It should be noted that at no time was any initiative taken to increase or find resources.

vi. Organization Culture. The Administrator acknowledged that the culture of the school impacted the nature of the professional development. She stated that many staff did not attend the professional development and that the ones who did, did not take it seriously. Improving the culture of the building was never addressed during the planning or implementation of the professional development.

vii.   <u>Organizational Structures</u>. Neither the district nor the Administrator, have sought to create any organizational structures that would aid in the implementation of the professional development.   Also, through the interview, it was evident that no infrastructure exists in this school that promotes effective professional development.

viii.   <u>History of Professional Development</u>. The Administrator acknowledged that she planned experiences based on past experiences.   She noted that teachers mentioned that they had previously completed an activity in which she opted not to repeat. The benefits of following up on a previous experience did not occur to the Administrator.

4.   <u>Critical Issues</u>. The Administrator acknowledged various Critical Issues that the district has either addressed or ignored that could have a dramatic affect on the effectiveness of the professional development.

i.   <u>Professional Culture</u>. The Administrator acknowledged that the culture of the school negatively impacted professional development. At no time was this issue addressed.

ii.   <u>Capacity for Sustainability</u>. The district does not have any structures or supports in place to continue the learning that occurred. If the present administrator were to leave, the chances of the experiences continuing are minimal.

iii.   <u>Time</u>. The Administrator acknowledged that the lack of time negatively impacts the district's attempts to establish good professional development. The issue of obtaining more time was never addressed by the district.

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iv. <u>Evaluation and Assessment</u>. The presenters utilized a "Likeability" survey after each experience and she noted that it was used for planning subsequent experiences.

Research Question No. 2: An Analysis of School No. 1's Implementation of their Professional Development

Form. NWLS No. 1 only utilized the "Traditional" form (In-District Workshop) of professional development. However, the experiences were conducted over three days throughout the year.

Duration. The professional development experiences offered in these schools were carried out over three days and conducted throughout the year (total of 18 hours). By spreading out the experiences, it allowed teachers to explore the topics within their classroom. The Administrator suggested to all teachers that they needed to attempt to implement some of the new information. The Administrator noted that there was time in the teacher's workday that could be utilized for professional development, but, historically, it was not used for that purpose.

Participation. All teachers, kindergarten through sixth grade, Title teachers and special area teachers (art, music, etc.) attended the same workshop on "Brain-Based Research." This was their first exposure to this information and it may have been beneficial to introduce the information in this manner. However, the teachers were never broken up into groups while in this workshop. The second session on state standards had teachers broken into two groups: kindergarten through third grade teachers and fourth through sixth grade teachers.

Focus. The experience on "Brain Based Research" was designed to inform teachers and provide information that they could take back to their classroom. The experiences of examining the state standards helped teachers reflect on what they were teaching. This experience did not

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result in any curriculum product but did give teachers time to coordinate their practices and understand the expectations of the state-level test.

Level of Active Learning. During the professional development experiences, the teachers were primarily engaged in listening to a speaker, watching videotaped lessons, and involved in large and small group discussions. However, at times, the presenters had teachers practice using student materials and review the work of students. The presenters also encouraged more active learning by having the teachers complete pencil and paper exercises. Though some level of active engagement was carried out, it was limited in duration compared to non-active engagement activities.

Degree of Coherence. The experience during the 2003-2004 school year did not relate to past experiences but the Administrator did report that she planned on continuing it next year; however, during the interview process, she also mentioned that the district was going to focus on science and social studies next year. Due to the limited time and the manner in which they conduct their professional development, it does not seem likely that the district will be able to offer professional development on these topics next year as well as additional science and social studies topics. Also, there appears to be no supports in place or commitment by the district to continue what was begun this year except for relating the standards to professional development.

Use of student Data. At no time were students' assessments used or PSSA scores examined in order to adapt professional development to student needs. The Administrator did acknowledge the fact that PSSA scores were part of the decision-making process, but there was no evidence of this throughout the rest of the interview and survey.

Research Question No. 3: An Analysis of School No. 1's reflection on the impact of accountability on their professional development program

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The Administrator made several comments throughout the interview and reported on the survey that accountability had a significant impact on her decisions regarding the planning and implementation of the professional development experiences for the 2003-2004 school year. The Administrator responded positively that the experiences created this year would help the school's chances of scoring well on the PSSA.

When asked what the Administrator would do if their achievement scores were to decline next year, she said they would focus more on the tested subjects, such as math and reading, instead of science and social studies. She also noted that if the scores were lower, they would look for more outside help and possibly change the times allotted to teaching certain subjects.

Though the Administrator stated accountability has had a significant impact on their professional development, when asked if it caused her district to increase the number of professional development experiences, the amount of resources dedicated to professional development or the amount of time dedicated to professional development, she replied that it did not.

The Administrator also noted that her teachers did not have an increased desire for more professional development and have not embraced the experiences to the extent that they are implementing fully the concepts acquired through their present activities. Though teacher's resistance could be due to many factors, one reason could be related to the fact that this school is not on the "Warning List" and feels no outside pressure.

In conclusion, though the school Administrator acknowledges accountability as a significant outside pressure, this school has done little to account for this pressure. It has not increased funding, time or commitment. The most dramatic change that accountability has brought about in this school is the focus of its professional development program. The

Administrator has put an emphasis on helping her teachers understand the state-level test and is

providing techniques that teachers can take back into the classroom to improve their teaching.

Profile

Non-Warning List School No. 2 (NWLS No. 2) is located in a rural school district in Western Pennsylvania which has three elementary schools that feed into three high schools. NWLS No. 2 services 554 students from kindergarten through sixth grade. Thirty-six percent of the students at NWLS No. 2 qualify for the "Free and Reduced Lunch Program," which makes this school eligible to receive federal Title I monies for additional support in reading and math instruction.

District Professional Development Profile

NWLS No. 2 employs a Curriculum Coordinator at the district-level who works in conjunction with the building-level principals to create professional development programs specific to each building. In past years, she has coordinated district-level experiences; however, for the 2003-2004 school year, all professional development was done at the building-level.

