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OHIO'S LOCAL PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEES:
POLITICS AND POWER AMONG TEACHERS AND ADMINISTRATORS

DISSERTATION

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy in the
Graduate School of The Ohio State University

By

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1999

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ABSTRACT

This dissertation is a qualitative study of three Local Professional Development Committees (LPDCs) in Central Ohio established by Ohio Senate Bill 230. The purpose of the study was to explore how these committees, composed of a mixed group of teachers and administrators, work to renew educator certification. Teachers and administrators seldom work collaboratively on sustained projects beyond collective bargaining which usually centers on creating consensus from conflicting agendas. Now, teachers and administrators face the challenge of creating a cohesive, collaborative committee to carry out state-mandated responsibilities. The central question was whether LPDCs could successfully fulfill their transformative potential as part of a larger effort to reshape professional development in Ohio.

This study employed a critical framework to examine three Central Ohio LPDCs in districts with various organizational structures from site-based to hierarchical. One area of this study focused on the dynamics of the committee’s mixed teacher-administrator membership, and how the committee members worked together to perform the functions prescribed to them by law. The second area of the study examined the LPDC’s role in the context of each school district’s professional development system, organizational structure, and political system. Given the nature of the research problem and the theoretical frame of the study, the methodology combines an interpretive methodology and a critical perspective.

Data were collected through participant observation, non-participant observation, interviewing, field notes and content analysis of documents. The data were analyzed, and the three districts were described with respect to their LPDCs.

Results of the study indicate that although LPDCs vary in their organization and
working style, they are able to fulfill their obligations under the law. The ability of an
LPDC to move beyond compliance and improve professional development practices is
influenced by a district’s organizational and political structures, that can serve to either
facilitate or inhibit these goals. Within the committees, the members’ shared
understanding of the LPDCs professional development mission is also necessary for
transformative professional development action.

The study includes recommendations for areas of improvement and growth for all
three districts, as well as the Ohio Department of Education and higher education.
For my husband Dana whose love and patience made me a believer, and whose support made it happen.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

When I began the final leg of my journey toward my last degree, I had no idea of the number of people whose lives I would intersect, and who would ultimately be my cheerleaders throughout this year-long process. Without their support and encouragement, I would never have been able to achieve warp speed in completing this project.

Thanks to all of my LPDC colleagues who graciously agreed to be my subjects, allowing my tape recorder to sit in the middle of our meetings. Working with them on committee as well as through my research has been an incredible experience of professional growth.

Thanks to the educators in my other two study districts who welcomed me into their schools, offices, and meetings, and made me feel like a part of their staffs. Some of us have become very close colleagues, collaborating on other projects, and my professional and personal life is richer for it.

Thanks to Dr. Marilyn Johnston, Dr. Barbara Seidl, Dr. Brad Mitchell, and Dr. Becky Kirschner for giving me the room to pursue my goal and holding me up along the way. Special thanks to my co-advisers Dr. Johnston and Dr. Seidl for their critique and guidance, and for keeping a sense of humor along the way.

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Thanks to Dr. Susan Witten at the Ohio Department of Education who encouraged and supported my project from the beginning and made room for me on the state committee.

Thanks to my family, who “put up with” another degree and loved me in spite of it. Mom, this “book” is for you. Lora, four years of college is plenty.

A final special thanks to my husband Dana whose love and support have been unfailing, even without cue cards.
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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION TO STUDY

This qualitative study focused on three Local Professional Development Committees (LPDCs) in Central Ohio established by Ohio Senate Bill 230. The purpose of the study was to explore how these committees, composed of a mixed group of teachers and administrators, work collaboratively to renew certification of the educators in their district. Teachers and administrators in any given school district seldom work collaboratively on sustained projects beyond collective bargaining which usually centers on creating consensus from conflicting agendas. Now, teachers and administrators are faced with the challenge of creating a cohesive, collaborative committee in order to carry out state-mandated responsibilities. This study examines how each committee fits into the organizational system of its district and operates under state legislative mandates and policies. The central question is whether these LPDCs can successfully fulfill their transformative potential as part of a larger effort to reshape professional development in Ohio. The results of this study provide recommendations to participant school districts and the state of Ohio and identify themes for further study and discussion.
Introduction

In 1996, the Ohio General Assembly passed Senate Bill 230 which authorized the establishment of Local Professional Development Committees (LPDCs) and required them to be operational in each school district and chartered nonpublic school by September 1998. The initial legislation was introduced in response to a perceived crisis in education that prevailed within the legislature. Legislators, hearing horror stories from their constituents about incompetent teachers devised the legislation as a means of addressing those concerns. With input from the Ohio Education Association who had been lobbying for a professional standards board for educators, and the Ohio Department of Education which wished to divest itself of the responsibility for providing Continuing Education Unit (CEU) credits for administrators, LPDC legislation was drafted. Now, in Ohio, professional development of educators is tied to student achievement.

Ohio Revised Code (ORC) Section 3319.22 outlines the specific requirements for the establishment of LPDC’s in districts both with and without collective bargaining units including the structure of the committees, the distribution of membership, the scope of the committees, and the procedures under which they operate. One mandate in ORC 3319.22 for all LPDCs is that they be composed of a minimum of five members, the majority of whom are practicing classroom teachers. The other LPDC members are administrators or other educational personnel from either the building or district level.

The LPDCs perform two important functions. First, they take over from the Ohio Department of Education (ODE) the task of reviewing course work and professional development activities completed by educators to determine if the requirements for renewal of certification or licensure have been met. Each LPDC will then make recommendations to The Ohio Department of Education to renew the certificates or licenses of the educators who have completed the necessary requirements. The Ohio Department of Education is still responsible, however, for issuing new certificates or licenses, handling certificate
still responsible, however, for issuing new certificates or licenses, handling certificate upgrades, and establishing and processing any fees associated with these functions.

The second function of the LPDC is to shape and guide professional development within each district. Now, renewal of certification or licensure no longer means that an educator must only complete a certain number of education credits through either college/university course work or Ohio Department of Education-issued Continuing Education Units (CEUs). The focus has shifted to the relevance of professional development work to the individual educator’s current assignment, and the goals of both his school and district.

LPDCs serve to fulfill the mission of Ohio’s Professional Development System which, according to Ohio’s new 1998 Teacher Education and Licensure Standards, is to ensure high levels of academic achievement for all students in the state through strong educator preparation programs, licensure requirements, and on-going professional development of practicing educators. In this capacity, the LPDCs are an integral element in Ohio’s role as one of 12 partner states selected by the National Commission on Teaching and America’s Future to implement programs whose goals are to transform the education profession.

Following the passage of the original Senate Bill, additional legislation, House Bill 477, was introduced after intense lobbying by administrator associations. Administrators throughout Ohio voiced concerns about the fact that the majority teacher membership on LPDCs would be responsible for reviewing administrator certification/licensure requirements. Their lobbying efforts focused on extricating administrators from the LPDC renewal review process. The legislation that finally passed, Amended Substitute House Bill 770, represented a compromise. It allowed the membership of the LPDC to be flexible so that a majority membership of teachers could examine teacher certification/licensure issues and a majority membership of administrators could examine issues of administrative certification/licensure.
The efforts of administrative groups to remove themselves from the scrutiny of LPDCs highlights the historical labor-management division that is an impediment to trust and communication between teachers and administrators in traditional hierarchical organization structure (Lugg & Boyd, 1993). This is especially true of districts with collective bargaining units. In these districts, teachers and administrators most often find themselves sitting in the same room across the bargaining table from each other, battling over contract issues. Now, in many of these same rooms and around many of these same tables, they are faced with the task of creating a cohesive, collaborative committee.

**Description of Problem**

In many cases, the teacher-majority LPDC structure prescribed by law represents a drastic shift in district organizational power structures. This structure will be in place for many LPDC functions because the majority of certificated/licensed personnel in a district are teachers. Theoretically within this structure, positions of authority are shared equally by the administrator and teacher members of LPDCs, with teachers often in the majority. In this regard, an LPDC not only has the potential to be a transformative catalyst for professional development, but also to redefine the role of practicing teachers in district decision making.

In carrying out their duties, LPDC teachers and administrators are required to collaborate and engage in shared decision making concerning certification/license renewal and professional development within the district. Although the size of the LPDCs varies from district to district, and LPDCs are organized at various levels (building, grade level, district) in various locales, the mixed teacher-administrator membership and resulting dynamics of the process of shared decision making remain a constant.

Ohio school districts have various levels of experience with shared decision making and decentralization, both of which are the major characteristics of LPDCs. Some
building-level administrators have leadership styles which encourage participative decision making among building staff members (Sergiovanni 1991). These principals regularly delegate authority to the teaching staff and utilize the teachers' expertise in order to manage buildings effectively. More often, however, schools and especially school districts are organized hierarchically, with decisions made by the top administrators and disseminated down through the various levels of leadership within the district and then within the school buildings. This top-down style of decision making results in "... a growing separation between teachers and administrators, and an increasing tendency toward bureaucratization" (Aronowitz & Giroux, 1985). Additionally, many times the relationship between teachers and administrators in a district is negatively influenced by power struggles which manifest themselves through conflicts between administration and teachers' associations, especially during contract negotiations.

