School Improvement Specialist Training Materials: Performance Standards, Improving Schools, and Literature Review

**Module 1—
Shared Leadership**

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Appalachia Educational Laboratory (AEL)
at

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The School Improvement Specialist Project prepared seven modules. School improvement specialists, as defined by the Appalachia Educational Laboratory at Edvantia, are change agents who work with schools to help them improve in the following areas so as to increase student achievement. These modules are intended to provide training materials for educators seeking professional development to prepare them for a new level of work.

> Module 1—Shared Leadership
> Module 2—Learning Culture
> Module 3—School-Family-Community Connections
> Module 4—Effective Teaching
> Module 5—Shared Goals for Learning
> Module 6—Aligned and Balanced Curriculum
> Module 7—Purposeful Student Assessment

Each module has three sections:

1. Standards: Each set of content standards and performance indicators helps school improvement specialists assess their skills and knowledge related to each topic. The rubric format provides both a measurement for self-assessment and goals for self-improvement.
2. Improving Schools: These briefs provide research- and practice-based information to help school improvement specialists consider how they might address strengths and weaknesses in the schools where they work. The information contained in the briefs is often appropriate for sharing with teachers and principals; each includes information about strategies and practices that can be implemented in schools, resources to be consulted for more information, tools for facilitating thinking about and working on school issues, and real-life stories from school improvement specialists who offer their advice and experiences.
3. Literature Review: The reviews of research literature summarize the best available information about the topic of each module. They can be used by school improvement specialists to expand their knowledge base and shared with school staffs as part of professional development activities.

Shared Leadership
Content Standards and Performance Indicators for School Improvement Specialists
Self-Assessment Tool

Shared Leadership: This matrix measures the extent to which a school improvement specialist has the knowledge and skills to assist a school in developing its capacity for shared leadership as reflected by the following characteristics: (1) a widespread view among all stakeholders that leadership is shared; (2) the existence of mechanisms for involving teachers, students, and parents in decision making; (3) opportunities for leadership development among the members of the school community; (4) the sharing of information and open flow of communications; and (5) school administrators actively listening to and soliciting the input of others.

Knowledge or Skill	Advanced	Proficient	Basic	Novice
1. Developing new leadership	The school improvement specialist a. helps administrators institutionalize structures and processes that enable faculty and staff members—as well as students, family, and community members—to assume leadership roles and rotate those roles, allowing many to hold leadership positions over time b. can assess the readiness of school leaders to assume increasing levels of shared leadership responsibilities (i.e., moves from a directive role to a mentoring role to an advisory role) c. facilitates trust building and fosters positive relationships among team members d. uses reflection as a tool to develop leadership skills among all groups	The school improvement specialist a. suggests and encourages ways teachers and other members of the school community can take on leadership roles b. encourages respect for individual differences and strengths, and facilitates methods for determining and building on faculty and staff strengths c. focuses a great deal on building trust and developing positive relationships among team members d. encourages groups to use reflection as a tool to increase their skills	The school improvement specialist a. encourages administration to include teachers, staff, students, parents, and community members in school improvement planning b. may facilitate meetings of these stakeholder groups and model methods of agenda building, communication, group and personal reflection, conflict resolution, delegation, empowerment, questioning, and listening c. focuses on building trust and developing positive relationships among team members	The school improvement specialist a. works mainly with administrators and existing leadership team on planning and implementing schoolwide improvement plan b. focuses improvement efforts on classroom issues during interactions with teachers c. works to build trust and develop positive relationships among team members

Knowledge or Skill	Advanced	Proficient	Basic	Novice
2. Improving and supporting existing leadership	The school improvement specialist a. works with existing school leaders to objectively and openly identify and reflect on the leaders' strengths and weaknesses in relation to the school's leadership needs b. facilitates the development of professional growth plans that build on strengths, address weaknesses, are based on school needs, and include intended outcomes c. encourages school leaders to monitor their own progress in professional growth and share that progress, as well as new learnings, with the faculty on a regular basis d. mentors school leaders by modeling the behaviors and attitudes of successful leadership for that particular school environment, and builds in sufficient time for reflection on leadership topics	The school improvement specialist a. works with existing leaders to objectively and openly identify and reflect on strengths and weaknesses b. ties strengths and weaknesses to professional growth plans, which are developed collaboratively with the existing school leader c. communicates regularly with the leader to ensure the implementation of the professional growth plan	The school improvement specialist a. discusses professional growth needs of existing school leaders and guides the creation of growth plans b. suggests resources to assist leaders in carrying out their growth plans c. encourages leaders to reflect on their practice and growth, as well as on the change process as it relates to school improvement	The school improvement specialist a. works mainly with administrators and existing leadership team on planning and implementing school improvement efforts b. focuses on the execution of specific tasks c. models behaviors and attitudes of shared leadership, but may not encourage reflection or professional growth among leaders
3. Knowledge and understanding of shared leadership	The school improvement specialist a. has extensive knowledge of shared leadership and the skills and strategies needed to foster it b. models and facilitates shared decision making and accountability in a consistent manner c. keeps up with the latest research and professional dialogue on shared leadership and encourages the leadership team to do likewise d. supports faculty and team members in identifying and developing their own unique model of leadership	The school improvement specialist a. provides the leadership team and other involved stakeholders with information on shared leadership b. leads group discussion on shared leadership strategies and benefits c. provides models and specific examples of shared leadership that are appropriate to the context of the school (e.g., distributed leadership, teacher leader model) d. identifies opportunities for shared leadership within the faculty's conception of leadership	The school improvement specialist a. explains the need for shared leadership to the leadership team, but has limited intervention skills and limited insight into the attitudes and strategies needed to facilitate the development of shared leadership b. helps faculty reflect on their awareness of the changing concept of leadership	The school improvement specialist a. has some knowledge of shared leadership, but this knowledge is communicated to the faculty on a very limited basis b. is aware of the changing concept of leadership and conveys such to the faculty