The district had three different methods for providing professional development. First, the district has a contractually mandated thirty minutes a day which the principal can use for professional development. However, the Administrator acknowledged that this was seldom used for those purposes. The district also has a mandatory obligation of ten and a half hours of professional development time that each teacher must fulfill each year. Teachers are responsible for keeping track of and submitting a record of their professional development activities. It might be noted that this time can be applied to building-sponsored events, but the building principal cannot make these events mandatory. The last resource for implementing professional development is through the districts Act 80 days. During the 2003-2004 school year, this district offered two Act 80 days which were the main vehicle through which the district implemented their initiatives.

NWLS No. 2 Professional Development Profile

The decision-making team for NWLS No. 2 consisted of the Curriculum Coordinator and the building principal. They made all the decision for the professional development experiences that occurred at NWLS No. 2 for the 2003-2004 school year. The principal noted that a few years ago they had a building-level team that would focus on designing professional development, but this committee had not met in two years. That decision-making team was made up of the principal, IST teacher, and representative teachers.

During the 2003-2004 school year, the teachers at NWLS No. 2 were only involved in one professional development topic. At the school level, the teachers focused on adopting a building-wide character education curriculum. The teachers were engaged in this topic through both of their Act 80 days as well as after school experiences.

Research Question No. 1: An Analysis of School No. 2's Goal Setting and Planning

Goal Setting. The Administrator stated that the goal of the year's professional development was to improve the environment of the school by instituting a character education program. The Administrator stated that she developed this goal because she had many disruptive students and felt this would hopefully alleviate problems that were occurring and enhance learning.

The Administrator stated that though the decision to focus on behavior was an administrative decision, she felt that the teachers noted a need for such a program.

Planning. The Principal determined the goals of NWLS No. 2 drove the professional development experiences. The decision to focus on implementing the character education program was an administrative decision and all the planning and coordination occurred through the principal's office. At no time were teachers involved in the planning process.

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1.   <u>Beliefs and Knowledge</u>. In accessing the knowledge and beliefs of the district and the Administrator regarding professional development, the Administrator acknowledged several aspects of effective professional development including several supports that the district finances. First, the district employs a Curriculum Coordinator to oversee and assist principals in designing and implementing their professional development. The district also has a contractual obligation of professional development hours for teachers. These structures indicate a certain belief in the need for professional development, although in comparison to other districts, it is minimal.

The Administrator also stated that professional development should focus on giving teachers what they need to implement their initiatives. This, she admitted, is the driving force behind their professional development offerings.

She also felt that professional development should be consistent and give teachers the practice they need to help students. She noted that curriculum development should be central to professional development experiences and that experiences should correlated with the district's curriculum.

The Administrator stated the belief that professional development should include all individuals. This leads to include all teachers, believing that all teachers needed to participate in order to unify the program and to prove to all children that this program is important. She felt that participant buy-in is essential to the change process.

She also acknowledged that good professional development was needs-focused and teachers should have input into the process for it to truly work. She

also stated that good professional development should be followed-up and on-going. She felt that the design of her program met all these guidelines.

2. <u>Strategies</u>. The Administrator had an adequate knowledge of strategies; but when asked about strategies that would promote better learning, she continually focused on the "Traditional" types of experiences (i.e., Workshops). The types of experiences that were created this year coincide with the understanding of the lead decision-maker.

3. <u>Contextual Issues</u>. The Administrator implicitly and explicitly acknowledged several Contextual Issues that the district had either accounted for or ignored during their professional development for the 2003-2004 school year. Addressing these issues is critical in creating responsive and meaningful professional development.

i. <u>Students</u>. The Administrator acknowledged that the experiences that were developed were designed to address student behavioral problems. This indicates that the administrators acknowledged to some degree the issue of addressing the context of students in the planning process.

ii. <u>Teachers</u>. The Administrator felt that the design of the professional development specifically addressed giving teachers strategies and an understanding of the new curriculum that teachers could use in the classroom. This indicates that teachers' needs were considered in the planning stages of these experiences.

iii. <u>Practices: Curriculum, Instructional and Assessments</u>. The Administrator stated that the existing curriculum did not address behavior issues that

were occurring in the building. She attempted to fill the void through the adoption of a support program.

iv. State and Local Policies. The Administrator acknowledged that PSSA was behind their choice for professional development experiences; however, the connection between test data and the character education program is vague.

v. Available Resources. The Administrator stated that resources were never an issue. However, the available resources used were minimal compared to other districts and at no time were additional time and or outside resources considered.

vi. Organization Culture. Through the interview, the Administrator did not indicate any structures or supports in which teacher culture was addressed.

vii. Organizational Structures. The Administrator stated that the district did not have any structures that would support professional development past the contractual requirements of 10 hours of professional development and the position of Curriculum Director.

4. Critical Issues. The Administrator acknowledged various Critical Issues that the district has either addressed or ignored that could have a dramatic affect on professional development.

i. Professional Culture. The Administrator stated that the culture of the district was not an issue that negatively impacts professional development. Neither the Administrator, nor the district, addressed this issue in the planning or the implementation of the professional development.

ii. <u>Capacity for Sustainability</u>. Other than the Curriculum Coordinator's position and the two principals, there are no other supports to assist teachers with new learning. Also, since this was the first year of the experience, the Administrator stated that no additional experiences were going to occur because all teachers have already been trained.

iii. <u>Time</u>. The district has focused on making time available for teachers. The district has mandatory time in the teacher's contractual day, and requires teachers to participate in 10 hours each year for on-going professional development. The Administrator also identified other times (Peer Coaching, Out of district workshops, etc.) available for professional development.

iv. <u>Evaluation and Assessment</u>. The Administration stated that the teachers were going to self-evaluate on how successful they were in implementing this year's professional development. No other forms of evaluation or assessments were conducted.