As teachers and administrators move from a traditional organizational hierarchy of authority in everyday district operations to the collaborative model of LPDCs, or if the teachers and administrators who are members of the LPDC have limited experience with sharing decision making, potential tensions and factions within the LPDC, and between the LPDC and other district entities, could manifest. In a traditional hierarchy, teachers are removed from decisions about "...what counts as knowledge, what is worth teaching, how one judges the purpose and nature of instruction, how one views the role of the school in society, and what the latter implies for understanding how specific social and cultural interests shape all levels of school life..." (Aronowitz & Giroux, 1985). In a traditional hierarchy, teachers have little opportunity to shape the conditions of schooling because they have little or no control over either the ideological or economic circumstances of their own work (Aronowitz & Giroux, 1985). As members of a district’s LPDC, the role of teachers changes significantly, and in theory, these teachers gain much more control in areas that had formerly been exclusively the realm of administration. Power becomes a major
element as districts adopt the LPDC initiative and put it into practice, and the roles of educators become highly politicized (Giroux, 1988).

Posturing for power, either on the committee or within a district, can be problematic as LPDCs carry out their functions. The pedagogy of management under which most administrators are trained assumes that teacher behavior needs to be controlled (Aronowitz & Giroux, 1985). As teachers move into positions of influence through the LPDCs, administrators find themselves and their position of authority threatened. This tension surfaced at the state level when administrators, through various administrative organizations, attempted to extricate themselves from the LPDC review process. Administrators lobbied for removal from the LPDC process where teachers would make decisions about their certification/licensure renewal. Although they weren't successful in removing themselves from the process entirely, they have been able to reestablish administrative control over administrative issues through Amended Substitute House Bill 770.

Additionally, The Ohio Department of Education experienced severe problems in the communication network it employed to send information out to LPDCs. Throughout the pilot year of 1997-98, materials were sent to all districts through superintendents, and in many cases were never received by LPDC members. Whether this was simply oversight or negligence, or a concerted effort to retain power at the administrative level, the flow of information was cut off at the top levels of the district. As a result, The Ohio Department of Education found itself in the position of funding a mass mailing to all school buildings in the state in order to provide all LPDC members with the information they needed to establish themselves in their districts.

Even some established LPDCs which have attempted to disseminate information or provide in-service to district employees have found themselves up against the barricade of district political and organizational structures. LPDCs have not been granted district priority in many cases, and much of their work is not currently seen as important by central
administration. This could arise from a number of factors including general lack of information about LPDCs and their functions, or even an attempt, implicit or explicit, to maintain administrative power at the administrative level.

This may well reflect the training that administrators receive in which organizational theory and business management are combined. This training assumes that language, systems, and accountability measures are all beyond the grasp of teachers (Aronowitz & Giroux, 1985) or if not beyond them, outside their responsibilities. These assumptions are in direct opposition to the decentralization and participatory decision making that are the cornerstone of the LPDC. Current difficulties in LPDCs may or may not reflect an attempt, implicit or explicit, to maintain administrative power at the administrative level. These kinds of questions are at the heart of this study and will determine whether LPDCs can function effectively within the current climate of state and local politics.

For an LPDC to be successful, teachers and administrators, both on the committee and within the district, will need to negotiate new relationships and navigate through the process of collaboration. Critical theorists would argue that educators must take on the responsibility for the system in which they operate and work toward goals of self-empowerment and transformation (McLaren, 1989). It could be argued that the apparent democratic nature of the LPDCs provides a possible context for empowerment and transformation. Whether LPDCs support this is documented and analyzed by this study.

Purpose of the Study

This study had two main purposes. First, it closely examined the interactions between teacher and administrator members on selected LPDCs, describing how they carry out their work with each other in restructured roles as collaborators, and analyzing whether power relations are transformed through this committee (Aronowitz & Giroux, 1991). These teacher-administrator relationships were examined within the structural frame of the
LPDC, as well as through external factors such as historical district relationships among those individuals, and past experiences of committee members in working collaboratively.

The second goal of the study was to examine how the LPDC fits into the organizational structure of its school district and the larger arena of state mandates and policies. The study applied both organizational theory (Owens, 1987; Senge, 1990; Bolman & Deal, 1997; Argyris & Schön, 1974, 1978) which focuses on various framing perspectives of organizations and how they operate, as well as critical theory (Freire, 1989; Apple, 1986; Giroux, 1988, 1997; Aronowitz and Giroux, 1985, 1988; McLaren, 1991; Shannon, 1992) which emphasizes the politics of education and directs research to empower and transform the context under study.

**Research Questions**

The LPDC organizational structure poses several research questions which probe into the political context in which LPDCs are placed:

**Question 1.** What are administrator and teacher LPDC members' perceptions concerning their roles in the district, in particular, with regard to decision making and other forms of power?

**Sub questions:**

a. How are teacher and administrator roles defined?

b. What leadership opportunities exist in the district and who occupies those positions?

c. How do administrators and teachers perceive the importance of the LPDC’s work?
d. How do teacher and administrator members place the LPDC in the hierarchy of district decision making?

e. How do district roles influence the work of the LPDC?

**Question 2.** How do LPDC members interact with each other in working situations?

**Sub questions:**

- a. How is work distributed among committee members?
- b. Who takes on leadership roles among committee members?
- c. When and where are working meetings held?
- d. Where and how is information stored, and who has access to it?
- e. How are compensation issues addressed?
- f. What resources (clerical, time, information) do various members have?

**Question 3.** What are perceptions of superintendents and teacher association presidents concerning their relationship in the district relative to each other and its influence on the LPDC?

**Sub questions:**

- a. How is the relationship between administration and teachers defined by each?
- b. What have been the significant events that have contributed to this definition?
- c. What is the historical relationship between administrators and teachers in the district?
- d. How involved have both the administration and teachers' association been in the LPDC's work?
Question 4. How does the structure of the LPDC affect power relationships within the district?

Sub questions:

a. Who controls the Professional Development Block Grant, and how much influence does the LPDC have over its distribution?
b. What authority does the LPDC have to make district policy?
c. How is communication established between the LPDC and the various members of the school district?
d. How does the LPDC interact with district-level administration?
e. What does the LPDC have autonomy over?
f. Who has authority over the LPDC within the district?

Question 5. What factors may exist at the committee level and/or the district level that impede an LPDC from being an effective reform initiative?

Sub questions:

a. What district policies are in place that may impede the LPDC?
b. What constraints do LPDC members believe they face from the district?
c. What relationship dynamics within the committee affect its performance negatively?
d. What additional support do LPDC members believe they need?
e. How do members' perceptions of their position in the district power structure affect group efficacy?
Stakeholders and Methodology in the Study

Three Central Ohio school districts were part of the study. Two of these districts were 1997-98 pilot districts and the other was a district with a new LPDC in 1998-99. These three districts represent a variety of experience with shared decision making of teacher-administrator groups. The stakeholders for the purposes of this study were:

1) teacher members of LPDCs;
2) administrator members of LPDCs;
3) district teacher association presidents;
4) district superintendents;
5) Ohio Department of Education personnel; and
6) other LPDC representatives from state and regional committees.

Methods included participant observation, observation, interviewing, field notes, and document analysis. As both a researcher and an LPDC member in my own district, I participated as a committee member taking field notes and keeping a researcher's journal. Teacher and administrator members of all three LPDCs were observed in their roles as committee members and interviewed about them. District superintendents and association presidents were interviewed about their relationships relative to each other and their positions concerning the scope and function of LPDCs. Ohio Department of Education personnel and other LPDC representatives were involved in informal conversations surrounding the purpose and operation of LPDCs in Ohio. Documents collected from all three LPDCs and The Ohio Department of Education were used for content analysis. Data was collected throughout the 1998-99 school year informally, with formal data collection beginning in January 1999 and ending in June 1999. Analysis was ongoing.

As analysis progressed, the information was shared with various stakeholders including the LPDC members under study, district personnel, and The Ohio Department of
Education through informal conversations and formal member checks. Input from these conversations and member checks was used to identify emergent themes, direct further analysis, and provide face validity for the study. Findings have been shared with The Ohio Department of Education LPDC Team, and I have worked in cooperation with this team throughout the entire study. This study should not only provide a better understanding of LPDCs and their role in the larger education reform movement, but also serve as a guidepost for LPDCs throughout the state as they work to transform professional development in Ohio.

**Need for the Study**

Twenty-one pilot LPDCs were initiated in 1997-98. Through information presented at various meetings, participants shared many of the challenges they encountered in their first year. There is little known about the details of these pilot projects because the only documented data have been quarterly state status reports and various local documents that have not been analyzed or disseminated. Since each district was charged with creating its own LPDC with minimal state guidelines, LPDCs look very different across the state. The one constant, however, is the mixed teacher-administrator membership requirement. Preliminary evidence from pilot LPDCs and The Ohio Department of Education pointed to emergent problems. This study looked closely at the relationships among members of three LPDCs to determine how they affect the functioning of the LPDCs. The results from this study have provided recommendations to participant school districts, higher education, and the State of Ohio.
Definition of Terms

**Local Professional Development Committee**—A committee mandated by the Ohio General Assembly in a school district with a mixed teacher-administrator membership whose function is to review educators' Individual Professional Development Plans (IPDPs), assign Continuing Education Units (CEUs) or other credit for professional development, and make recommendations for renewal of certification/licensure to the Ohio Department of Education.

**Shared Decision Making**—The process under which the LPDC operates to reach decisions about certification/licensure renewals, awarding of professional development credit, and operating procedures. Each member of the LPDC takes part in the decision making.

**Mixed Teacher-Administrator Membership**—By law, LPDCs have a minimum of five members, the majority of whom must be practicing classroom teachers. New legislation allows for a shifting membership so that when administrators are being reviewed, the majority may shift to administrators. In its simplest terms, an LPDC is composed of three teacher members and two administrator members or two teacher members and three administrator members.

**Traditional Roles**—Education roles that follow the traditional hierarchy of administrators having power over teachers and making decisions which teachers carry out.