Knowledge or Skill	Advanced	Proficient	Basic	Novice
4. Structures supporting shared leadership	The school improvement specialist a. works with the school community to institutionalize procedures and opportunities for broad stakeholder involvement in the school improvement process b. fosters the incorporation of strengths and weaknesses of various ethnic, socioeconomic, and cultural backgrounds as a primary goal for creating shared leadership structures c. enables the involvement of students as valued stakeholders d. aids the school community in using these procedures to set and maintain priorities, which reflect the school's data and mission	The school improvement specialist a. helps the leadership team and other involved stakeholders plan training and collaborative work sessions for all members of the school community b. aids the team in valuing and incorporating student leaders' input within the leadership structure c. assists the team with assessing strengths of various ethnic, socioeconomic, and cultural backgrounds, as a foundation for creating shared leadership structures d. models and coaches the use of agendas and processes for conducting productive collaborative sessions	The school improvement specialist a. explains to the leadership team the importance of providing opportunities for broad stakeholder involvement b. provides examples of student leader contributions to shared leadership structures c. assists in creating committees and teams that involve the overt identification of various ethnic, socioeconomic and cultural backgrounds	The school improvement specialist a. encourages the leadership team to create opportunities to involve all stakeholders (including student leaders) in planning and decision making b. encourages the inclusion of various ethnic, socioeconomic, and cultural backgrounds
5. Processes	The school improvement specialist a. facilitates shared leadership learning and development, as a mentor or facilitator, by cultivating team goal setting for the purpose of achieving consensus b. enables the school community to evaluate, select, and modify processes to meet the school or district's needs c. serves as a mentor and a coach as school leaders practice with processes d. fosters widespread communication by promoting multiple processes	The school improvement specialist a. models shared leadership processes and demonstrates team goal setting, but may not promote consensus b. involves faculty in applying the processes to their own experiences c. offers individualized assistance based on observations and discussions d. assists the team with implementing effective communication processes	The school improvement specialist a. can articulate processes for sharing leadership to school leader and faculty, as an instructor, by guiding them through goal setting and consensus processes b. provides examples of processes, but may not adequately adapt to the school or district's contexts and needs	The school improvement specialist a. is familiar with the processes of shared leadership, but communicates these processes to school leader or faculty on a limited basis b. can communicate the notions of team goal setting and consensus-building processes

Knowledge or Skill	Advanced	Proficient	Basic	Novice
6. Explicit promotion of shared leadership	The school improvement specialist a. facilitates and encourages the implementation of shared leadership by creating opportunities for the entire school community to understand the value of shared leadership (including its implications for student achievement), and to design a plan that will enhance teaching and learning across their school community for themselves	The school improvements specialist a. actively creates opportunities for the entire faculty to plan for shared leadership	The school improvement specialist a. verbally promotes the development of shared leadership of faculty, but may limit this promotion to the administration and leadership team	The school improvement specialist a. is aware that he or she should promote the development of shared leadership across the school community and knows its potential impact on student achievement

What Is Shared Leadership?

How can a principal manage a large physical plant, support teachers, coordinate community resources, be a dynamic instructional leader, and cope with the other complexities of the job?

The answer, of course, is that one person cannot do all this without assistance. When a school staff works to become a community of learners, their goal is to raise student achievement by raising the professional performance of all the adults connected to the school. A professional learning community within a school promotes this goal through supportive and shared leadership, where administrators and teachers share power, authority, and decision making.

The concept of shared leadership has evolved since the 1970s, when early forms of shared leadership decentralized school decision-making processes. Other terms are also used to describe this decentralization. Terms such as site-based decision making, site-based management, participative leadership, distributed leadership, and balanced leadership imply leadership by many people, all of whom focus on improving student achievement. The term *teacher leader* describes teachers who remain in the classroom and also organize reviews of teaching practices, assist with curriculum development, lead staff development, and participate in school decision-making activities.

The term *shared leadership,* as used by School Improvement Specialists, emerged from the professional learning communities movement. The concept of shared leadership implies that everyone has the ability—as well as the right and responsibility—to lead.

Shared leadership recognizes that we all want to grow professionally and that leadership is a critical component of professional life. Shared leadership means strong two-way communication. It means the novice teacher's idea about the testing schedule is as valued as the principal's. Shared leadership is listening, valuing, and respecting every member of the school community.

We all want to improve student learning but reaching this goal is impossible without the assistance of the whole school community. In working to influence the culture of a school, a school improvement specialist will want to look for opportunities to share leadership within the school.

Inspiration and contributions for Improving Schools *came from Edvantia staff and school improvement specialists with whom we work. These resources have been created to support school improvement specialists and the schools they assist.*

On the Job: Shared Leadership Through Teams

The school improvement specialist stories that appear in Improving Schools *come from real life. The names have been changed or removed to preserve confidentiality.*

As a school improvement specialist, I've seen various forms of shared leadership in schools, and I have become convinced that schools must have shared leadership if they are to be successful. Although there are many ways of involving everyone from teachers to student to parents in school governance and leadership, the most effective way of sharing leadership is through leadership teams.

Two types of teams form the backbone of a school's shared leadership initiative. The first is what I call the *leadership team.* This team includes one representative from every major school unit—grade-level teachers, departments, committees, parent groups, student body, paraprofessionals, and so on. The leadership team functions as a conduit of information to and from the principal, with members acting as liaisons for their representative groups. Team members meet with the principal once a month to discuss events, scheduling, problems, and concerns that affect the day-to-day maintenance of the school.

Leadership team responsibilities might include determining how funds should be allocated, ordering supplies and materials, and scheduling and operating fundraising activities and field trips. In addition, team members schedule professional development activities for teachers and consider variations to the daily schedule to allow for student assemblies, speakers, and the like.

The second team is called the *instructional team.* This team is composed of teachers willing to plan and deliver professional development. Team members are involved in mentoring new or struggling teachers, modeling lessons and behavior management strategies, and making decisions about instructional programs. Teacher members can be selected based on their willingness to search for new and better ways to improve student learning. As budgets allow, these teachers attend conferences; observe teachers at other schools; and study research-based practices so they can model, teach, mentor, or share new ideas with other teachers.

The teams are complementary: one functions as a management tool and the other focuses on instruction. This two-team approach creates multiple opportunities for staff members to lead in various capacities.

Reflection

- Do you see any advantages to having a two-team leadership system in a school? Could there be disadvantages?
- Are there other teams that would complement the work of these two teams?
- Can you think of additional opportunities for shared leadership that you would recommend to a school staff?

Continuum of Shared Leadership

Complete shared leadership	We're getting to shared leadership.	Lip service to shared leadership	No interest in shared leadership
All members of the school community believe that what they do makes a difference.	Most members of the school community believe their work is important and makes a difference in students' education.	Members of the school community try to influence events in the school but do not believe their efforts will have much effect.	Members of the school community believe that whatever actions they take are fruitless and of no effect.
Leadership is not associated with positions or roles but is open to all who will assume responsibility.	Leadership opportunities are open to all faculty and to some parents and student government leaders.	Leadership resides with the principal and a few lead teachers.	Leadership rests with the principal.
Formal leaders communicate shared goals that mobilize and energize the entire school community.	Formal leaders communicate limited goals developed through some collaboration.	Formal leaders communicate goals developed in isolation.	Formal leaders communicate regulations and mandates on an occasional basis. Goals are not communicated.
Those who are affected by a decision play a significant role in the decision-making process.	Those who are affected by a decision are involved in the decision-making process.	Those who are affected by a decision have a limited role in the decision-making process, such as choosing between two alternatives.	Those who are affected by a decision are informed of the decision after it has been made.
School administrators share information freely with all members of the community.	School administrators share most information with most members of the community.	School administrators share limited information with selected members of the community.	School administrators share information with the community when they are forced to do so.
Individuals are encouraged to exercise initiative in making changes that will improve their personal performance and contribute to student learning.	Individuals are allowed to exercise initiative in making changes that will contribute to student learning.	Individuals are allowed to make limited changes as long as the changes are approved in advance.	Individuals are expected to follow specific rules and procedures. They are not allowed to change process or procedure.
School administrators facilitate others (parents, teachers, students, and staff) in solving problems.	School administrators solicit input from two or more groups in solving problems.	Administrators solicit input from certain people in solving problems but make the decisions alone.	Administrators solve all problems without outside input.
School administrators facilitate two-way communication	Administrators are open to listening to the community and	Administrators communicate information, but they	Administrators dispense information to the community as