Research Question No. 2: An Analysis of School No. 2's Implementation of their Professional Development

Form. During the 2003-2004 school year, the teachers at NWLS No. 2 were involved in adopting a new character education program. The manner in which the experiences were implemented was through the use of the workshop/in-service strategy, which makes this a "Traditional" type experience. It should also be noted that the two of the in-service days were separated by several months which enabled teachers to meet over a period of time to discuss issues that arose around the topic.

Duration. The Administrator stated that the total contact time for the training was 16 hours spread over two days.

Participation. The teachers participated in this program in a whole group and in primary and intermediate groups. Also, the Administrator had all special teachers attend. The participation in this activity limited the extent of productive learning that could take place since unless special attention was made to assist special teachers in seeing their place in this process, these experiences could be meaningless to their specific needs.

Focus. The focus of the experience was on learning the program and classroom strategies. Though this experience may enhance the learning in the school, it would not be considered content-centered.

This experience did not address the state standards or the PSSA.

Level of Active Learning. Both experiences involved teachers in both passive and active learning experiences. The Administrator noted that the teachers listened to a speaker and observed a lesson as passive experiences, but teachers were also involved in small and large group discussions, conducted demonstration lessons, and engaged in extended problem solving. Though the activities had some degree of active participation, they were limited in comparison to the passive learning experiences.

Degree of Coherence. This program was implemented for the first time during the 2003-2004 school year and should be noted that the Administrator stated that no more professional development time will be devoted to this program.

Use of Student Data. No student data was used in the planning or implementation of this program.

Research Question No. 3: An Analysis of School No. 2's reflection on the impact of accountability on their professional development program

When asked how the professional development went this year, the Administrator stated that she thought it went well since she did not hear any grumbling. However, she did note the frustration of teachers in implementing another program. She stated that the teachers felt they were responsible for too many things and this was just one more. The Administrator stated that this attitude caused her to back out of many of the past district initiatives.

The Administrator stated that if NWLS No. 2 were to be identified on the state's "Warning List" they would develop a committee made up of teachers, parents and administrators to focus on areas of deficiency in which they could improve. She suggested that the content or focus of the professional development would have change and "would have been more academic in nature."

The Administrator stated that accountability has not increased the amount of time dedicated to professional development and has not yet changed the content or focus of the experiences. However, if the school was on the "Warning List", the content or focus would change because they would focus more on their PSSA results to determine a focus area. The Administrator did acknowledge that the district was dedicating more money to their professional development program.

The Administrator felt that accountability has made their school district look more carefully at what they are offering. However, this seems to only be the case in the school that is on the "Warning List."

Profile

Non-Warning List School No. 3 (NWLS No. 3) is located in a suburban school district in Northwest Pennsylvania. The district has three elementary schools which feed into one high school. The elementary school services 435 students in kindergarten through fifth grade. Thirty-three percent of the students at NWLS No. 3 qualify for the "Free and Reduced Lunch Program," which makes this school eligible for federal Title I monies for additional support in reading and math.

District's Professional Development Profile

NWLS No. 3's district employs a Director of Curriculum and Instruction that oversees and organizes the district's professional development. All elementary teachers, regardless of their building, receive the same professional development experiences. No extra experiences are given at the building-level. The reason for this, the Administrator states, is to build consistency among all three elementary buildings.

The District has a process for developing their professional development plan. At the end of each year, the Director of Curriculum and Instruction puts out a staff survey which enables teachers to list areas of need. These surveys are collected and then content area focus teams (i.e., Elementary Reading Team) are organized to review these surveys and make a recommendation to the Director of Curriculum and Instruction in each subject area. The Director of Curriculum and Instruction reviews the focus team's suggestions with the building-level principals to determine if district initiatives are being addressed. The Director of Curriculum and Instruction then develops a plan which she submits to the Superintendent and the school board.

The district implemented their professional development in a variety of ways during the 2003-2004 school year. The district has three in-service days, all of which are utilized for teacher learning opportunities. The district also has an early dismissal the second Wednesday of every month (half-day Act 80), enabling the district to have two additional hours of professional development a month. A third resource is through release time in which substitutes are hired in order for teachers to participate in professional development. The district also requires 28 hours of professional development that professional staff must complete each year. In order for the staff to obtain these hours, the district provides opportunities over the summer through their Summer Staff Development offerings and after school experiences or they go to out of district activities with principal approval.

The final decision-maker and the person with the most responsibility for the district's professional development is the Director of Curriculum and Instruction and all programs are coordinated through her office.

NWLS No. 3's Professional Development Profile

The teachers at NWLS No. 3 attended the same professional development offerings as did other teachers in the district. The topics covered were Brain-Based Research and Writing. The Brain-Based Research topic took place during two in-service days and two half-day Act 80 days. The first experience was a half-day Act 80 day in which the presenters focused on the presenting the background and research on Brain-Based theory. During two consecutive in-service days, the teachers delved deeper into the topic. An additional half-day experience was dedicated to this topic where teachers met in groups to discuss how they implemented strategies in the classroom. The total amount of time for this experience was 18 hours for all teachers. Teachers met on the writing topic through the district's summer course offerings, release time for teachers, and

through one In-service day during the school year. Teachers followed up on the Writing topic through the remaining half Act 80 day. The total contact time for this experience was 20 hours per teacher. However, the actual time varied by teacher depending on whether they participated in the non-mandatory summer course offerings or other experiences that were offered on this topic.

Research Question No. 1: An Analysis of School No. 3's Goal Setting and Planning

Goal Setting. The Administrator acknowledged that "Impacting student achievement" is the primary goal of this year's professional development. The Administrator stated that the district uses student scores to determine the district's initiatives. She also acknowledged that the district has put considerable funds into developing a database that stores student data and has progress reports to track student skill mastery. Though the Administrator acknowledged that she reviewed data to determine the effectiveness of the professional development program, this was not addressed at all throughout the remainder to the interview.

Planning. As stated earlier, the Administrator utilized teacher input and a committee to devise a plan for the experiences for the year. Though the Administrator stated the goal of the professional development was to increase student achievement, the direct connection between the plan and the goal is somewhat cloudy. She stated that she gets good attendance at all the professional development activities because they are based on teacher's requests.