**Restructured Roles**—Education roles that are different from the traditional hierarchy and may include teachers and administrators functioning on equal levels of power and decision making.
LPDC Responsibilities--The LPDC responsibilities include establishing operating procedures, reviewing certification/licensure requirements, awarding professional development credit, and guiding professional development.

LPDC Effectiveness--The perceptions of LPDC members, high-level district administrators, and teachers' association presidents about the degree of success in fulfilling LPDC responsibilities.

Power--The ability to make decisions that affect others in the district, create policy, and carry out functions either autonomously or through delegation.

Limitations

This study involved three districts with collective bargaining units which have implemented a district-level LPDC. The study included two pilot districts and a first-year district in the Central Ohio area. Districts represented a variety of experience with shared decision making among mixed teacher-administrator groups. Methods included participant observation, non-participant observation, interviewing, field notes, and document analysis. Data was collected throughout the 1998-99 school year and analysis was ongoing. The study's findings warranted further investigation, and recommendations have been made to The Ohio Department of Education, higher education, and the participating districts.
CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to explore how Local Professional Development Committees (LPDCs) in Central Ohio operate on two different levels. The first focus, the micro level, examined how the members of the committees who are teachers and administrators work together to perform their duties. At the macro, or district level, the focus shifted to the LPDCs' place in the larger organizational framework of the districts.

The study was framed by two distinct theories—critical theory and organizational theory. Critical theory is a call to action for educators that I as a researcher, a practicing teacher, and LPDC member, adopted as a lens through which to study the transformative potential of LPDCs and teachers' roles within them. Organizational theory places LPDCs within the political and structural frames of organizational change and their associated dynamics.

In addition to the study's two grounding theories, additional relevant literature falls into the following areas: education reform and its complexity of shifting localization of control including (1) teacher empowerment through professionalism of teaching, and changing administrative leadership roles; and (2) collaboration and shared decision making.
Critical Theory

Introduction

Critical theory is one of the framing theories of this study, and it is utilized as a lens through which to study Ohio's Local Professional Development Committees and their impact on educators in Ohio. As a career educator, I have consistently been in the middle of reform initiatives. Through my work and research, I have come to define myself as a critical educator, and as such, I perceive myself as a change agent. I am currently a member of my district's LPDC. Critical theory drives me to question the status of LPDCs and their role in transforming professional development, and serves as a call to action through which I have conducted this research.

Critical Theory in Education

As a relatively young body of work, critical theory has had only two distinct incarnations. First generation critical theory originated in the work of the Frankfurt School of critical theory which can trace its roots to pre-WW II Germany and the Institute for Social Research's Freudo-Marxist analysts (McLaren, 1989). The assumptions of Dewey and other social constructionists weave throughout critical theory as well, incorporating a perception that schooling is neither politically nor morally neutral and defining a "politics of difference" (Giroux, 1988a, p. 85) that denies the homogeneity of schooling and acknowledges its differences and the struggles they bring about.

Much of the work of modern critical education theorists has its origins in Paulo Freire's Pedagogy of the Oppressed (1989). Although this seminal piece of literature deals primarily with the education of illiterate adults in Third World Latin America, Freire's philosophy transcends its humble roots and speaks to all educators as we look to improve the state of education in the United States. Freire reaffirms education as anything but
neutral and advocates a raised consciousness that he calls "conscientização...learning to perceive social, political, and economic contradictions, and to take action against the oppressive elements of reality" (Freire, 1989, p. 19). Freire explores the positioning of oppressors and the oppressed within the context of education for democracy and the dynamics of the complex relationship between them. Within Freire's theoretical framework, educators are encouraged to strive for democracy, taking action through reflection and dialogue combined with critical thinking.

Second generation theorists such as Henry Giroux, Stanley Aronowitz, Peter McLaren, Michael Apple, and Patrick Shannon have built upon the earlier Frankfurt work and Freire's concept of conscientização and redirected their focus to educators and the process of schooling. Today, critical theory creates a new discourse that "combines the language of critique with the language of possibility" (Giroux, 1988b, p. xxxii). Modern critical theorists ask educators to critically examine the nature of their work, understand the political nature of their roles, and redefine themselves as "transformative intellectuals" (Giroux, 1988b, p. xxxii).

Critical Theory and Educators

In order to examine their roles through critical theory, educators must confront issues of power and position. In reality, few practicing teachers consider themselves political, but their denial does not separate them from the politics of education (Shannon, 1992). To become true transformative intellectuals, educators must ask difficult questions. They must be willing to ask how the current organization and practice of schooling serves certain interests, and how they are positioned within this system. In order to be transformative, "teachers must be able to shape the ways in which time, space, activity, and knowledge organize everyday life in schools" (Giroux, 1988b, p. xxxiv). To be able to
shape policy, educators must examine their own ideologies and see how they are perpetuated through their own experiences and needs (Giroux, 1997).

The lens of critical theory makes problematic the processes that position teachers and administrators within relationships of power and dependency that are, in a large part, the result of the underlying structure of schooling which reflect and reproduce the inequities in the larger political and cultural arena (Giroux, 1997). Currently, the organizational constraints under which most teachers labor leaves very little opportunity to engage collectively in critical pursuits, and as a result, political issues in education remain largely unexamined (Aronowitz & Giroux, 1985). Within current organizational structure, power is dynamic and the balance shifts continually between resources and practices that privilege certain positions. "Power becomes a form of cultural production, linking agency and structure through the ways in which public and private representations are concretely organized and structured within schools" (Giroux, 1988b, p. 101). Power and structure are intertwined, and both affect the positioning of educators and their opportunities for self empowerment.

Critical theory argues that schools do not provide opportunities for self empowerment of teachers, and may even work against them by obscuring the responsibility that educators have for the system in which they operate. As critical educators, teachers must work towards both self empowerment and social transformation, and see the problems that currently exist from many perspectives that are linked to class, race, gender, and especially power issues (McLaren, 1989). Aronowitz & Giroux (1991, p. 22) argue that "without a vision of transformed power relations within schools and the larger society, education reforms will inevitably be reversed or used to maintain the existing authorities." This has indeed been the case through many earlier reform movements which have served only to legitimate "both new forms of control and greater state intervention using industrial and technical models" (Apple, 1986, p. 40). Even though there has been some organized resistance by teachers and their collective organizations,
most of these reforms and the institutions driving them have answered with ever more sophisticated attempts to overcome any opposition.

The most recent trend has responded to growing concerns over accountability in education by moving toward excessive administration and management of the day to day life of teachers, utilizing management pedagogy which assumes teachers' behavior needs to be controlled. Predominant organizational and leadership theories allow teachers very little control over their work, and there is "a growing separation between teachers and administrators, and an increasing tendency toward bureaucratization" (Aronowitz & Giroux, 1985, p. 27). The administrative training which combines organizational theory and business management assumes that its language, systems, and accountability measures are beyond the grasp of teachers. This belief is in direct opposition to any realization of decentralization and participatory democracy which are, ironically, attributes of many current reform initiatives (Aronowitz & Giroux, 1985).

In the traditional bureaucratic education hierarchy, teachers are removed from decisions about "what counts as knowledge, what is worth teaching, how one views the role of school in society, and what the latter implies for understanding how specific social and cultural interests shape all levels of school life" (Aronowitz & Giroux, 1985, p. 28). As a result, we have witnessed a process of "intensification" which has deskillled teachers and removed them from controlling the conception of their work, leaving them disempowered by the technical and social division of their labor. Teachers are under the control of "experts" who are not knowledgeable about the context of the classroom, widening the political gap between those who have the most control over the schools and those who spend their days in the classroom (Apple, 1986; Aronowitz & Giroux, 1985).

The positioning of teachers outside of the power of making decisions about their work serves to intensify the antagonism that already exists over their relative autonomy in the classroom and their lack of control over both goals and purposes of schooling (Aronowitz & Giroux, 1985). Ultimately, "when the power of decision is located outside

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rather than within the one who should decide, the latter has only the illusion of deciding” (Freire, 1989, p. 159). This illusion is quite transparent, and it is just a matter of time before disillusionment and frustration are entrenched, and teachers find themselves in a cycle of self-deprecation where they internalize feelings of powerlessness, distrust themselves as policy makers, and contribute to their own oppression.

Critical Theory and the Call to Action

Although much of modern critical theory focuses on pedagogy and how teachers as transformative intellectuals can help their students achieve democracy, this study takes both theory and practice to the policy-making level. In Schooling and the Struggle for Public Life, Henry Giroux (1988a) makes clear the need for educators to take responsibility for their own emancipation:

If educators are going to have any significant effect on the unequal economic, political, and social arrangements that plague schools and the wider society, they have no choice but to actively engage in the struggle for democracy with groups outside their classrooms. (p. 110)

If teachers are going to become transformative intellectuals and shape the conditions of schooling, they must first gain control over the ideological and economic circumstances of their own work (Aronowitz & Giroux, 1985). Recognizing the impact on the teaching profession of the first wave of reform initiatives that swept the country after 1983's A Nation at Risk report by the National Commission on Excellence in Education, and the second wave that arrived in 1986 with the Holmes Group, the Carnegie Forum on Education and the Economy, the National Governors' Association, the Education Commission of the States, among others, critical theory demands that teachers take an active role in reshaping schooling (Darling-Hammond, 1988). Instead of simply executing
education reforms that have been created and administered by those who currently occupy positions of power within the traditional education bureaucracy. Teachers need to redefine their roles as educational leaders and engage in critical reflection which makes even pedagogy political and addresses the struggle over power relationships that currently exists in schools (Aronowitz & Giroux, 1985, 1991).

Teachers have to willingly take on positions of power in order to become visible in the central role they play in the attempts to reform public education, and to make the public recognize them as leaders.