Complete shared leadership	We're getting to shared leadership.	Lip service to shared leadership	No interest in shared leadership
between and among all members of the community.	make a good-faith effort at two-way communication.	often do not solicit input from the community before doing so.	needed.
All members of the school community have opportunities to develop leadership skills.	Many members of the school community have opportunities to develop leadership skills.	Lead teachers and a few other individuals have limited opportunities to develop leadership skills.	Members of the community have no opportunity to develop leadership skills.

Recommended Reading: Building Leadership Capacity

Building Leadership Capacity in Schools by Linda Lambert. Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, 1998.

Leadership Capacity for Lasting School Improvement by Linda Lambert. Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, 2003.

Building Leadership Capacity in Schools challenges the assumption that only someone with formal authority can lead. The premise outlined here is that "the school must build its own leadership capacity if it is to stay afloat, assume internal responsibility for reform, and maintain a momentum for self-renewal."

Lambert offers practical suggestions for constructing processes that enable participants "to learn themselves toward a shared sense of purpose." Stories from an elementary, middle, and high school reveal the major issues and dilemmas inherent in building leadership capacity.

Lambert presents five assumptions for building leadership capacity:

1. Leadership is not trait theory; *leadership* and *leader* are not the same.
2. Leadership is about learning.
3. Everyone has the potential and right to work as a leader.
4. Leading is a shared endeavor.
5. Leadership requires the redistribution of power and authority.

Advice for acting on these assumptions includes hiring people with the capacity to do leadership work, assessing staff and school capacity for leadership, developing a culture of inquiry, and implementing plans for building leadership capacity.

The book contains two leadership capacity surveys and an excellent rubric to measure emerging teacher leadership.

In *Leadership Capacity for Lasting School Improvement,* Lambert emphasizes the need to build leadership skills in all the players of a school community—teachers, principals, students, parents, and district office personnel.

Lambert asserts that teachers and others become leaders through a combination of formal education, on-the-job training, observation, and reflection. Lambert clearly states that the investment in building teacher leadership pays off in teachers who are strongly committed to the vision of the school, prepared to lead curricular and instructional reform, and prepared to become administrators.

Lambert discusses the characteristics of the capacity-building principal and offers strategies to develop leadership:

- Respond to a request for permission by inviting dialogue: "Tell me what you have in mind."
- Brainstorm with individuals and encourage choice.
- Use words such as "we" and "our" to suggest community ownership.
- Ask advice from members of several role groups.
- Rotate the leadership of meetings.
- Let the staff know which decisions are to be made by consensus, by the faculty, by the principal, or by someone outside the school.
- Sit in a chair in front of your desk to avoid an image of authority.
- Don't try to have all the answers; rather, be open to discovering answers.
- Follow through on commitments and promises.

In a high-capacity school, students, too, become leaders. This must go beyond a token student on an advisory committee, and it must be taught through specific instructional practice.

Lambert's thinking on parent leadership moves beyond traditional forms of parent involvement into true leadership and community with the school. She acknowledges potential problems with high levels of parent leadership, yet she believes the struggle to achieve reciprocity and "collective responsibility" with parents will pay off.

Finally, Lambert challenges districts to develop capacity for leadership and offers specific strategies.

This book contains many charts and bulleted points that clearly illustrate key points. The appendix contains sample self-assessments, rubrics, and other valuable instruments.

When we equate the powerful concept of leadership with the behaviors of one person, we are limiting the achievement of broad-based participation by a community or a society.

—Lambert, 1998, p. 5

Meaningful participation is a cornerstone of professional and school communities—a stone that we often leave unturned.

—Lambert, 2003, p. 11

Linda Lambert is Professor Emeritus in the Department of Education Leadership, California State University, Hayward. She has been a teacher, administrator, and consultant. Her books are very readable; the two reviewed here could be valuable resources for leadership teams and faculty study groups.

Online Resources

http://www.centerforcsri.org

The Center for Comprehensive School Reform and Improvement assists schools and districts by providing information about research-based strategies and support for school reform. Online newsletters contain updated information about successful initiatives across the nation. News and events sections contain announcements of reports, events, and funding opportunities.

http://www.sedl.org/change/issues/issues61.html

One of the best treatises on professional learning communities, this article from the Southwest Educational Development Laboratory outlines the history, attributes, and outcomes of learning communities. Numerous references and results of positive staff engagement provide bases for discussion and further research.

http://www.nsdc.org/library/publications/jsd/garmston262.cfm

This article, "Group wise: Create a culture of inquiry and develop productive groups" by Robert J. Garmston, appeared in the Spring 2005 issue of the *Journal of Staff Development.* The author cites three leadership factors that create a culture of inquiry: communication, time management, and self-reflection. With a strong emphasis on reflection, Garmston discusses how group members can self-assess and self-manage to become more productive.

What Works in School Leadership?

Researchers at Mid-continent Research for Education and Learning conducted a meta-analysis of research and identified 21 leadership practices correlated to student achievement. Although this research focused on principal leadership, many of these practices imply a movement toward shared leadership. As a school improvement

specialist, you will want to be familiar with this body of research so you can use it in your work with school leaders.