1. Knowledge and Beliefs. In assessing the Knowledge and Beliefs of the district's top professional development decision-maker and in reviewing the manner and method the district implements their professional development, it is apparent that the Administrator does have an adequate understanding of what constitutes good

professional development and that the district supports professional development to some degree.

The Administrator stated that professional development should strengthen teachers in the classroom. It needs to show teachers "how to do it, not just tell them what to do." She stated that good professional development needs to be hands-on and represent the students' varying learning styles. It needs to be on-going and supported. She also stated that it needs to be content-specific and give teachers something to use in the classroom.

The Administrator acknowledged her beliefs about the change process. She feels that change is eased by the manner in which the program is delivered. She feels that through her initiatives, she has tried to get teachers to buy-in to a program before it is implemented. This gives teachers a reason to change and gives them ownership in the initiative.

Though the Administrator acknowledged many ideals about professional development, they are not all evident in the manner in which the professional development program was implemented. There is a disparity between the Administrator's understanding and the reality of that program.

2. Strategies. When the Administrator was asked what strategies were considered in planning their professional development, she only noted in-district and out of district workshops. She stated that those were the methods that they have always used. This seems to be consistent with the manner in which the professional development was implemented this year. However, the Administrator did acknowledge the merit of several "Reform" types of experiences. She felt that

teachers needed the message delivered, but with better follow-up to help with implementation in the classroom.

3. <u>Contextual Issues</u>. The Administrator implicitly and explicitly acknowledged several Contextual Issues that the district had either accounted for or ignored during their professional development for the 2003-2004 school year.

    i. <u>Students</u>. Though the Administrator acknowledged that everything they do is for the students, other than an overall review of student achievement scores, there was no evidence that the district focused on the issue of students when they planned their experiences (i.e., no student data was used and assessment of students' needs was not carried out).

    ii. <u>Teachers</u>. The district did attempt to address the teachers' needs through their surveys and the experiences were provided to help teachers become more successful in the classroom.

    iii. <u>Practices: Curriculum, Instructional and Assessments</u>. This issue was addressed in that the professional development experiences focused on designing curriculum, creating action plans, developing strategies and coordinating the writing program.

    iv. <u>State and Local Policies</u>. Though the Administrator acknowledged the pressure of the "No Child Left Behind" Act, there was no evidence that this issue influenced any aspect of the professional development.

    v. <u>Available Resources</u>. The Administrator acknowledged that resources were readily available in the district for professional development. She

stated that most anything was possible and very seldom do they have to turn down any requests.

vi. Organization Culture. The Administrator stated that teachers were overwhelmed by the various new initiatives and stated that she had to delay undertaking new initiatives because of teacher pressure. The aspect of culture was not addressed through the interview.

vii. Organizational Structures. The Administrator did not acknowledge any structures in the district that would help create more effective professional development. However, the district does employ one person to oversee the program and to coordinate activities as well as require mandatory hours set aside for professional development.

4. Critical Issues. The Administrator acknowledged various Critical Issues that the district has either addressed or ignored that could have a dramatic affect on professional development.

i. Professional Culture. The Administrator did not acknowledge how she or the district addressed the culture of the teachers.

ii. Capacity for Sustainability. The Administrator did acknowledge that they attempted to revisit initiatives as much as possible. However, the topics presented this year are not a part of a district initiative and will not to be formally continued next year through their professional development.

iii. Time. The district has established several supports to encourage participation in professional development (i.e., Mandatory 28

hours, In-Service Days and Act 80 Early Dismissal once a month). The Administrator also acknowledged that they, at various times, provided release time for teachers for professional development.

iv. Evaluation and Assessment.   After every professional development, every teacher evaluates the experience on a "Likeability" rating form.

Research Question No. 2: An Analysis of School No. 3's Implementation of their Professional Development

Form. The teachers at NWLS No. 3 were involved in professional development on Brain-Based Research and Writing. Both experiences were of the "Traditional" types of professional development due to their use of the workshop or in-service strategy. However, portions of the Writing workshop did have signs of a "Reform" experience especially in the collaborative groups and curriculum development.

Duration.   The duration for the Brain-Based Research experiences totaled 18 hours. These hours were spread over two half-day Act 80 days and two in-service days. The contact time for the writing experiences was a total 20 hours. These hours were spread over a summer course, one full In-Service day, and five half-day Act 80 days. It should be noted that the contact hours for some teachers was less due to the fact that the summer course offering was not mandatory, while some teachers had more contact time due to their involvement in a half day release time professional development experience that involved teachers reviewing student writing samples.

Participation. The participation for the Brain-Based experiences was done as a whole group where teachers were presented with the general information, after which the class was broken down into two groups, primary and intermediate, for the remainder of the experiences.

The writing activities were divided into primary and intermediate groups during the summer workshop and during the in-service day and then into grade level groups during the release time and half-day Act 80 days.

Focus. The focus of both experiences was to provide teachers with strategies, lessons, and ideas to take back to the classroom. However, though the Brain-Based experience may be meaningful and applicable to all subject areas, the direct connection to content-based learning is limited in comparison to the writing experiences.

The Administrator stated that both experiences addressed the state standards and the PSSA to some extent.

Level of Active Learning. Though both experiences involved activities that engaged teachers (using student materials, reviewing student work, scoring assessments, participating in whole/small group discussion, engaging in problem solving, etc.) the degree to which this was done was minimal in comparison to the passive learning experiences (listening to a speaker, observing a demonstration, participating in a whole/small group discussion).

Degree of Coherence. Both experiences, Brain-Based Learning and Writing, were begun during the 2003-2004 school year, and the Administrator stated that more experiences would continue next year. However, it is not certain that they will be able to carry this out given some of the other initiatives/topics that were mentioned.

Use of Student Data. Student data was not used directly to address planning for either experience; however, during the implementation, the Administrator stated that student assessments were used in some of the activities.