Educators need to take as their first concern the issue of empowerment, and the route to that goal is not through definitions of professionalism based on the testing of teachers or other empirically driven forms of accountability. Empowerment, in this case, depends on the ability of teachers in the future to struggle collectively in order to create those ideological and material conditions of work that enable them to share power to shape policy, and to play an active role in structuring school/community relations. (Giroux, 1988a, p. 214)

Teachers must then work to overcome school reforms which fail to maintain and defend "the traditions and principles necessary for a democratic society" (Aronowitz & Giroux, 1985, p. 24), and focus on education reform which examines the "institution arrangements that structure and mediate the role of schooling in the wider society" (Giroux, 1988a, p. 109). Only in this way can educators provide leadership models which promise that reform extends beyond the schoolhouse walls in order to revitalize society as a whole (Aronowitz & Giroux, 1991). Ohio's LPDCs provide the opportunity for teachers to answer the call to action, step up into positions of power, and have a hand in shaping the policy which defines their work. This study of LPDCs through a critical theory lens has
made explicit the underlying politics and structure which both enhance and impede teacher empowerment and provide direction for future reform initiatives.

Organizational Theory

Introduction

Organizational theory has been developed by several different researchers who approach organizations from a variety of standpoints. Bennis & Nanus (1997) address the "social architecture" of organizations, while Bolman & Deal (1997) use multiple interrelated "frames" to describe organizational dynamics. Senge (1990) and Wheatley & Kellner-Rogers (1996) have provided additional theories which use the construct of organization as "system." These and several other researchers have used a variety of metaphors and analytical techniques through which to study organizations; however, the body of organizational theory literature contains several key issues which directly influence a study of Local Professional Development Committees and their transformative potential. As a new entity, the LPDC's position within the current educational hierarchy is still nebulous. Organizational theory provides a means of analysis to understand an LPDC's role and function within the education organization.

Organization and Structure

Most of the organizational theorists address issues of structure within organizations, and when discussing educational organizations, the predominant model is the traditional bureaucratic hierarchy of power and decision making. Public schools are very dependent on their environment, and this is one reason that bureaucratic hierarchies continue to be the norm in education. As this structure has become more formalized and complex creating a tradition-dominated and predictable environment, the bureaucratic
rigidity has become suffocating to the point of stagnation (Bolman & Deal, 1997). This particular formal structure can sometimes be positive if it helps educators to do their work, but it becomes extremely negative if it constrains them through barriers or allows excessive control by administration (Bolman & Deal, 1997).

Wherever professionals operate within the context of an established bureaucracy, they are embedded in an organizational knowledge structure and a related network of institutional systems of control, authority, information, maintenance, and reward, all of which are tied to prevailing images of technical expertise. (Schön, 1983, p. 336)

Bennis & Nanus (1997) describe this type of bureaucracy as the formalistic style of social architecture. In this model, superior positioning is the basis for power, and human relationships are structured hierarchically. The formalistic structure is characterized by rules, laws, rewards, and punishments, and compliance is expected of all subordinates with decisions made only by those in authority and directed down the chain. There is to be no deviation from authoritative direction, and risk taking is to be avoided. Growth is defined as following the established order. In many cases, the structure of education organizations creates the biggest conflict: although they are charged with promoting social change, they are also, within this formalized structure, committed to preserving traditional values (Owens, 1987).

Formalized educational bureaucratic structure creates a barrier to change by inherently promoting isolationism. School personnel are compartmentalized hierarchically and horizontally by their roles and the physical space to which they are assigned in order to carry out these roles. Barth (1990) describes this as parallel play where each individual keeps to his or her assigned domain, rarely venturing out. One reason that parallel play may be so prevalent is that it provides one level of defense for change imposed from
outside the domain. To protect themselves and carry out their jobs, teachers and principals keep safe within their own realms and often lash out at one another in defense. The culture of isolation transforms principals from teacher advocates to teacher adversaries, and transforms what should be collegial roles into levels of subordination (Barth, 1990).

This type of professional isolation stifles professional growth which is dependent on both collegial relationships and reflective practices. "Ordinary bureaucracies tend to resist a professional's attempt to move. . . to reflective practice" (Schön, 1983, p. 328). Reflection which would allow practitioners to become aware of their own frames as well as those of others is discouraged. In many cases, if a teacher were able to reflect in action it could pose "a potential threat to the dynamically conservative system in which she lives" (Schön, 1983).

Educational hierarchies are beset with many other problems. First of all, with changing models throughout the business world that shift toward participative management, hierarchies have become obsolete. Education has, in many ways, fallen behind industry in terms of management innovation. As the organization as a machine metaphor is being replaced, the education organization's focus on "right" discourages the risk taking that is inherent in restructuring and change (Wheatley & Kellner-Rogers, 1996). The education organization has little support for experimentation, and as a result remains stifled by its own inability to break free of its paradigm which focuses on "fragmentation, competition, and reactivity" (Kofman & Senge, 1993, p. 7). Rather than operating on an organic, self-managing, parallel system which encourages error for growth, the hierarchical system through its contrived structure cannot tolerate error and, as a result, remains static (Wheatley & Kellner-Rogers, 1996).

In many cases, hierarchies have problems with both coordination and control. As power filters from the top down, the larger mission becomes lost among individual unit goals. In some cases "... roles and activities can overlap creating conflict, wasted effort, and unintended redundancies" (Bolman & Deal, 1997, p. 60). The focus tends to be on
efficiency and control, order, and prediction rules the day (Bennis & Townsend, 1997). In this scenario, the people within the bureaucratic ranks are always looking upward for leadership based on an assumption of their own powerlessness (Senge, 1990). Hierarchical "bureaucracies like reasonable, adaptive, malleable, docile people" (Bennis & Townsend, 1995, p. 95) which flies in the face of the new organization paradigm which seeks to acknowledge, create, and empower. Bureaucracies perpetuate infantilism because "exclusion from critical choices leads to a pervasive feeling of inefficiency and isolation that erodes the profession" (Barth, 1990, p. 34). Additionally, because authority is limited throughout the hierarchy, those within the chain are dependent on others outside their own chain of authority. If decisions from the top happen to be incorrect, the whole organization falters (Pfeffer, 1992).

Control and the struggle over power are also characteristic of educational bureaucracies. If we define power as "the potential ability to influence behavior, to change the course of events, to overcome resistance and to get people to do things that they would not otherwise do" (Pfeffer, 1992, p. 30), we understand that as one moves down the ranks, power is reduced accordingly. In education bureaucracies, where interdependency is the norm, power and influence become scarce resources which are usually concentrated at the top of the administrative chain and manifest themselves through various symbols of power such as physical space, representation in governance, amount of salary, and control over resource allocation. Additionally, power emerges as location in the communication network as well, with centralized physical location and control over communication often working hand in hand (Pfeffer, 1992). A struggle over this power and the resources it controls is common in education organizations. "In professional bureaucracies, chronic conflict between administrators and professionals is the dominant tension..." (Bolman & Deal, 1997, p. 71). Education organizations are managed much like the U.S. Army. There is an overriding "emphasis on rank, command, and top-down control" which creates
debilitating results such as "militant unions, deep-seated mistrust, (and) perennial labor-management antagonism. . ." (Bolman & Deal, 1997, p. 101).

This type of organizational conflict tends to be extremely destructive to interpersonal relationships. Healthy organizations identify conflict and deal with it in a collaborative way (Owens, 1987). In many cases, however, education organizations are so entrenched in tradition that they fail to engage in any type of organizational learning that helps them to understand how they operate, and that they are indeed complex, surprising, deceptive, and ambiguous entities. Senge quotes Bohm in stating "hierarchy is antithetical to dialogue, and it is difficult to escape hierarchy in organizations" (1990, p. 245). Maintaining dialogue is paramount for building trust and working through periods of crisis.

Good dialectic is not a steady state free from the conditions of error, but an open-ended process in which the cycles of organizational learning create new conditions for error to which members of the organization respond by transforming them so as to set in motion the next phase of inquiry. (Argyris & Schón, 1974, p. 60)

Without the opportunity for ongoing communication, when conflict arises, it becomes problematic and characterized by people-blaming, blaming the bureaucracy, and basic thirst for power (Bolman & Deal, 1997).

**Understanding Relationships within Organizations**

"A system is fluid relationships that we observe as rigid structure" (Wheatley & Kellner-Rogers, 1996, p. 70). Peter Senge's (1990) systems theory may provide one of the best ways of understanding relationships within education organizations by
depersonalizing events and mapping out how relationships are influenced by mental models and underlying structures. Senge advocates changing the traditional paradigm but reminds us that we must first change ourselves and our "mental models" which influence how we view the world. Unlike the hierarchical decision-making dynamic, in Senge’s systems view “effective progress can start in the middle as well as at the top of organizations” (Senge, 1990, p. xix). Change in an organization starts with a change in identity, and education organizations need to use learning to recreate themselves and expand their capacity for the future (Wheatley & Kellner-Rogers, 1996).

Systems theory makes clear the issues that arise when good-intentioned interventions create responses that offset the intervention’s benefits, and when short-term improvements actually result in long-term dependency. For educators who have seen reform initiatives come and then go, systems theory provides a framework for explaining what has been occurring through these non-systemic changes. Systems thinking requires looking beyond the obvious and seeing the underlying structures of the organization. This is especially true when cause and effect are not closely related in time or space. Senge (1990) argues that in order to understand an organization we must understand the "dynamic complexity," the non-obvious and very subtle effects over time of an intervention that has been implemented to affect change.