Principal Leadership Practices and Correlation with Student Achievement

Practice	the extent to which the principal…	Avg r	# of Studies	# of Schools
Affirmation	recognize & celebrates school accomplishments & acknowledges failures	.25	7	345
Change Agent	is willing to & actively challenges the status quo	.30	7	479
Communication	establishes strong lines of communication with teachers & among students	.23	10	245
Contingent	recognizes & rewards individual accomplishments	.15	7	420
Culture	fosters shared beliefs & sense of community & cooperation	.29	13	709
Curriculum, instruction, assessment	is directly involved in design & implementation of curriculum, instruction, & assessment practices	.16	19	636
Discipline	protects teachers from issues & influences that would detract from their teaching time or focus	.24	10	397
Flexibility	adapts his or her leadership behavior to the needs of the current situation	.22	2	151
Focus	establishes clear goals & keeps those goals in the forefront of the school's attention	.24	30	1,109
Ideals/beliefs	communicates & operates from strong ideals & beliefs about schooling	.25	8	526
Input	involves teachers in the design & implementation of important decisions & policies	.30	13	504
Knowledge of curriculum, instruction, assessment	is knowledgeable about current curriculum, instruction, & assessment practices	.24	8	327
Monitors/ evaluates	monitors the effectiveness of school practices & their impact on student learning	.28	30	1,071

Order	establishes a set of standard operating procedures & routines	.26	17	456
Outreach	is an advocate & spokesperson for the school to all stakeholders	.28	14	478
Optimizer	inspires & leads new & challenging innovations	.20	9	444
Relationship	demonstrates an awareness of the personal aspect of teachers & staff	.19	12	497
Resources	provides teachers with the material & professional development necessary for the successful execution of their jobs	.26	17	570
Situational awareness	is aware of the details & undercurrents in the running of the school & uses this information to address current or potential problems	.33	5	91
Visibility	has quality contact & interactions with teachers & students	.16	11	432

Adapted, with permission, from *Balanced Leadership: What 30 Years of Research Tells Us about the Effect of Leadership on Student Achievement* by Tim Waters, Robert J. Marzano, and Brian McNulty. Aurora, CO: Mid-continent Research for Education and Learning, 2003, p. 4. Available online at www.mcrel.org/topics/productdetail.asp?topicsid=7&productid=144.

What Does *r* Mean?

The correlations depicted in this table make more sense if you have a basic understanding of the statistical term *r*. Think of it this way: *r* = relationship. The statistical analysis for *r* uses a scale of 0 *(no relationship)* to 1 *(strong relationship)*. Therefore, as *r* gets closer to 1, the assumption is that the practice has a greater effect on student achievement. For the synthesis of studies shown here, each *r* is an average computed from the total number of studies that addressed each practice.

We have concluded that there are two primary variables that determine whether or not leadership will have a positive or a negative impact on achievement. The first is the focus of change—that is, whether leaders properly identify and focus on improving the school and classroom practices that are most likely to have a positive impact on student

achievement in their school. The second variable is whether leaders properly understand the magnitude or "order" of change they are leading and adjust their leadership practices accordingly.

> —Tim Waters, Robert J. Marzano, and Brian McNulty, *Balanced Leadership: What 30 Years of Research Tells Us about the Effect of Leadership on Student Achievement,* p. 5.

On the Job: Don't Assume!

The school improvement specialist stories that appear in Improving Schools *come from real life. The names have been changed or removed to preserve confidentiality.*

The school in which I was serving as a school improvement specialist postponed writing its school improvement plan until a one-month deadline loomed. When I voiced concerns about the delay, the principal and curriculum facilitator tried to reassure me that everything was under control. "We're going to a two-day workshop with representatives from the state department. They have all the information we need about deadlines and formats," they said. "While we're there, we'll develop committees that will include all faculty members and a few parents and community reps. Then we'll publish a calendar of due dates and requirements. Don't worry." I took a wait-and-see attitude.

Sure enough, committees were formed, deadlines were communicated via e-mail and hard copy, and meeting dates were set. I was told I would be welcome at any or all meetings and that everyone appreciated my willingness to help.

So one afternoon, armed with my copy of the state rubric, I headed to a meeting of the committee assigned to the action planning section of the school improvement plan. Of the 10 people assigned to the committee, only 3 showed up, and one was the chairperson. The chair had no materials, no copies of the previous year's plan, and no idea how to lead a group in brainstorming, let alone consensus voting. I had brought only the rubric, so I, too, was unprepared to lead the discussion. Nevertheless, they looked to me for guidance.

We talked about the component, which would eventually contain goals and action steps for the school. We also talked about how to get committee members to attend meetings, how to involve faculty and staff in developing the plan, and how to meet the rapidly approaching deadlines. The time was not wasted, but it meant another week before we could begin in earnest. During that week, I attended three other meetings with similar structures: no agendas, no materials, no continuity, no leadership—and, therefore, no positive outcomes.

I learned many valuable lessons that month. First, don't assume that just because teams are formed, team members will know how to lead, communicate, facilitate, or "make things happen" by the deadline. Second, don't assume that school leaders know

how to train committee leaders adequately. And third, don't assume that ample time has been set aside to accomplish a given task.

In the end, the school submitted its plan only a few days late, but the final product was haphazardly thrown together. There was, however, one positive outcome: the principal and other school leaders now realize the importance of time management and the value of leadership training. As for me, I know that as a school improvement specialist, I should be prepared for anything!

Reflection

- As a school improvement specialist, what would you suggest to help the school "work backward" to develop a plan with stakeholder input?
- Did this school improvement specialist learn other lessons that were not mentioned in the article?
- Have you had a similar experience in working with a school team? If so, how did you accomplish your goal?

Recommended Reading: Building New Leaders

Managers as Mentors: Building Partnerships for Learning by Chip R. Bell. San Francisco: Berrett-Koehler Publishers, Inc., 2002.

Chip R. Bell says that even though his book is titled *Managers as Mentors,* in truth, it is really about "managing as mentoring." Whatever Bell set out to do in writing a book filled with ideas, suggestions, how-tos, and resources, he has succeeded in not only defining roles for mentors and protégés but also in detailing a road map with insightful stories, examples, and exhortations.

Using the woodsy character of Jack Gamble, a "consummate outdoorsman," as a mentor to city-savvy Tracy Black (who is new to the engineering firm), Bell traces their mentor-protégé relationship through the book. Their conversations reveal the importance of mentors being authentic, asking leading questions, and allowing protégés the space to figure things out for themselves with skillful, understated guidance.

Using a mnemonic—SAGE—Bell outlines four structures of the mentoring experience:

- Surrendering: Leveling the learning field by being devoted to learning, not dedicated to convincing
- Accepting: Being able to create a safe, nontoxic relationship
- Gifting: Bestowing assets (advice, feedback, stories, support) without any expectation of return
- Extending: Nurturing a self-directed learner beyond the relationship with the mentor

It is instructive that the word "feedback" starts with the word "feed."
—Bell, p. 103

An effective mentor invites the protégé to face the risks of learning by being a good model, engaging in judgment-free communication, and offering rational (i.e., believable) affirmation.
—Bell, p. 66

When we see that to learn, we must be willing to look foolish, to let another teach us, learning doesn't always look so good anymore. . . . Only with the support and fellowship of another can we face the dangers of learning meaningful things.
—Peter Senge, *The Fifth Discipline,* as quoted by Bell, p. 133

On the Job: Walkabout Leadership

The school improvement specialist stories that appear in Improving Schools *come from real life. The names have been changed or removed to preserve confidentiality.*

One day during a grade-level team meeting, eighth-grade teachers complained about not being able to visit other schools to see how teachers manage their classrooms. As a school improvement specialist, my first question was, "When was the last time you observed teachers at *this* school?" Their answer: "Never."