Research Question No. 3: An Analysis of School No. 3's reflection on the impact of accountability on their professional development program

The Administrator stated that this year's professional development was successful based on the fact that many teachers gave positive feedback on the experiences. She noted that the most successful experience, though not content-based, was popular because they had a dynamic speaker. The Administrator stated that she would not have changed anything because she felt the experiences were needed.

When asked what was the greatest influence on the planning that occurred, she felt that it was the achievement data. She stated that her district has been examining data for years and the new data initiatives are a part of their planning process.

When asked if she would change anything if her school would be fall into the "Warning List" category, she stated that, in time, all schools will be there and she was not too concerned about it. She did note that it would most likely force her to look at the data to determine different focus areas but they already do that presently.

The Administrator stated that they have been focusing on their special education students for years, to the detriment of the rest of the children. She felt that they have taught their special education teachers everything they need to know and have been "short changing all the other kids." Now, she feels that they need to address the needs of the rest of their students.

The Administrator also stated that PSSA data can be misleading and people tend to over react to the results. She stated that she developed a data base to review student progress in

comparison to their abilities and feels that their curriculum has enable students in her district to over achieve.

The Administrator did not feel the district has increased the number of professional development experiences due to the pressure of accountability, nor did it increase the resources it provides. She did feel that the district's focus has changed in that it is more committed to content/skill centered experiences.

The Administrator had a positive attitude regarding the influence of accountability. She stated that accountability gives education a focus, whereas before, decisions were made based on "gut feelings" or by word of mouth with textbook companies determining what students learned. Now, the state is forcing districts to really look at what they are teaching and is holding teachers accountable for what is occurring in the classroom.

Non-Warning List School No. 4

Profile

Non-Warning List School No. 4 (NWLS No. 4) is located in a suburban school district in Northwestern Pennsylvania. The district has seven elementary schools that feed into one high school. NWLS No. 4 services 551 students in kindergarten through fifth grade. Forty-seven percent of students at NWLS No. 4 qualify for the "Free and Reduced Lunch Program," which makes this school eligible for federal Title I monies for additional support in reading and math.

District Professional Development Profile

This district has a Curriculum Department that is responsible for overseeing all of the district's programs which includes three people assigned to overseeing the elementary language arts program. These positions include a Coordinator of Reading, Elementary Curriculum Facilitator, and a Literacy Coach who are primarily responsible for the planning of professional development and making sure the district's initiatives are implemented in the classrooms.

The district offers both building and district-level professional development experiences. It provides one day for building-level professional development which are to focus on district-level initiatives. The administration feels that by focusing at the building level, the district is more responsive to individual needs of the building. The district also offers district-level experiences through one in-service day in October and through summer and after school experiences. The district also requires teachers to obtain 48 hours per year of professional development which can be fulfilled through attendance at these district-sponsored summer or after school experiences. The district-level in-service day in October was dedicated to a wellness fair that the Administrator acknowledged was held every year.

The decision-making team at the district level consists of the Principals, Curriculum Department, Literacy Coaches, and Department Chairs. Teacher input is obtained through a yearly staff survey through which topics of interest and areas of need for individual schools as well as the district are identified.

NWLS No. 4's Professional Development Profile

The decision-making team for building-level experiences consists of the principal and the Curriculum Department.

The Administrator stated that school-level professional development helps the district address initiatives at a building-level and guarantees attendance on a specific topic. This is an issue because the district implements their professional development through a menu of options in which teachers can choose areas of interest. The Administrator acknowledged that this creates gaps in the teachers' knowledge base in the school but can make sure that they have a focused audience on a specific topic that needs addressed, through their in-service day

The teachers at NWLS No. 4 can also involve themselves in summer or after school experiences provided by the district. However, these experiences are not mandatory.

Another opportunity available to the teachers at NWLS No. 4 is a coaching program that is run by two district-level teachers who can model lessons in individual classrooms and provide feedback to teachers.

The building-level experiences for the 2003-2004 school year consisted of a team building experience on the first day and a clerical day on the last day and a faculty meeting. The only content-based professional development that occurred at the building-level occurred on their October in-service day. The teachers focused on implementing a literacy and assessment framework, specifically, Guided Reading.

Research Question No. 1: An Analysis of School No. 4's Goal Setting and Planning

Goal Setting. NWLS No. 4's district has a published goal statement/plan regarding their

professional development for the 2003-2004 school year. It states:

> Continue district-wide implementation and staff development of a balanced literacy program in grades kindergarten through grade five and to begin development of a plan for literacy instruction in the middle school. The emphasis for the 03/04 year will be to increase leveled reading instruction in grades kindergarten through five to be present in 100% of grades one and two, and at least two of three intermediate grades in all buildings. With staff development, sixty additional classrooms grades kindergarten through five, including special education, will begin to define and implement the Literacy Framework within the context of the daily class schedule and content instruction. The thirty classrooms initiated at the start of the 02/03 school year will continue to provide a base for staff development. Grade level assessments developed from the grade level standards and curriculum will be implemented in grades kindergarten through grade five by January of 2004. Assessment data will be used at the building, class, and student level to direct instruction and evaluate student progress. During the 03/04 school year a middle school literacy team, made up of teachers (including a librarian), administration, parents, and students will be convened. The team will establish a consensus on best practices, and complete a plan to ensure the implementation of best practices in Literacy Instruction in grades six through eight.

> The elementary language arts department is presently implementing a literacy and assessment framework. Language arts instruction will be delivered through four basic components: modeled/interactive reading, guided reading, independent reading, and writing. Assessment tasks have been constructed across grade levels based on the literacy skills framework. The information from assessment will be used to provide focused language arts instruction.

This goal statement and plan have provided a basis for coordination of experiences at the

district and school level. The Administrator felt that the goal of the October in-service day was

to help teachers make the best use of the new instructional blocks of time he had scheduled at the

recommendation of the Curriculum Department.

Planning. The planning of NWLS No. 4 was done at the administrative level (the

Curriculum Department and the Principal) and had no teacher input. The focus of the

professional development correlated with the goals and plan of the district and spotlighted the

practice of Guided Reading. The Curriculum Department designed the experience and brought in outside presenters who focused on Guided Reading strategies.