Senge’s (1990) feedback processes and simple diagrams help to illustrate his theory and its implications for education organizations. Reinforcing, or amplifying, feedback processes show how small changes can grow over time and space, much like a snowball rolling down a hill. Balancing, or stabilizing, feedback processes represents the limits or barriers that changes may come up against, particularly when there are implicit goals involved. The resistance to change that has been so characteristic of education organizations can be explained through any change’s inherent threat to the traditional ways of doing things that may upset the distribution of authority and control. In cases like this where there is resistance to change, there are undoubtedly hidden balancing processes that
function to keep the status quo. In order to overcome these limits to growth, they must first be identified, and care must be taken not to simply shift the burden and rely on symptomatic solutions.

Patterson's (1993) theory of leading through systems thinking gives practical advice for school personnel to follow in examining their own education organizations:

1. Focus on the system, not the people;
2. Learn how the current system evolved and how it connects to related systems;
3. Expect the system to resist interventions meant to disrupt the stability of the current system;
4. Evaluate the system according to the organization's core values;
5. Look beyond the symptomatic problems and symptomatic solutions to fundamental systems issues;
6. Think whole-system, long-term solutions and remain patient for the solution to take effect;
7. Anticipate new systems problems arising from current systems solutions.

Systems theory, like most organizational theory, requires a look beneath the surface to find the gaps that exist between "espoused theory," what an organization says it does, and "theory in use," what is really going on (Argyris & Schon, 1974; Bolman & Deal, 1997). Argyris & Schon's (1974) Model I and Model II Theories in Use help to explain one of the problems in education systems. Most education organizations espouse a Model II Theory where the organization operates from a structure of valid information informing decision making, free and informed choice by the stakeholders, and internal commitment to the choice made with constant monitoring of its implementation. However, in reality, these same organizations operate under a Model I Theory where the achievement of defined goals, minimization of losing and maximization of winning, discouragement of
generating or expressing negative feelings, and rationality rule the day. The gap between these two theories serves to obfuscate underlying structure and politics of an organization.

Theory in use is also very often obscured by the organization's political environment where "who" is more important that "what." Frequently, education organizations engage in political decision making where factors such as power or looking good weigh more importantly than other factors. Political decision making also involves the allocation of scarce resources. In organizations where coalitions have enduring value differences, conflict is the norm, and power becomes the essential resource. In a bureaucracy, if power is distributed down the hierarchy, upper management fears it will be used against them, so they protect themselves with various strategies that hide gaps between theories, including defensive routines that maintain control while appearing to disperse power (Bolman & Deal, 1997).

Organizational system dynamics are also obscured by very effective defensive routines which are in place to cover up underlying problems (Senge, 1990). This shroud of secrecy tends to influence behavior by restricting important information to top level, using rituals to cover up the secrecy, and creating distancing among organizational members (Argyris, 1993).

If participants in a group or organization know privately that they have acted in ways that reinforce fragmentation and avoidance while they behave has if they did not know, and if they believe others are doing the same, then it seems predictable that they will feel a lack of confidence in the group's performance. (Argyris, 1993, p. 43)

Argyris (1990) has explored defensive routines in great detail, portraying the double bind that organizations experience— if defensive routines are not discussed, they will perpetuate, but if they are discussed, people involved may find themselves in trouble.
Organizational defensive routines make it highly likely that individuals, groups, intergroups, and organizations will not detect and correct the errors that are embarrassing and threatening because the fundamental rules are to (1) bypass errors and act as if that were not being done, (2) make the bypass undiscussible, and (3) make its undiscussibility undiscussible. (Argyris, 990, p. 43)

Particularly in traditional education hierarchies where promoting the appearance of competence while operating within the confines of a maintenance of the status quo, defensive routines are so entrenched that they are almost invisible to most members of the organization.

Organizational Resistance to Change

Education organizations, like their counterparts in the business world, find themselves faced with a need to change systemically in order to create a capacity for future growth. Because of the heavy steeping in traditional ways of doing things, though, education organizations find that real change, not just cosmetic reform, happens only with great difficulty. Today, organizational change from fragmentary to systemic has become a new world view, a "Galilean Shift" (Kofman & Senge, 1993, p. 6).

Fragmentary change in education, the same as in business, has only served to create "walls" that separate teachers, content areas, and grade levels into "independent and often warring fiefdoms" (Kofman & Senge, 1993, p.8 ). The "walls" representing our mental models create a struggle between competition and collaboration and create an emphasis on looking good instead of being good. This reactive management stance creates a belief that problem solving is going on when in fact change only occurs in crisis situations. Senge (1990) reminds us that without systems thinking, short-term solutions are short-sighted.
A system cannot be understood by simply analyzing its components in isolation; we also must understand how the system fits into any larger system it belongs to (Kofman & Senge, 1993). For education organizations, this means a new type of self evaluation. In order to overcome the organizational game playing that plagues education organizations, there must be openness—both participative openness where members of the organization are free to speak their minds, and reflective openness where traditional norms are challenged (Senge, 1990). Unfortunately, most education organizations discourage time to reflect, and as a result reinforce self-imposed structural barriers to learning which include defensive actions, inconsistent messages, and fragmentation (Argyris, 1993). Micropolitics in education have created a lack of trust in teachers which undermines through outside control (Argyris, 1993).

In order to achieve true systemic change "long-standing beliefs, doctrines, and ways of doing things must be constructively challenged and organizational barriers and cultural bias overcome" (Bennis & Mische, 1995, p. 33). To do this requires a new climate of openness and reflection which focuses on "removing bureaucratic boundaries that box people in and keep them from making the most effective use of their skills, experiences and ambitions" (Bennis & Mische, 1995, p. 36). The first step in achieving this openness is to expose the implicit relationships that hinder organizational learning. "In order to accomplish this, skilled incompetence, organizational defensive routines, and fancy footwork will have to be interrupted to show exactly how they are counterproductive" (Argyris, 1990, p. 116).

Any attempt at restructuring must acknowledge the natural tensions that exist among the various components of the education organization (Bolman & Deal, 1997). This is most definitely not a painless process. "Restructuring is a powerful but high-risk tool for organizational change. In the short term, it almost invariably produces confusion, resistance, and even a decline in effectiveness" (Bolman & Deal, 1997, p. 80). Because organizational change often involves changes in the distribution of power, there is often a
great deal of resistance (Pfeffer, 1992). A shift from hierarchical management to participative management, or localness where decisions are moved down the organizational hierarchy and people are given freedom to act, take risks, and be responsible for results, is difficult (Owens, 1987; Senge, 1990). Managers may have great ambivalence about their new role as stewards, supporting participative management on the one hand, but fearing abuse by subordinates. Sometimes this results in mandated participation in a "controlling, top-down fashion, a contradiction that virtually guarantees failure" (Bolman & Deal, 1997, p. 129).

Managers resist organizational democracy because they are afraid of losing the prerogatives of their position. On the other hand, union leaders sometimes view organizational democracy as a trick by management to get workers to accept gimmicks instead of wages (Bolman & Deal, 1997). Political battles can also occur when management proposes changes that someone lower on the hierarchy should carry out, and the "lowerarchy" finds multiple ways to resist (Bolman & Deal, 1997). This "...clash of collective leadership and hierarchical leadership... poses a core dilemma for learning organizations" (Kofman & Senge, 1993, p. 18). To truly achieve organizational justice, leaders must enhance the power of their subordinates, and provide access to authentic decision making. There must be a "rock-solid commitment from top management..." for restructuring to work (Bolman & Deal, 1997, p. 350).

Facilitating Organizational Change

Kotter (1996, p. 21) outlines an eight-stage process for facilitating organizational change that is designed to address many of the errors associated with unsuccessful transformation efforts. The first step involves establishing a sense of urgency by examining realities and identify both crises and opportunities. Step two calls for creating a guiding coalition that is built into a team to lead the change effort. The third step is to
develop vision and strategy to direct the change effort. The fourth step is communicating the change vision through every vehicle possible. These first four steps help to break down status quo relationships in organizations. Step five is empowering broad-based action which includes removing obstacles, changing inhibiting systems, and encouraging risk taking. The sixth step involves generating short-term wins and recognizing individuals who make them possible. Step seven, consolidating gains and producing more change, builds upon those smaller wins and calls for change in any systems that don't fit the vision. The final step is anchoring new approaches in the culture by identifying the connection between increased performance and new behaviors.

As part of the third step in this change process, education organizations must reinvent themselves from their traditional bureaucratic hierarchy to a new identity. "Every change is fostered by a change in self perception" (Wheatley & Kellner-Rogers, 1996, p. 50). Argyris (1990, 1993) provides steps for an organization to see itself clearly and map the path for a change in identity. First, the players must be interviewed and observed and the problems diagnosed. The participants then must be given feedback so that they may see how their behaviors create and maintain organizational defenses. Then, they can be helped to change their behavior in order to develop new organizational norms and culture that reinforce their new identity.

Education organizations must reconfigure themselves in such a way that they become collegial organizations that engage in participative decision making and consensus building, and redefine power as based on peer recognition instead of hierarchical position (Bennis & Nanus, 1997). Education organizations must recognize that position power alone does not define leadership (Owens, 1987). Too often, leadership is confused with management, but one can be a leader without being a manager if he is in possession of the qualities of a leader, including having a vision and communicating the vision with passion (Bolman & Deal, 1997). Participative decision making can help members of an education organization arrive at better decisions and enhance the growth of all its members.
Emergent problems are ambiguous and information for decisions may be scattered among many people, making participative decision making the desired course of action that has benefits for everyone involved (Owens, 1987).