That was the door-opener I needed. I learned a process called Walkabout from Edvantia School Improvement Specialist trainers Jackie Walsh and Beth Sattes but had never had an opportunity to apply it. I approached school administrators with the idea of conducting a Walkabout. I touted its major strength: an opportunity for teachers to observe classes and note the strengths and needs of the instructional program.

Walkabout has three parts, and the administrators agreed to dedicate a faculty meeting to the first—setting a focus and developing the list of "look-fors." (The second part of Walkabout is conducting the classroom observations, and the third part is analyzing the observation data at the end of the day.)

The teachers liked the idea. We determined that our Walkabout would focus on teaching reading across the curriculum. The assistant principal charted teacher responses to the question What would we look for in a classroom where literacy improvement is a focus? Hesitantly at first, and then enthusiastically, teachers and administrators named room attributes (word walls, reading materials for student use) and instructional strategies (group interaction, read alouds, writing activities) that we might see in a classroom that emphasizes reading across the curriculum. We accomplished two things: teachers were developing a list of indicators to use for Walkabout, and they were making mental notes of ways to improve their classrooms and instructional techniques.

Walkabout day came, and the principal met with teachers before school to give them a schedule that showed at least one visit to each classroom. The "look-fors" had been put into a checklist so teachers could tally the frequency of observed behaviors (see sample at right). There was excitement as teachers talked about where they were going and whose classrooms they would see.

That afternoon, the faculty met to tally observations (the process is objective, and no names or room numbers are mentioned). Then participants reflected on what they had observed. We finally had data in hand!

We were pleased with the results—both those related to the physical nature of classrooms and to teacher-student interactions. Some teachers decided they would like to try practices they had observed. Others took pride in hearing their efforts praised. And all teachers talked about what needed to be done: Clean up our piles of books. Engage kids actively instead of using so many worksheets. Ask students how they can improve their writing. The list went on.

We posted all tallies on chart paper and distributed final comments. There were no repercussions from the administrators (as some had feared). The Walkabout was a success—and a catalyst. Although teachers knew that reading skills should be reinforced in every classroom, it took "seeing" to affect "believing."

Shared leadership, in this case, meant sharing responsibility for providing quality instruction in all classrooms.

Reflection

- What is the value of determining "look-fors" for a Walkabout?
- What is the benefit of keeping the Walkabout tallies anonymous?
- What does the school improvement specialist mean by saying, "It took 'seeing' to affect 'believing'"?

Walkabout Checklist					
School: _____ Date: _____					
Team Member: _____ Time: _____ A.M. _____P.M.					
Topic: Reading across the curriculum	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
Classroom Attributes Word walls					
Books for students to read					

Walkabout Checklist					
Instructional Strategies					
Group interactions					
Read alouds					
Student writing activities					

One Principal's Perspective: A Shared Leadership Lifestyle

When the superintendent named me as a high school principal, my first task was to establish a system of shared leadership. As a teacher leader in my former school, I participated in a shared leadership initiative piloted by a local university. I knew the process from the teacher side but found it very different to ask teachers to help me, as a principal, with leadership responsibilities.

Some teachers said, "That's not my job. You're trying to delegate your job to me." Others preferred working in isolation. Not everyone wanted to be part of a team, or to accept the challenges of gathering data, collaborating with others, and making informed decisions. I knew I had to build trust. Although I had a bit of an uphill battle, the teachers emerging as leaders did come on board.

But there was another obstacle. Although teachers began to feel comfortable sharing ideas in committees, all the ideas could not be implemented. Some asked, "Why did you ask if you're not going to use my suggestions?" Sometimes I wondered if they didn't see the big picture or know the constraints of time, money, and state or federal restrictions. I looked for balance and humility. And I looked for more ways to build trust.

After my first, rocky year, the teachers helped me find a three-step process. First, seek teacher input. Second, share all responses with everyone. Third, show how the input is used in decisions.

I can't say that today all of our teachers wholeheartedly embrace shared leadership, but I am convinced it is one of the best initiatives a school can undertake. Leaders need input and support to make informed decisions. Teachers want to be involved and know their opinions are valued. And students have the advantage of watching us model how we can work together to implement common goals.

For me, shared leadership is more than a buzzword: At my school it is becoming a lifestyle.

Reflection

- What lessons about sharing leadership do you think this principal has learned and could pass on to other first-year principals?
- If you were the school improvement specialist in this school, what advice would you have given the principal about beginning and sustaining a system of shared leadership?

Recognizing Shared Leadership

What does shared leadership look like in a school? The school improvement specialist might begin by looking for some of these indicators:

Open Communication

- Does the school have open communication among administrators, teachers, students, parents, and community members?
- Do you see evidence of open communication in the school, such as suggestion boxes, newsletters, e-mail networks, or homework hotlines?
- Are meetings characterized by mutual respect?
- Do meetings have advance agendas and follow-up minutes?

Teacher/Staff Leadership

- Do teachers have genuine opportunities to develop and practice leadership?
- Does the school offer teacher-led staff development?
- Do teacher-led committees have real responsibility and authority?
- Is there a functioning leadership team or advisory committee?

Internal Collaboration

- Does the school have ongoing study groups, interdisciplinary planning and projects, thematic units across subjects or grades, team meetings, and team teaching?
- Are new teachers mentored and are all teachers coached and nurtured?
- Do teachers meet regularly to discuss student data and instructional improvement?
- Do teachers have the authority, responsibility, and expectation to adjust procedures for the best interest of students?

Student Leadership

- Are there opportunities for student council meetings, peer tutoring, student focus groups, cooperative learning groups, or student announcements?
- Is there a sense of democracy in the classrooms, with students free to ask

questions and express alternative views?
- Does the school teach leadership skills?

Parent and Community Involvement

- Does the school have one or more active parent groups?
- Is there a volunteer program, and does the school maintain an active parent resource file?
- Does the school invite parent input into critical decisions?
- Does a parent sit on the leadership team?

As a principal, I used to think I shared leadership. I did. Or I should say I went as far as I could go or felt the school could go. But reflecting a decade later on my leadership, I see that I stopped well short of a community of leadership. Leadership for me was delegating, giving away, or sharing participation in important decisions so long as the curriculum, pupil achievement, staff development, and, of course, stability were not much altered. Now I see it differently.