The planning for all other experiences was done at the district level and teachers had a choice of activities they would like to attend. No administrative guidance was given to teachers regarding their choices.

1. <u>Knowledge and Beliefs</u>. In assessing the Knowledge and Beliefs that influenced the planning and design of the professional development, the district's top decision-maker appeared to have a good understanding of effective professional development practices. Throughout the interview, the Administrator acknowledged several beliefs that drive the district's offerings.

The district developed a published philosophy regarding their district's language arts initiatives. The district employs two individuals at the elementary level that have the primary responsibility of coaching staff. This district structure shows their commitment to working with individual staff at the classroom level to improve programs. Also, the district, through their published plan, encourages all teachers to observe other teachers. The Administrator also mentioned that the initiatives that the district has been promoting have been a three-year process which demonstrates the district's commitment to creating a cohesive and on-going program. Also, through the planning process, the district seeks input from staff and attempts to incorporate it into the overall plan.

The district also demonstrates an understanding of the change process through their commitment to the coaching model which exemplifies their belief that change must be done on an individual level. Also, the district has a three-

year implementation plan for their language arts initiative which exhibit on-going support for their initiatives.

2. Strategies. The district demonstrates a good understanding and commitment to effective professional development strategies. The district mandates the coaching/mentoring strategy, and also involves teachers in other "Reform" type strategies. However, the district still utilizes the workshop/in-service strategy as their main method of professional development.

3. Contextual Issues. The Administrator implicitly and explicitly acknowledged several Contextual Issues that the district had either accounted for or ignored during their professional development for the 2003-2004 school year.

   i. Students. The Administrator acknowledged that the students are the purpose behind their professional development and it is designed to make what they do better for students. However, it was not evident that the district or the Administrator attempted to account for specific student needs (no test scores were reviewed, nor were any students' needs assessment done).

   ii. Teachers. The Administrator stated that the goals of the district were to provide teachers with strategies and skills to meet student needs. The focuses of the experiences were of teachers' perceived deficiencies and/or areas of interest.

   iii. Practices: Curriculum, Instructional and Assessments. Instruction and assessment were the focal point of the October professional development experience.

iv.   <u>State and Local Policies</u>.   The Administrator acknowledged that the district reviewed state test scores but did not specifically address any issues related to test performance.

v.   <u>Available Resources</u>. The Administrator stated that resources were not an issue and the district appeared to make a strong financial commitment to the district's professional development.

vi.   <u>Organization Culture</u>.   The Administrator stated that both he and the district attempted to build a relationship of trust and cooperation with the teachers. He feels that offering a variety of experiences (both voluntary and mandatory) creates an atmosphere of commitment to their trade and makes the staff lifelong learners.

vii.   <u>Organizational Structures</u>.   The district's commitment to creating organizational structures that promote effective professional development are evident (coaching and the mandatory 48 hours of professional development per year). Also, the Administrator stated that they have been restructuring the schedule to accommodate the new practices they are acquiring in their professional development.

4.   <u>Critical Issues</u>. The Administrator acknowledged various Critical Issues that the district has either addressed or ignored that could have a dramatic affect on professional development.

i.   <u>Professional Culture</u>. The Administrator stated that the district has been committed to creating a professional culture by developing volunteer experiences focused on their needs. Also, the use of the coaching has

created a collaborative environment where teachers share information with staff and work as a cohesive team. The Administrator also acknowledged that by including the staff in the planning stages, everyone gets on board and a commitment to (or at least an understanding) the direction they are headed is developed.

ii.   Capacity for Sustainability. The district has several structures (i.e., the Curriculum Department, mandatory 48 hours of professional development, Coaches) that help in the sustainability of programs in the district. These structures, along with the district's three-year implementation plan, promote sustainability in their language arts program.

iii. Time. The district has addressed the issue of time by creating both voluntary and mandatory professional development hours in the summer, after school, and through their in-service days. Every staff member must obtain 48 professional development hours per year, above and beyond their teacher workday. This time commitment surpasses any other school in this study in the amount of time created for professional development.

iv.   Evaluation. The Administrator acknowledged that the staff evaluated each experience on a "Likeability" survey. At no time has the professional development program been evaluated on it effectiveness.

Research Question No. 2: An Analysis of School No. 4's Implementation of their Professional Development

Form. The NWLS No. 4 utilizes two main forms for providing professional development to their teachers. First, is the district/school's use of the workshop/in-service experience. This

"Traditional" type of professional development was used in the NWLS No. 4's October in-service day and through the district's Summer Staff offerings and after school experiences.

The second type of professional development that occurred was of the "Reform" type in which the district provides coaches who model lessons in the classroom, critique teacher lessons, and assist teachers in planning and implementing programs. This program can be very effective but could be compromised if the coaches' workload is so great that would limit the amount of time they can spend with each teacher.

Duration. The duration of the summer/after school experiences varies according to the experience. However, the contact time for each experience was no more than 16 hours. The October in-service day had a contact time of 8 hours

The duration of the coaching/mentoring experience cannot be fully explored in this limited venue. During the interview, the Administrator did state that these individuals had no teaching duties and that a majority of their time was to be engaged in the coaching/mentoring process. The amount of time spent varied per teacher, the Administrator stated, and certain individuals were targeted during the year.

Participation. The manner of participation that occurs varied according to the experiences. The summer and after school experiences sponsored by the district were topic-centered and could have participants from multiple grade levels. No experiences were offered that targeted a specific grade level. Also, the participation varied by school, in that teachers could select topics of interest to them, which creates an uneven knowledge base within the same school. This can impede school-wide implementation and cohesiveness of programs. However, it must be noted that the topics were coordinated through the district and focused on the district's initiatives.

The participation at the October in-service was targeted more specifically to groups of teachers, primary and intermediate. The coaching experience focused on individual teachers within the classroom.

Focus. The focus of all the summer/after school experiences and the October in-service day were content-based and focused on the language arts initiative. The experiences were designed to provide information to teachers that they could use in their classrooms. The Administrator stated that the experiences addressed curriculum and instruction, but did not address the PSSA or Standards issues.