When people feel significant, they're reminded by example that learning and competence matter, they feel they are part of a community effort, and finally, they find their work challenging and stimulating. (Bennis & Townsend, 1995, p.73)

New reality and a changing identity involve profound transformation. This type of profound change is bound to generate conflict and division among the competing groups of the administration and the teaching force, and without training to gain the confidence and skills to do something a new way, people will still resist and may even sabotage the effort. (Bolman & Deal, 1997). "Reengineering" an education organization requires a bold vision, a systematic approach, a clear intent and mandate, a specific methodology, and effective and visible leadership, and support from top management (Bennis & Mische, 1995). Only through this type of profound transformation can education organizations acquire the characteristics of great organizations: creativity, long-term focus, cooperative/independent/collaborative behavior, risk taking, great concern for results, high preference to assume responsibility, high tolerance for ambiguity, high task orientation, and openness to change (Bennis & Townsend, 1995). LPDCs have the potential to jumpstart true systemic change in education organizations by reconfiguring both the political and systems processes to move from the traditional hierarchy to a management style that acknowledges change as imperative for growth.
Collaboration

Introduction

One facet of reengineering that the establishment of Local Professional Development Committees requires is collaboration among the teacher and administrative members of the committee. In all districts, to varying extent, collaboration involves power shifts—teachers and administrators who sit on the committee are players on the same field, regardless of the roles they assume outside the LPDC. Power shifts, particularly those that are abrupt and/or legislated are difficult because schools and school districts have historically been organized around a system of subordination and domination which essentially defines the traditional hierarchy (Johnson & Pajares, 1996). Shifting power roles is essential because "...inequality of status is a major hindrance to successful collaboration" (Million & Vare, 1997, p. 711).

Mandated Collaboration

It should be noted here, particularly in light of the legislation that has driven the formation of LPDCs, that there is irony involved in "imposing collaborative norms" (Johnston, 1997, p. 41). If bottom-up decision making is being mandated top-down, it becomes what Andrew Hargreaves terms "contrived collegiality" which runs a great risk of undermining that which it is supposed to create (Midgley & Wood, 1993; Lugg & Boyd, 1993). To simply give up regular teacher and administrator roles to participate as equals on a committee ignores their social construction and all that that implies (Johnston, 1997). In the symbolic/interactionalist view of role acquisition that is built upon Biddle's Role Theory, roles are dynamic and constructed within interpersonal negotiations and always contextualized (Clift, Johnson, Holland, & Veal, 1992).
Communication and interpersonal relationships are influenced by history. Teachers as a group become a personality that interacts with administration, and both teachers' morale and sense of professionalism are affected by the historic treatment of faculty by administration (Lieberman & Miller, 1992). Communication is largely dictated by roles and practices established through organizational structure, and differences or problems can be hard to discuss because of the good-bad values assigned to them by school people in their various roles. As a result, discussions are simply avoided to avoid conflict, and many teachers operate under the assumption that their schools are unsafe places to disagree with administration (Johnston, 1997).

In effect, schools are like families where unspoken understandings dominate. There are characters, strong personalities, leaders, those to be tolerated. There are ways of being open or being closed. There are people who are listened to and people who are ignored. As in the family in all its complexity, there are those endless tensions that one learns to tolerate.

(Lieberman & Miller, 1992, p. 94)

The school district's cultural norms of behavior also determine to what extent participants are usually involved in decision making, and as power shifts occur, these mores of authority have to be broken down (Johnson & Pajares, 1996). Shared leadership is not a naturally occurring state and cannot be created simply by virtue of forming a group.

Cultural, economic, and political barriers as well as structural and technical problems associated with inter-organizational collaboration provide greater impetus for unilateral rather than joint endeavors.

(Reed & Cejda, 1987)
Roles can be renegotiated, but only when consideration is given to the context in which shared leadership is to take place, and only if a tolerance for ambiguity exists (Clift, Johnson, Holland, & Veal, 1992).

As room is created for more people to take part in making decisions, teachers take greater control over their professional lives, and those who are administrative leaders take on a role of stewardship creating a hybrid culture of collaboration (Johnson & Pajares, 1996, Million & Vare, 1997). Any "authentic collaboration" requires equal status of participants, mutually agreed upon goals, and equal participation in decision making (Million & Vare, 1997). However, many times when authority is delegated to these decision-making bodies, it is ambiguous because the members are unsure of the extent of their power, particularly if they have no previous experience or training in decision making. Constructing collaboration takes time—time for building both trust and communication among those who are working together, including LPDC members. The process must be gradual and comfortable for all the participants, and there first needs to be a meeting of the minds in terms of goals (Johnston, 1997). Above all, it must be well understood that fundamental change is fragile, and can easily be destroyed (Clift, Johnson, Holland, & Veal, 1992).

Successful Collaboration

Collaboration in education has many benefits. By combining resources and dividing labor, the work of a collaborative group can be much more efficient than work carried out by individuals in a hierarchy. Educational collaboration can also alleviate academic isolation, a function of the current structure of education organizations. Collaboration can also help sustain motivation for long-term vision through the commitments that the members of the collaborative group have to each other and the energy that they create together through the collaborative relationship (Hord, 1986). In a
successful collaboration, there is equal and active involvement among all members of the collaborative group, and they grow to appreciate each other's role and the perspective each brings to the group (Hord, 1986). However, collaboration is not the normal operating procedure within education institutions, and institutional change can only take place if there is a dissatisfaction with the status quo, a vision toward which energy can be directed, and a practical means to reach that vision. Furthermore, policy must support the new practice of collaboration if there is to be system-wide change (Clift, Johnson, Holland, & Veal, 1992; Hord, 1986).

In order for collaboration to take place in education organizations, schools need to be restructured into a "communitarian" model instead of a bureaucratic model (Lugg & Boyd, 1993). Structures and process must be changed to allow more collegial interactions that foster increased collaboration. Although site-based management (SBM) has been implemented in many educational organizations, unless it is seen as a process and not an end product, the chances for true collaboration are limited (Midgley & Wood, 1993). Collaboration, like any other reform effort is an on-going process that is ultimately tied to structural, cultural, and political changes in an education organization.

**Preconditions for Collaboration**

The success of collaborative relationships within an organization depends in a large part on organizational characteristics already in place. Prior organizational situations determine whether the environment is conducive to collaboration, whether resources can be reallocated, and if the goals of the organization's members are congruent. Structural characteristics will determine if coordination can take place to permit collaboration and if resources can actually be utilized for collaborative functions. An organization's relational characteristics will point to whether or not individual involvement in collaboration is
supported, and process characteristics will determine if an organization's patterns of influence and power allow for the change that collaboration will bring about (Hord, 1986).

Certain preconditions must exist for collaboration to be possible. First, organizations need to have system-wide objectives that foster mutual goal attainment. They should have organizational values conducive to managing and promoting collaboration. Valued commodities need to be preassessed comprehensively in order that they may be reallocated during collaboration. There needs to be an institutionalized system in place for analyzing the environment and planning strategically. And finally, for collaboration to take place, there must be administrative commitment, knowledge, and support (Reed & Cejda, 1987).

A team, school-university partnership, shared decision-making body, site-based management council, or any other group working together collaboratively all have additional requirements that must be met in order to assure successful collaboration. First of all, the needs of all the participants can be met if roles are authentically reconceptualized, and they find ways to broaden their understanding of each other's worlds and become mutually respectful (Clark et al., 1996). Although simplistic on its face, this reconceptualization requires time and effort on the part of all group members. Collaboration requires plenty of "on the job training" (Johnston, 1997, p. 156).

Initially, all members of the collaborative group must understand the team's mission, and training in collaboration must commence as well (Oswald, 1996). There must be time for shared dialogue where issues of power and authority can be negotiated and reconceptualized (Clark et al., 1996). Empowerment, providing freedom for people to do what they want to do successfully, is tied to a sense of trust that develops over time and through dialogue (Whetten & Cameron, 1995). Tuckerman (in Whetten & Cameron, 1995) describes the stages of team development as forming, conforming, storming, and performing. These are steps collaborative groups struggle through to create their own identity. Only by progressing through these stages can teams envision and solidify goals.
and pledge commitment which will hold them together (Schmoker, 1996). Collaborative team members must bond by committing time, knowledge, skills, and energy to the team and its goals in order to develop cohesiveness and create a sense of community (Oswald, 1996).

Within a school or district, there are other factors that enhance a collaborative team. Johnson and Pajares (1996) denote five in particular. First, members must have confidence in themselves and other members of the team. Next, resources must be provided at critical moments when the team needs them. The team must also adopt democratic rules and procedures to follow in carrying out their goals. Additionally, the team needs to have early and concrete accomplishments as tangible evidence of their productiveness. Finally, support of the administration is essential for successful collaboration in the current bureaucratic structure of education organizations.

**Inhibitors to Collaboration**

Successful collaboration is difficult in even the best of circumstances, and impediments to collaboration can come from a variety of sources. A lack of resources may exist, or organizational limits may exist which prohibit the transfer of resources or power. Decision making could be external, and the members of an organization may have a lack of cooperative skills. There may be a poor match between needs and available resources. A lack of time or financial support or both may inhibit organizational collaboration, and even if all other factors are favorable, collaboration may be seen as a way to overburden those who take part (Hord, 1986).

Schools and their tradition-steeped world view provide even more barriers which must be overcome in order to create a climate where collaboration can take place. Unfortunately, because of the traditional power structure in education "...most of what goes on in the name of collegiality is ineffective or counterproductive" (Schmoker, 1996,
p. 14). Even some of the most well-intentioned efforts to involve teachers in decision making have served only to exacerbate tensions between principals and teachers (Barth, 1990). Collaboration has two meanings, to work together, or to cooperate treasonably with the enemy; in education, collaboration often takes on the flavor of the second (McLean, 1996). There is a culture clash between teachers and administrators because of their respective power positions that creates misunderstandings, misperceptions, mutual antagonism which serve to undermine collaboration (McLean, 1996). Traditional school culture may overpower any type of shared decision making as participants shape new roles with old assumptions (Lashway, 1996).