—Roland S. Barth, *Improving Schools from Within,*
San Francisco: Jossey Bass, 1990

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Shared Leadership and Student Achievement
A Review of the Literature

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Introduction

Shared leadership is an important element of both Edvantia's framework for school improvement and its Continuous School Improvement Questionnaire (CSIQ) (Meehan, Cowley, Craig, Balow, & Childers, 2002). One CSIQ subscale collects teachers' perceptions of shared leadership in their school. The items for this subscale were based on the most current literature on shared leadership. This subscale reflects the degree to which leadership is viewed as being shared. It assesses whether school administrators dominate decision making or if there are mechanisms for involving teachers, students, and parents. Opportunities for leadership development among the members of the school community are assessed, as are the degree to which information is shared, and the extent to which school administrators listen and solicit the input of others.

The purposes of this literature review are to describe ways of thinking about sharing school leadership and to examine the possible link between shared leadership and student achievement. It is hoped that this information will be helpful to schools engaged in improvement efforts.

While bureaucratic and scientific management theories—top-down views of school leadership—dominated the education landscape during most of the 20th century, many now believe that the days of the principal as the lone leader of the school are over (Hart, 1995; Lambert, 2002). Standards-based reform efforts that emphasize instructional improvements and student achievement as the measures of leadership success created an impetus for change in the way that schools are led (Elmore, 2000). Because the typical principal's working day is consumed by managerial tasks having little or no direct bearing on the improvement of instruction, a single administrator cannot fill all of the leadership roles in a school without substantial participation by other educators (Elmore, 2000; Olson, 2000; Spillane, Halverson, & Diamond, 2001). The notion that leadership is not confined to those in a formal managerial role is at least 60 years old (Pounder, Ogawa, & Adams, 1995 in Leithwood & Jantzi, 1998); indeed, the current movement toward a theory of sharing leadership is documented in business as well as education literature. Organizational restructuring initiatives have enhanced the pertinence of shared leadership, and as flatter, team-based structures have begun to be favored over a more hierarchical structure (Banner & Gagne, 1995), many districts have adopted site-based management (Murphy & Beck, 1995). Additionally, teacher leadership (e.g., career ladders, teacher mentoring programs, and greater participation in school decision making) has facilitated the sharing of leadership.

While there is substantial agreement about the need for including others in the leadership of the school, there is little agreement about what the new model should look like or what name to give it. As noted by Leithwood, Louis, Anderson, and Wahlstrom (2004), many labels are used in the literature to signify different forms or styles of leadership. Even a cursory search through the leadership literature turns up adjectives such as *instructional, shared, transformational, democratic, teacher, moral, participative,* and *distributed*. Leithwood warns that the multitude of terms brings confusion rather than clarity to the understanding of school leadership. For example, "The concept of distributed leadership overlaps substantially with shared leadership" (Leithwood et al., 2004, p. 28). Some of the terms that are used to describe a

specific model or form of leadership have their own literature base, while others do not. The lack of agreed-upon models and the presence of imprecise terminology make building a research base about educational leadership difficult at best.

This review examines four different approaches to school leadership that involve more than a single individual: school-based management, distributed leadership, teacher leadership, and shared leadership. These four were selected because they were most widely represented in the writings on leadership.

School-Based Management

Over the past several decades, bureaucratically structured school systems failed to meet the growing educational needs of our youth (Wohlstetter, Mohrman, & Robertson, 1997). Changing the way schools are structured and led may remedy this failure. School-based management (SBM) features a change in the governance system of a school district by decentralizing decision-making authority from the central office to the local schools. SBM aims to give more control over what happens in schools to a wide array of school constituents— administrators, teachers, parents, and other community members (Wohlstetter et al., 1997). Though delimited by state standards and accountability measures, SBM teams are able to make many decisions that affect the everyday life of the school's instructional program. Further, shared instructional leadership is a primary goal of SBM, which involves the active collaboration of administrators and teachers around curricular, pedagogical, and assessment issues (Marks & Printy, 2003).

Although specific SBM programs vary considerably, a common set of beliefs about the efficacy of SBM as an approach to school improvement usually underpins the decision to implement such a program. Supporters of SBM believe that this approach creates ownership and commitment to decisions and generates energy for school improvement.

Teacher Leadership

According to Lieberman and Miller (1990), teachers have long provided leadership in schools as department chairs, team and grade leaders, and curriculum committee chairs, among other roles. A new understanding of teacher leadership emerged with the advent of school restructuring, school change, and professional and collaborative school cultures. Although there is not a common understanding of teacher leadership in that literature, teachers are most often described as working collaboratively or cooperatively to provide leadership for learning. In 1987, Devaney provided a list of six ways in which teachers might provide leadership. The list, which follows, was synthesized from a comprehensive review of the literature on formal programs for developing teacher leadership skills.

- Continuing to teach and to improve individual teaching proficiency and skill
- Organizing and leading peer review of teaching practices
- Providing curriculum development knowledge
- Participating in school-level decision making

- Leading in-service training and staff development activities
- Engaging other teachers in collaborative action planning, reflection, and research

This list appears to capture the variety of teacher leadership functions that are described in more recent literature as well. Anderson (2004) also noted that teacher leadership often involves the mutual influence between teacher leaders and principals, or *leadership reciprocity*. Thus, how teachers carry out their roles as leaders differs from building to building. The variety of roles and the lack of clarity of the meaning of teacher leadership, as well as the variability of functions and their performance, add a layer of difficulty to aggregating and interpreting the research on teacher leadership (Smylie, 1997).

Distributed Leadership

In their search for instructional leadership in schools, researchers began to focus not only on the leadership activities of school principals but also the leadership exercised by other school constituents (Camburn, Rowan, & Taylor, 2003). The conceptual model of school leadership that emerged from these studies reveals what Rowan (1990) called "network" patterns of control, where leadership activities are distributed widely across multiple roles and participants (Hart, 1995), and multiple school members are seen as exercising instructional leadership in order to effect instructional improvement (Camburn et al., 2003). This model is called *distributed leadership* (Leithwood & Jantzi, 2000; Gronn, 2000; Spillane et al., 2001; Wallace, 2002). According to Spillane and colleagues (2001) and Elmore (2000), five principles lay the foundation for a model of distributed leadership focused on educational improvement:

- The purpose of leadership is the improvement of instructional practice and performance, regardless of role.
- Instructional improvement requires continuous learning.
- Learning requires modeling.
- The roles and activities of leadership flow from the expertise required for learning and improvement, not from the formal dictates of the institution.
- The exercise of authority requires reciprocity of accountability and capacity.