The district in-service day and the two other building days were not content-focused and did not actively engage in enhancing the learning of teachers.

The focus of the coaching/mentoring experience encouraged teachers to reflect on the practices as they occurred and teachers were given feedback which could be used immediately to adjust or change their teaching styles or methods.

Level of Active Learning. The summer/after school experiences were all "Traditional" type of experiences. Though the teachers were engaged in some degree of active learning (collaborating with a colleague, reviewing student work, participating in a whole/small group discussion) most of the activities were of the passive learning nature.

The level of active learning for the coaching/mentoring experience was high and enabled teachers to immediately reflect on their teaching.

Degree of Coherence. The summer/after school experiences and the one building-level in-service day all revolved around the district's language arts initiatives. These experiences are in their third year of implementation and are expected to continue next year.

Coaching has a high degree of coherence if it is used to support and further the strategies and practices learned through their professional development.

The two building level days (first and last days) and the one district-level in-service day did not related to the language arts program, nor to any of the goals stated in the district's plan.

Use of Student Data. The Administrator noted that student assessments were reviewed in the planning stages; however, the connection was not noticeable. The Administrator stated that no student assessments were utilized in the implementation stages of the other experiences.

Research Question No. 3: An Analysis of School No. 4's reflection on the impact of accountability on their professional development program

The Administrator noted that the year's professional development was successful in that it was the natural progression of the implementation process. He felt that the impetus for the professional development was not accountability, but the district's implementation plan. He felt this plan adequately addressed accountability issues due to the fact that their district has a curriculum that is aligned to the state standards. He stated that districts that are on the "Warning List" "have not done their homework up front." He feels that if you align your curriculum to the standards and practice good teaching in the classroom, you should have good scores.

The Administrator stated that he did not feel that accountability has changed the number of professional development experiences the district offers, nor the focus of the experiences, but does feel that the district is dedicating more funds to their professional development program. He noted that the district just hired an Assessment Coordinator whose sole job is to look at district-level and state-level data and note trends. The Administrator also stated that the district has hired Literacy Coordinators in order to be more accountable.

Profile

Non-Warning List School No. 5 (NWLS No. 5) is located in a rural school district in Northwest Pennsylvania. The district has two elementary schools that feed into one high school. NWLS No. 5 services 308 students in kindergarten through fifth grade. Thirty-six percent of the students at NWLS No. 5 qualify for the "Free and Reduced Lunch Program," which makes this school eligible for federal Title I monies for additional support in reading and math.

District Professional Development Profile

The district has a Curriculum Coordinator, but during the 2003-2004 school year, this individual had little involvement in the planning and implementation of professional development.

The professional development that occurred this year was done at the building-level and the Administrator noted that this was the first year in which professional development took place the building-level. The Superintendent set the parameters for professional development, but it was up to the building-level principal to plan and coordinate the activities that occurred.

The only professional development that occurs in this district is through their in-service days. The district was able to offer six in-service days, all of which were used for teacher learning experiences.

NWLS No. 5's Professional Development Profile

The Administrator was the individual that oversaw the planning and implementation of the experiences for NWLS No. 5. The principal involved the teachers in the planning process by calling a voluntary meeting for all teachers to participate in the decision-making process. A committee was formed with three teachers and the Administrator. This committee created a plan which was presented to the entire staff and approved by the Superintendent and school board.

The topics, "Focusing on the State Standards", "Improving Home-School Communication" and a session on the "New Reading Series" all took place during their in-service days. No other professional development experiences occurred for teachers at NWLS No. 5.

The only outside presenters were for the "New Reading Series" presentation, all other experiences utilized the school's teachers.

Research Question No. 1: An Analysis of School No. 5's Goal Setting and Planning

Goal Setting. The Administrator stated that the goals of the professional development were to "Better acquaint teachers with standards and develop strategies to best help kids to meet those standards and to improve the home-school communication." When asked how they came up with the goals, she stated that the Superintendent set the goals, and that neither the principal, nor the teachers had any input into that process.

Planning. The planning that occurred at NWLS No. 5 was done by a committee who determined which activities were going to occur. The actual experiences were implemented by the teachers in the building with an outside person brought in for the Reading Series experience.

1. <u>Knowledge and Beliefs</u>. In assessing the Knowledge and Beliefs that influenced the planning and design of the professional development, the district's top decision-maker seems to have adequate knowledge of ideal and effective professional development and these are evident in the implementation of the professional development.

   The district has no goal statement or vision for their professional development and much of the manner in which the experiences were planned and

implemented are based on the Administrator's personal understanding of professional development.

Through the interview, the Administrator discussed elements that she thought good professional development should involve. The Administrator stated that professional development should be customer friendly, should provide teachers with information that they can utilize in the classroom, and should focus on what students really need to know. She stated that experiences should help teachers understand children and their learning styles and that teachers should be helped in understanding and using assessment to guide their instruction as well as in providing hands-on experiences.

The Administrator also acknowledged the importance of teacher input in the professional development process and felt that if teachers bought into the experiences, they were more apt to utilize and implement the information. This, she feels, smoothes the transitions that take place during the change process.

2. Strategies. The Administrator demonstrated a good understanding of the different varieties of professional development and noted the benefits of the "Reform" type experiences. This is evident in the manner in which the professional development was implemented in her school. She created two experiences that were "Reform" in nature and commented that her teachers "got a lot accomplished and she felt in the way." The one "Traditional" type experience, the Administrator noted, was the least beneficial to her teachers.