Because LPDCs require teachers and administrators to assume new roles, traditional power relations may become even more firmly entrenched as the old habits of authority can't be overcome (Peterson-del Mar, 1994). What masquerades as dialogue may, in fact, impede democracy if the communication attempts to control (Habermas in Johnson & Pajares, 1996). Administrators may be highly reluctant to empower teachers for a number of reasons. Whetten & Cameron (1995) point out several inhibitors to empowerment. Administrators may have negative attitudes about their subordinate teachers, that they are not competent, not interested, already overloaded. They may hold onto beliefs that it would take too much time to train teachers to be decision makers, or that teachers shouldn't be involved in administrative work. Administrators may have personal insecurities, feeling that they may lose recognition or reward, power or position. Some administrators have a low tolerance for ambiguity, or they may prefer to work alone in general. Administrators may have a great need for control, equating absence of control with failure. They may see direction from the top as mandatory for work to be carried out.

Even if empowerment is not an issue, many other factors can contribute to the failure of a collaboration. If members fail to understand the team's mission or don't understand their roles and responsibilities, or if they simply don't know how to work as part of a team or don't buy into the team's purpose, collaboration can break down
Most of these problems are brought on by poor communication. If clear communication and goals are not established at the outset, collaboration may become futile (Schmoker, 1996).

Without straightforward communication of goals and adequate time, training, or fiscal support, collaboration is unrealistic (Johnson & Pajares, 1996). These are the minimum requirements for overcoming barriers to successful collaboration. Members of a collaborative group need training to understand how to engage in shared decision making and how to use decision-making skills. They need time to build communication and trust among each other and to deal with issues that may rise such as contracts and policies which may restrict decision-making authority or teachers' time involvement (Oswald, 1995). Without time and training to create an understanding of common goals, all members may not share the same enthusiasm for the reforms the collaboration is undertaking (Johnson & Pajares, 1996). Teachers may be much more enthusiastic about reforms which serve to give them more control over the conditions of their work than administrators are. Or, if a school community has distrust for its district's administration, it may take both time and effort to show that true collaboration can indeed take place.

Questions about Collaboration

Lieberman & Miller (1992, p. 31) have formulated a set of questions about teachers and improvement efforts which are modified here to suit this research which looks at teacher involvement in transformational collaboration:

- What is the state of the relationship between teachers and other teachers, and teachers and administration?
- Do teachers relate easily and comfortably with the administration?
- Do teachers trust the administration?
- Do teachers trust each other?
• Is there a small group who is motivated to work with the administration’s support?
• Is the dialogue that goes on in the district realistically related to the conditions of the particular district and its most pressing problems as seen by the administration and teachers?
• Are the people who make decisions about school improvement efforts aware that mobilizing teachers and engaging them in their own improvement is *the* reality (as differentiated from telling teachers what to do and assuming they will do it without their active involvement)?
• Is there an accurate assessment of what initially needs to be done to bring teachers together?

Collaboration in schools is not natural. Educators are used to working in isolation behind classroom doors or within administrative offices. Any study of collaboration in education must operate from the premise that it is a difficult transition, and collaboration “. . .must be taught, learned, nurtured, and supported until it replaces working privately” (Lieberman, Saxl, & Miles, 1987, p. 156). If LPDCs are to be true collaborative bodies, these issues must rise to the surface for discussion, informing district policy in order to provide support for the conditions necessary for collaboration.

**Leadership and Empowerment**

**A Call for New Leadership**

A paradox seems to exist between collaboration and leadership--can either one exist in the presence of the other, or are they mutually exclusive states? Understanding this relationship is necessarily guided by one’s world view. In the traditional view or the organizational hierarchy, collaboration only takes place within a level of bureaucracy, and
the collaboration is administered from the next level up. From a pure constructivist perspective, collaboration can only exist in the absence of leadership, where all participants share power equally. However, education requires a new style of collaborative leadership that is in line with new management theory, but recognizes that collaboration will have to evolve within a bureaucratic hierarchy in education that will transform slowly over time.

Traditional management theory is limited to linear conditions and tightly structured situations where a routine level of competence and performance is expected. Although this theory has been the norm in education organizations, it ignores the fact that when dealing with people in systems there is very little that is linear and tightly structured. With nonlinear forms and loose structure, there needs to be a new model. This new model encompasses the systems view of change (Sergiovanni, 1991).

New theories of management have an entirely different focus than their traditional antecedents. As applied to education organizations, these theories focus on cooperation in order to facilitate teaching, enhance learning, and overcome the isolation that is characteristic of an educator's daily life. They focus on teacher empowerment, which creates ownership and increased commitment and motivation. They redefine teachers' responsibilities, giving their work more significance and providing a new basis for recognition of expertise. They stress accountability which makes achievement meaningful, and they define meaningfulness as intrinsic satisfaction. Most of all, these new theories of management stress a new view of authority which is based on ability and not position within the organization (Sergiovanni, 1991).

A combination of both new organizational structures and new roles for educators is required in order to "professionalize the school culture and to bring a measure of recognition and respect to teachers" (Lieberman, Saxl, & Miles, 1988, p. 165). However, neither superficial structural change nor role change for teachers can change anything on their own. The change itself, the underlying motivation for the change, must be the source for the meaning (Cooper, 1988). Redefining leadership in teaching is not sufficient for
successful reform without an understanding of schools and school districts as systems and
the nature of professional bureaucracies (McAdams, 1997).

In order for there to be transformational leadership, structural systems will have to
be put in place which support it. These systems are the embodiment of concepts which
inform both teaching and administration. Learning must move from the top to the center
where leadership responsibilities are delegated to those who have expertise and share
authority because of their ability. Decision making becomes collaborative. Provisions
must be made to enable and support teacher success through shared vision and promotion
of teacher development. Reforms are managed collaboratively with the input of those who
are to carry them out and observe their effects. Together, these create a professional
learning community where everyone is both a teacher and a learner (Clark & Clark, 1996).
The professional learning community with its emphasis on shared values, collaboration,
and reflective dialogue, is the antithesis of a hierarchy (Louis & Kruse, 1996). Through
restructuring of systems and roles comes new definitions of human capital theory.
Teachers must respond to changes in schooling with great professional autonomy and
discretion. Teachers should learn to accommodate the need for innovation, flexibility,
critical analysis, and reflectivity, which makes sustained change possible (Smylie, 1996).

Teacher Empowerment

In order to restructure schools, the teaching profession must be restructured so that
control over many of the current policies moves to the teachers, and this teacher
empowerment will enhance the professional community by providing flexible governance
instead of bureaucratic centralization (Louis & Kruse, 1996). Currently in most education
organizations, teachers are treated like bureaucrats instead of professionals and the “. . .
bureaucratic structure of teaching works against . . . knowledge for decision making. . .”
(Darling-Hammond & Goodwin, 1993, p. 40). Teacher empowerment brings to the
surface issues of dominance and dependency, and within the current hierarchy, teachers will respond to changes in structure largely in response to the way in which supervisors bring it about (Block, 1996; Grimmett, Rostad, & Ford, 1992).

Externally motivated change usually results in a strong sense of dependency by teachers because they feel helpless and powerless. The many reform initiatives that have surfaced in the past decade and a half have been testament to this fact. Teachers have been charged with carrying out initiatives that have originated from without, and in most cases, have only been accorded responsibility when these initiatives fail. To change this cycle, teacher empowerment is crucial, but reshaping teachers' roles requires “fundamental restructuring of schools” (Darling-Hammond & Goodwin, 1993, p. 41) which in turn is interdependent with teacher professionalism. In order to redirect the current cycle, educators must use it to expand their vision rather than resist it. They must welcome the paradox of achieving a balance between maintaining organizational control while at the same time supporting employee freedom (Patterson, 1993).

Change is a slow and painful process, and within the current structure, there must be supportive leadership to help focus the vision of change (Louis & Kruse, 1996). Current supervisors need to provide organizational support to facilitate the change through scheduling and allocating of fiscal and human resources (Grimmett, Rostad, & Ford, 1992). Professional development is imperative—educators must have opportunities that support individual and collaborative growth (Louis & Kruse, 1996). Within this development, there needs to be a connection between “teacher participation and a process of teachers rethinking core assumptions about . . . schooling” (Lipman, 1997, p. 32). Educators will also need to examine how teacher empowerment and participation are influenced by ideologies and the larger social structure within which the school system operates (Lipman, 1997).

Teacher empowerment is not without concerns. “Unfortunately, well-intentioned efforts to involve teachers in decision making have exacerbated tensions between union and
management, between teacher and principal” (Barth, 1988, p. 130). Principals’ associations have responded defensively to teachers as leaders, and would-be teacher leaders usually encounter more work—committees, meetings, conflict—in their already overloaded schedules (Barth, 1988). If they are truly seen as “centers of power,” they are sometimes distrusted by their own colleagues, as well as being seen as a threat by administration (Cooper, 1988).

Also problematic is the concept of empowerment itself. By its very nature, “empowerment is less than power” (Cooper, 1988, p. 50). Having authority delegated from another source is not the same as having authority. Usually, this type of “received power” has distinct limits set by others’ decisions, and can be revoked if the empowered venture beyond their defined boundaries of power (Cooper, 1988). In new education organizations, however, teacher empowerment is one part of a larger systemic change which redefines power roles through restructured systems as well as positions. The main challenges lie in changing longstanding and firmly held mindsets about teaching, and introducing capable people to a new role and introducing the new role to the institution (Warren Little, 1988).