Because essential knowledge is distributed across many individuals, it follows that leadership is distributed as well (Lashway, 2003). The key is for leadership to be organized around a common task and shared common values—the principal's core responsibility (Elmore, 2000). Spillane and colleagues (2001) agree, asserting that effective principals do not just string together a series of individual actions but systematically distribute leadership by building it into the fabric of the school life (Lashway, 2003). In this manner, leadership is distributed not by delegating it or giving it away but by weaving together people, materials, and organizational structures in a common cause (Spillane et al., 2001).

Shared Leadership Within Professional Learning Communities

The term *shared leadership* first surfaces significantly in the professional learning communities literature. Hord (1997) defined *professional learning community* as the

professional staff learning together to direct their efforts toward improved student learning. Hord's synthesis of the literature identified five key attributes of professional learning communities in schools:

1. *Supportive and shared leadership:* School administrators participate democratically with teachers, sharing power, authority, and decision making.
2. *Shared values and vision:* Staff-shared visions for school improvement have an undeviating focus on student learning and are consistently referenced for the staff's work.
3. *Collective learning and application of learning:* Staff's collective learning and application of the learning create solutions to address student needs.
4. *Supportive conditions:* School conditions and capacities support the staff's arrangement as a professional learning organization.
5. *Shared personal practice:* Peers review and provide feedback on teachers' instructional practice in order to increase individual and organizational capacity.

Focusing specifically on the shared leadership inherent in professional learning communities, Johnson (1996) writes,

Today's school leaders must understand both the limits and the potential of their positions, carefully balancing their use of positional authority with their reliance on others, gradually building both a capacity and widespread support for shared leadership. (p. 11)

Lambert (2002) furthers this definition of shared leadership by stating that "shared leadership needs to be separated from a person, role, or set of individual behaviors . . . rather, it needs to be embedded in the school community as a whole" (p. 38). The key notion is that leadership is about learning together and constructing meaning and knowledge collectively and collaboratively (Lambert, 2002). According to Lambert (2003), shared leadership is based on the following assumptions:

- Everyone has the right, responsibility, and ability to be a leader.
- How leadership is defined influences how people will participate.
- Educators yearn to be more fully who they are—purposeful, professional human beings.
- Leadership is an essential aspect of an educator's professional life. (pp. 38-39)

Being responsible for the learning of colleagues is at the center of shared leadership (Lambert, 2003). Further, asserts Lambert, by understanding that learning and leading are firmly linked within the school community, principals can take the first step in building shared instructional leadership capacity within their organizations.

The Link Between School Leadership and Student Achievement

Pitner (1988) offers a theoretical model and the understanding of the possible link between school leadership and student achievement. Called the *reciprocal-effects model* (Figure 1), it reflects the reciprocal nature of the interaction of leadership, intervening variables, and student achievement, and suggests various interactions through which principals might exhibit leadership behavior in schools over time. Any subsequent changes in the condition of the school would produce feedback that will, in turn, impact the principal's future leadership actions.

Figure 1. Modeling school leadership effects on student achievement

Reciprocal Effects Model

Principal Leadership ⟷ Intervening Variables ⟷ Student Achievement
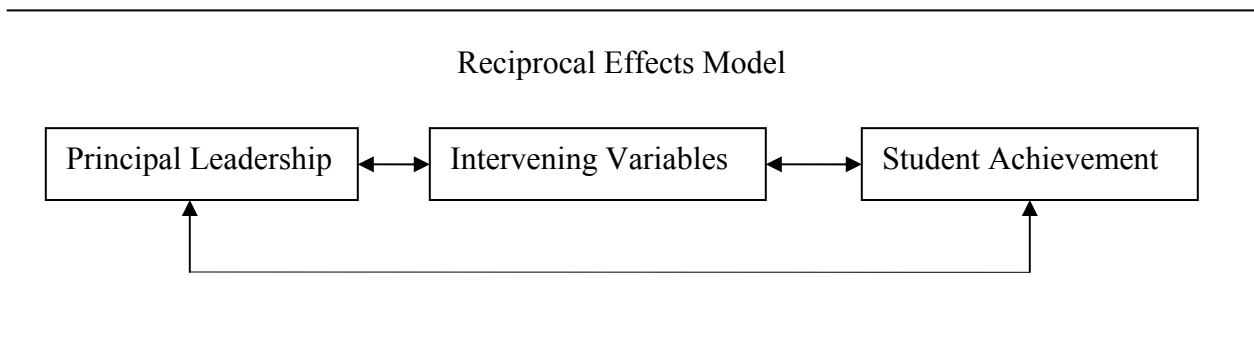
Source: Pitner, 1988, pp. 105-108

The reciprocal-effects model assumes that some or all of the relationship between administrators and student achievement occurs through interaction with features of the school organization (Hallinger & Heck, 1996). This is consistent with the notion that principal behaviors are ultimately related to student performance through their interactions with other people, most notably teachers. Theoretically, the principal is both a dependent and independent variable (Pitner, 1988). As a dependent variable, administrative behavior is subject to the influence of other variables within the school, such as teachers, students, organizational culture, and parents. As an independent variable, the principal influences the actions of teachers, the school, and student achievement (Hallinger & Murphy, 1985; Leithwood, Begley, & Cousins, 1990).

School-Based Management and Student Achievement

One of the most extensive syntheses of empirical studies examining the relationship between SBM and student performance was conducted by Leithwood and Menzies in 1998. They examined 83 studies that were conducted between 1993 and 1998 and concluded, "There is virtually no rigorous, scientifically based research about the direct or indirect effects of SBM on students . . . the little research-based evidence that does exist suggests that the effects on students are just as likely to be negative as positive" (p. 34). Similarly, Fullan's (1993) analysis of empirical studies found that "school-based management, in its present form, does not impact teaching and learning" (p. 454).

5

Smylie and Hart (1999) found substantial support for the conclusion that teacher participation in shared decision making is related positively to instructional improvement and to student academic achievement when they conducted a study of teacher involvement in decision making, instructional improvement, and student learning over a 5-year period. These findings are supported by other investigations of successful involvement of teachers in decision making (White, 1992; Wohlstetter, Smyer, & Mohrman, 1994). As the findings from new longitudinal studies become available, a more comprehensive understanding of the efficacy of involvement of teachers in decision making may emerge (Smylie & Hart, 1999).

Teacher Leadership and Student Achievement

As with SBM, the picture is mixed. Marks and Louis (1997) examined the relationships among teacher empowerment, instructional practice, and student academic performance. The sample for this study included 24 elementary, middle, and high schools from 16 states; the primary method of analysis was hierarchical linear modeling (HLM). The pertinent results indicate that teacher leadership is associated with pedagogical quality and student academic performance indirectly, through enhancements to the school's organization for instruction. According to the authors, school organization for instruction begins with professional community.