3. <u>Contextual Issues</u>. The Administrator implicitly and explicitly acknowledged several Contextual Issues that the district had either accounted for or ignored during their professional development for the 2003-2004 school year.

    i.   <u>Students</u>. The Administrator stated that the focus of the professional development was on student needs. They focused on areas of poor performance of the students by reviewing student data and identifying the areas where they needed to better prepare students.

    ii.   <u>Teachers</u>. The Administrator stated that the professional development was designed to focus on what teachers needed to better meet their students' needs. The experiences focused on teacher understanding of the state standards and how they could meet the standards through their instruction.

    iii.   <u>Practices: Curriculum, Instructional and Assessments</u>. The experiences with the state standards focused on helping teachers align their curriculum with the standards, as well as working with parents in the new era of accountability.

    iv.   <u>State and Local Policies</u>. The Administrator stated that state standards were used to determine shortcomings in their curriculum, and through this process they reviewed PSSA scores and developed a plan to inform parents of this state-level initiative.

    v.   <u>Available Resources</u>. The Administrator stated that no barriers existed in the manner in which they implemented their professional development and commented that the Superintendent gave each school $2,000 dollars to buy what they need to improve their scores. Though there may not be any

barriers noted by the Administrator, the overall district expenditure for resources for NWLS No. 5's professional development was minimal compared to other school in this study.

vi. <u>Organization Culture</u>. The Administrator acknowledged that the culture of the school was sound and she felt that the focus on building-level experiences strengthened and respected the cultures of the different buildings.

vii. <u>Organizational Structures</u>. Through the interview, no structures were identified beyond the principal that enabled, enhanced or supported effective professional development.

viii. <u>History of Professional Development</u>. The Administrator acknowledged that the method through which professional development occurred this year was different from past years, in that they were able to implement experiences at a school-level. The Administrator felt this enhanced the performance of her teachers because her school did not have the same needs as the other schools in the district.

4. <u>Critical Issues</u>. The Administrator acknowledged various Critical Issues that the district has either addressed or ignored that could have a dramatic affect on the effectiveness of the professional development.

i. <u>Professional Culture</u>. The Administrator acknowledged that the culture of the building was addressed by the district by providing them with their own professional development days, and that the manner in which the

Administrator implemented the professional development brought teachers

together as a group to share and problem solve.

ii.   Capacity for Sustainability. Though the state standards are a consistent

issue, there appear to be no (or minimal) structures or supports available at

NWLS No. 5 to continue the learning that was started this year.

iii.   Time. Though the district administrator reported six days of professional

development, the actual contact time that was reported was extremely

limited.   No other ways of offering professional development were

explored by the Administrator at NWLS No. 5 and the district had no

mandatory hours for professional development other than mandatory

faculty meetings.

iv.   Evaluation and Assessment. No formal evaluations or assessments were

used during the experiences.

Research Question No. 2: An Analysis of School No. 5's Implementation of their Professional

Development

Form. The Administrator stated that the professional development experiences of "focusing on the state standards" and "improving home-school communication" utilized aspects of several "Reform" type experiences. She noted that at times teachers were engaged in "curriculum development" and at other times, a "committee or task force."

The experience on the "new reading series" was a "Traditional" type experience in that they utilized the workshop/in-service strategy. It might be noted that the Administrator noted that this was the least effective experience.

Duration. The duration for the experiences varied. For the experience on "focusing on the state standards" the total contact time the administrator reported was 16 hours over three days. The experiences on "improving home-school communication" had a contact time of 16 hours over three days and the experience on the "New Reading Series" lasted 8 hours during one day.

Participation. The Administrator stated that participants in "focusing on the state standards" and "improving home-school communication" were broken into intermediate and primary groups during most of the experiences; however at times, the entire group was brought together to discuss what they done. For the "reading series" experience, all teachers met as a whole group.

Focus. The focus of the experiences varied according to the experience. The focus of the "reading series" helped teachers understand how their reading series matches the state's standards, but did little to offer teachers new strategies or improve the existing strategies. The focus of the "improving the home-school communication" focused on "communicating standards

and ways to help children to parents." Though the Administrator stated that the experience gave teachers lessons or ideas to take back to their classroom, it is unclear the true extent of how content-based this experience was. The "focusing on the state standards" experience provided teaching methods that can be taken back to the classroom.

The Administrator stated that all three experiences in some manner focused on helping students do better on the PSSA and teaching to meet state standards and assessment.

Level of Active Learning. The "improving the home-school communication" and the "focusing on the state standards" experiences engaged teachers in many active learning experiences. The Administrator reported that teachers participated in whole/small group discussions, gave lectures, conducted a demonstration lesson, led a whole/small group discussion, engaged in problem solving, practiced using student materials, developed and reviewed material, collaborated with a colleague, completed exercises and assessed knowledge and skills. The extent of the active engagement experiences was greater than the passive learning experiences.

The experience on the Reading Series involved teachers in some active engagement (using technology), but the degree was limited in comparison to the passive experiences (listening to a lecture and participating in a whole group discussion).

Degree of Coherence. The Administrator stated that teachers were exposed to all these experiences before (except the Reading Series) and she expects the experiences to continue (except for the Reading Series experience).

Use of student Data. At the beginning of the year, PSSA data was utilized to plan the experiences and student writing samples were used as well as scores on other assessments during the professional development activities.

Research Question No. 3: An Analysis of School No. 5's reflection on the impact of accountability on their professional development program

The Administrator stated that the experiences that occurred this year were successful because it "really met my teachers' needs." However, she stated that she wished she had more time to plan her experiences so she could bring in speakers or access other resources.

The Administrator stated that the biggest impact on the planning of the professional development was the fact that she incorporated teachers in the decision-making process. However, she did note that accountability influenced most of the group's decisions.

The Administrator felt that accountability has been a driving force and if they were on the state's "Warning List" they would have to "take a hard look at the data and the standards in which we did poorly… and address that standard all the way down to kindergarten."

The Administrator stated that accountability has not increased the district's professional development offerings, but has increased the resources that are available. She noted that the district has purchased PSSA preparation materials and each school has received extra monies to address areas that will help them on the PSSA.

The Administrator acknowledged that prior to accountability the district did a lot of activities that were "not directly related to instruction." Now, she said that they are focusing more on instruction and content. They are focused on the "nuts and bolts" and not "theory and philosophy."

The Administrator summed up the influence of accountability on her school by saying "It has really been a driving force. Where before professional development was not as systematic. We used to touch on many things, now we have a picture of where we want to go."

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