

Abstract

The purpose of this study was to examine the relationships between building and district level leadership in sustaining level district Professional Learning Communities (PLCs). The study attempted to reveal the relationships of building level and district level leadership in sustaining level PLCs. The study also sought to determine the impact of relational trust between district-level and building-level leadership practices within professional learning communities. The Professional Learning Community Continuum (PLCC) was administered in order to identify those districts that were operating at the Sustaining Stage for PLCs. Approximately forty-six district and building level leaders participated in the study. A non-random sampling of three sustaining stage PLC districts participated in the second stage of the study.

The study investigated the relationships of central office and building leadership in sustaining level PLCs, using values coding, resulting in a culture picture. The study was carried out in three phases; the first two consisted of a selection process geared towards the identification of sustaining level PLC Elementary School District in the northeastern portion of the state. The final phase III focused on a qualitative analysis of the relationships of central office and building leadership in those PLCs.

In Phase I, the researcher chose to survey the districts in the Northeastern section of Illinois because more than fifty percent of the state's elementary school districts are located in four northeastern counties. The researcher surveyed nine-hundred and sixteen administrators from one-hundred and thirty-four elementary school districts. There were seven-hundred and eighty-two building administrators and one-hundred and thirty-four central office administrators. In Phase II of the study, the researcher utilized the information gathered with the PLCC. The data were used to identify sustaining stage PLCs. Phase III of the study included visits and interviews of both building and district level leadership. The data gained with the visits, interviews, and document review enabled the researcher to answer the research questions. The analysis of Phase III centered upon coherence across the interviews of the three districts central office and building leadership. The study identified relational trust as a factor in sustaining level PLCs.