A relationship between teacher leadership and a variety of school-related outcomes was reported in Smylie's 1997 review of 208 international studies, which examined the state of the art in teacher leadership. According to Smylie, relatively few studies specifically targeted the outcome of student learning. Of those studies, approximately half (Bryk, Deabster, & Tum, 1994; Jenkins, Ronk, Schrag, Rude, & Stowitschek, 1994; Lee & Smith, 1994; Sebring et al., 1995; Taylor & Bogotch, 1994), including both cross-sectional and longitudinal analyses, found no evidence that teacher leadership is related to student achievement on standardized tests or to teachers' reports of student academic performance. The other half (Mortimore, Sammons, Stoll, Lewis, & Ecob, 1988; Ramey & Dornseif, 1994; Smylie & Hart, 1999) found positive relationships to academic achievement. In addition, Taylor and Bogotch (1994) reported a positive relationship between teacher leadership and student attendance. Smylie and Hart (1999) found positive relationships between participation and teachers' reports of increases in students' responsibility and enthusiasm for learning, and problem-solving skills.

Smylie (1997) acknowledges that there are many flaws in the teacher leadership literature. For example, he points out that the research varies widely in design, methodology, and context. Further, it is mostly descriptive, lacking strong conceptual definitions; is not guided by formal theory; and is plagued by serious problems with regard to validity and reliability. Smylie also notes that these general shortcomings come into pronounced focus in the research on student learning outcomes. Further, the research on student learning outcomes of teacher leadership has been conducted within a relatively short period of time after the establishment of new leadership roles, perhaps too short a period to reasonably expect these outcomes to occur. Unfortunately, most studies rely on perceptual measures of change, and few examine closely the manner in which teacher leadership is exercised (Smylie, 1997). On a positive note, however, Smylie finds that "the most well-designed studies—those that examine

longer periods of implementation, rely on more objective data, employ multiple measures, and take role performance variation into account—tend to reveal the most positive outcomes" (1997, p. 576).

Distributed Leadership and Student Achievement

A 2003 survey of the distributed leadership literature conducted by the National College for School Leadership concluded: "The relationship between shared leadership and learning is a crucially important issue, but there are no empirical data at all on this" (Bennett, Wise, Woods, & Harvey, 2003, p. 12). The following year, however, Leithwood and colleagues (2004) published a review of the literature on how leadership influences student learning and concluded that there is an association between increased student learning and leaders who develop and rely on leadership contributions from a diverse constituent base within their organizations.

Leithwood and Jantzi (1998) conducted one of the few correlational studies of distributed leadership. Nearly 3,000 teachers and 10,000 students in 110 schools in a large district were asked about their perceptions of the effects of various school leaders on student engagement in school. The primary finding is that neither principal nor teacher leadership were perceived as having important effects on student engagement. Leithwood and Jantzi concluded that leadership distributed to teachers is perceived to have greater direct effect on students than does the principal because teachers are directly involved with the students. This result is consistent with Ogawa and Hart's (1985) finding that principal leadership explained 2-8% of the variation in student performance. The perceived effect of distributed leadership is small compared to other school and environmental factors, but the findings provide support for continued distribution of leadership functions beyond the principal.

Shared Leadership and Student Achievement

To date, quantitative studies linking shared leadership to student learning are virtually nonexistent (Witziers, Bosker, & Kruger, 2003). A search through the peer-reviewed, scholarly journals and the ERIC database reveals only a handful of articles that list shared leadership in their title or descriptors. Those that do are very much what Smylie would term "mostly descriptive, lacking strong conceptual definitions and overreliance on perceptual data" (Smylie, 1997, p. 574). As such, the quantitatively verifiable merits of shared leadership remain to be seen. While at present there is scholarship on the topics of school-based decision making, teacher leadership, and distributed leadership, the emergence of professional learning communities, and the shared leadership model inherent within them, is much more recent.

Marks and Printy (2003) emphasized the importance of shared leadership in eliciting the instructional leadership of teachers for improving student performance. This shared leadership approach may help galvanize a school around ambitious academic goals and establish conditions that support teachers and facilitate student success (Togneri & Anderson, 2003). Togneri and Anderson assert that principals who share leadership responsibilities with others will be less subject to burnout than principals who attempt the challenges and complexities of leadership alone. Further, principal leadership that elicits high levels of commitment and

professionalism from teachers, and works interactively with the school staff to share instructional leadership capacity, is associated with school organizations that learn and perform at high levels (Marks & Printy, 2003).

Summary

This review closely examined four approaches to involving teachers in school leadership. The terminology used by various researchers obfuscates the extent to which the concepts overlap one another. Each approach incorporates multiple constructs related to leadership, and there is overlap in the constructs used to define each approach. Researchers are urged to increase the specificity with which they study leadership in order to bring clarity to our understanding.

The performance expectations and accountability measures built into the No Child Left Behind Act are driving the need for a more systematic understanding of the ways that leadership may impact student achievement. Many studies have found an association between principal leadership behaviors and student academic performance (Leithwood & Jantzi, 2000; Mazzeo, 2003; Waters, 2003). For example, Waters (2003) examined 70 leadership studies and identified 21 leadership behaviors that are most strongly correlated with improved student achievement. The behaviors, whether demonstrated individually or collectively in a school, need to be tested using rigorous research methods to determine their effect on student achievement. Further, such studies need to examine the effect of leadership in different contexts such as in urban schools or low-performing schools (Harris, 2004).

While a substantial amount of qualitative research exists on the subject of sharing leadership (see Conley, 1991; Murphy & Beck, 1995), only a small number of studies examine the instructional benefits, and the findings of those studies yield ambiguous results (Smylie, 1997). Some studies show a positive relationship between shared decision making and student achievement (Ramey & Dornseif, 1994), but others find no relationship (Bryk et al., 1994; Taylor & Bogotch, 1994). The lack of consistent and conclusive evidence about the instructional outcomes of sharing school leadership may be explained by the level of implementation—even the best-designed structures are not likely to achieve their intended outcomes if they are not put in place, implemented well over a substantial period of time, or provided adequate resources (Smylie, 1997). Another possible explanation suggests that the ambiguous evidence on instructional outcomes may be explained by weaknesses in the studies themselves (Smylie & Hart, 1999). For example, scholarly reviews consistently point out that the SBM literature consists primarily of position statements, project descriptions, and status reports (Malen, Ogawa, & Kranz, 1990; Murphy & Beck, 1995). In addition, only a small proportion of studies consist of systematic investigations with identifiable questions for inquiry, specified methodologies, and collection and analysis of original data; and most shared school leadership literature is descriptive, suffering from an over reliance on anecdotes, perceptual data, and post-hoc measures (Smylie, 1997). The next phase of research on sharing school leadership should move beyond description and focus more on explanation, and incorporate longitudinal studies that capture change over time.

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