Warren Little (1988) outlines several conditions that advance the prospects for teacher leadership:

1. Teachers performing work that is considered to be both difficult and important;
2. Teachers assuming roles that provide them with the dignity of leadership and participating in activities that showcase them as participants in professional relationships that are challenging and rewarding;
3. Teachers and administrators demonstrating their shared interests publicly and setting ground rules for the collaborative leadership of schools;
4. Incentives that support teachers in taking on collaborative leadership roles; and
5. District policies and practices that preserve teacher leadership.
Teacher leaders are the heart of reform. Instead of just inviting teachers to advise administration on various committees, teachers need to be given the opportunity to make decisions concerning things they care about (Midgley & Wood, 1993). Opportunities to take on leadership roles are attractive to teachers because they see them as an opportunity to improve their own day-to-day working conditions. However, empowering teachers to take on leadership positions is not simply a matter of turning selected individuals into administrative clones. "Teacher leadership is less a question of according trusted teachers responsibility for important issues than of ensuring all teachers are given ownership for a responsibility about which they care deeply" (Barth, 1990).

**Administrative Transformation**

In the education bureaucracy, leaders are currently identified by position through the various levels of administration. Leadership definitions range from "bossing" with its traditional power and control relationships to "managing" whereby leaders coordinate people and resources to "leading" in which leaders "influenc(e) others to achieve mutually agreed upon purposes for the organization" (Patterson, 1993, p. 3). This continuum order also represents the shift in management that has been taking place over the past few decades. Values in organizations have shifted toward openness to participation, diversity, conflict, reflection, and even mistakes (Patterson, 1993). As a result, leadership has also adopted new values including purposing shared values, building followership, enabling others to function autonomously on behalf of shared purposes, viewing leadership as the power to accomplish, putting collegiality first, and reflecting on action (Sergiovanni, 1991).

For education organizations, this shift in leadership calls for administrators to take on a democratic style of leadership and to exercise power through, not over, others (Peterson-del Mar, 1994). Strong leadership within this framework means working
through people by communicating, team building, and motivating (Krug, 1993). Leadership must take on the qualities of facility where power is based on mutuality and synergy, decisions are negotiated, and trust is key (Lashway, 1995). This type of restructuring demands a change in thinking and beliefs, not just practices; in effect, the entire culture of the school must be transformed (Parker, 1993). In restructuring education organizations, this process moves slowly, and in order to be successful, there must be a support network in place.

Block (1996) contends that strong leadership in and of itself does not create fundamental change. He advocates stewardship, “the choice to preside over the orderly distribution of power” where accountability is achieved “without control or compliance” (Block, 1996, p. xx). With the practice of stewardship, leadership moves to the background of reform. Choices and resources are moved closer and closer to the bottom and edges of an organization. In education organizations, the teachers who occupy those bottoms and edges become empowered through decision making and control over resources. Leadership transforms as the education system changes.

Even within the current hierarchy, administration can facilitate the reconstruction of the education organization. Administrators can uphold the goals of transformational leadership by helping staff to develop and maintain a collaborative, professional school culture. They can foster teacher development and allocate time and funds for the professional development necessary for teachers to take on leadership roles. They can also help teachers solve problems more effectively (Liontos, 1992). By supporting collegial interaction, extensive staff development, shared leadership, and creative problem solving, administrators can help create more effective schools and move toward an education organization for the future (Sergiovanni, 1991).
Thurston, Clift & Schacht (1993) propose the following elements of a change-oriented leader:

1. A leader who is transformational and creates inspirational relationships with school personnel;
2. A leader who creates collaborative decision-making processes;
3. A leader who is oriented toward continuous learning; and
4. A leader who evaluates the effects of improvement measures by using a variety of student outcomes.

**Leadership and Collaboration**

As administrators adopt new forms of management which direct power and decision making downward, and as teachers become empowered and take on leadership roles, a true hybrid culture results (Million & Vare, 1997). Leadership is no longer defined by position, but by ability and expertise, and teachers and administrators can work together in a collaborative and egalitarian partnership. True collaboration requires that all parties involved understand what is necessary to form this partnership. There must an exchange of purpose where every level defines the vision for restructuring and the values of the organization. Each participant must retain his own voice and the right to say no. There must be joint accountability because, ultimately, the price of freedom is personal accountability. Above all, there must be absolute honesty so that dialogue which deals with crucial issues can take place (Block, 1996). As roles and structure transform simultaneously, a new vision begins to emerge—a vision that will slowly solidify into a new paradigm of the education organization.
Conclusion

Through the lens of critical theory and within the frame of organizational theory, Local Professional Development Committees take on a new and exciting dimension in the quest for the restructuring of the education organization. Not only do they provide the means for teachers and administrators to collaborate at the policy-making level, they also can serve as a catalyst for other systemic changes throughout school districts. The challenge comes in analyzing the structure and politics of individual districts and how these influence the work and transformative potential of LPDCs. Once the underlying structure and hidden political agendas are revealed, collaboration can become a reality, and with an understanding of current roles and positions of power, visions of systemic change can begin to solidify. Only when educators understand the system in which and through which they carry out their day to day tasks can they effectively plan for the future—a future in which the education organization finally comes of age in a post-modern world.
CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to explore how Central Ohio Local Professional Development Committees with mixed teacher-administrator membership work together to perform the functions of certificate/license renewal and professional development transformation prescribed to them by law. One area of this study focused on the dynamics of the committee and its members, while the second area of the study was broader and included the LPDC's role in the context of the school district. Given the nature of the research problem and the theoretical frame of the study, the methodology combined an interpretive methodology and a critical perspective.

Situating the Researcher

As a career educator, I have consistently been in the middle of reform initiatives. My initial experiences took place in my own high school English classrooms where I experimented with curricular reforms and alternative assessment initiatives. I then served on district-level curriculum reform committees and continued my reform involvement at a higher level.

My interest in education reform moved from the district to the larger arena of state-mandated reforms when Ohio's 9th grade proficiency test was passed into law. As an
urban educator, I saw how this high-stakes test disenfranchised a majority of my students, detouring them away from graduation and career. As I pursued my MA during this time, I studied critical theory, and adopting this lens, I positioned myself as a critical educator.

After changing school districts and gaining a suburban school district perspective, my focus shifted away from student-centered issues to those most directly involving teachers. I saw many excellent educators become frustrated because they lacked any power over their working conditions. I decided to direct my energies to empowerment issues, becoming an active member of my teachers' association and as a result, I became more aware of the underlying politics of education. I began to look more closely at the lines that divide teachers and administrators and the power issues that surround them. My current position as an LPDC member gives me an opportunity to broaden my experience and apply a critical theory analysis in a new context.

Through this study I intended to analyze potential problems related to instituting collaborative structures within a bureaucratic hierarchy and to describe how structural and political relationships between administrators and teachers may need to be transformed in order to realize true systemic education reform. From this study, I hoped to identify ways that this change can be facilitated through such means as university-school collaboration, self-designed inservice programs for educators, and dialogue that addresses problematic issues surrounding LPDCs. Utilizing a critical theory perspective, I took seriously the tenants of my philosophical stance that compel me to take an "openly ideological approach to critical inquiry" (Lather, 1991, p. 110).

I took a critical stance in examining LPDCs, and because of my personal involvement with an LPDC to be studied, my positioning as a critical researcher was clearly defined from the outset of the study. I stated my role as a teacher member of an LPDC and a critical researcher in both my initial introductions to the two other LPDCs under study, as well as reaffirming my position throughout on-going interactions.
Positivist research designs that presume some type of "objectivity" and aim for generalizability of results are in contrast with this study whose goal is "critical knowledge, a combination of self-reflection and a historical analysis of inequitable systems . . . produced by emancipatory or critical inquiry" (Maguire, 1987, p. 14). As a teacher LPDC member, I was provoked to embark on this study through my first-hand experiences with a system that appeared in structure to be democratic, but played out in ways that appeared to be inequitable in several different arenas. However, since only my own experiences and discussion with other teacher members of my own LPDC shaped my perceptions, I needed to move beyond my district to compare my initial impressions.

I recognize that "within the context of a critical social science, methodology is viewed as inherently political, as inescapably tied to issues of power and legitimacy" (Lather, 1991, p. 110). The data gathered represents this political influence because my purpose was to "uncover the systems of social relationships and the contradictions which underlie social tensions and conflicts" (Maguire, 1987, p. 14). Throughout my inquiry, I probed these relationships, and in many cases was surprised at the politics which, although not directly of the LPDCs, certainly influenced both the relationships between the members and the methods through which they carried out their work.

The portrait of LPDCs that has emerged is my interpretation of the context under study. Eisner (1988, p. 19) states that "all methods and all forms of representation are partial and because they are partial, they limit, as well as illuminate what through them we are able to experience." I am a teacher member of my LPDC. The perspective through which I conducted my research was that of a teacher who has experienced some of the problems associated with the development and implementation of an LPDC. In this sense, I am limited to my teacher's perspective and cannot speak for administrative members of my LPDC or even teacher members of other LPDCs; however, by including excerpts from interviews with these individuals, a more multi-dimensional view of LPDCs emerges. My field notes, for the most part, have been running records, but even in that regard, they have
been selective. The themes that I identified as emerging from my data have been informed by my own experiences, as well as by others involved in the study.

My experience has also been limited by my critical stance. As researcher as change agent, my focus was narrowed to the problematic. As both a participant and observer on several levels, I have chosen a research approach that is explicitly committed to a more just social order (Lather, 1986), recognizing fully that this informs my data collection as well as my data analysis. I have actively worked to effect change in my own district, and have moved to the next level of influence through additional work related to my study at both the regional and state level.

From a critical methodological perspective, "there is no such thing as a value-neutral approach to the world. . . " (Eisner, 1988, p. 19). The constructivist/interpretive paradigm recognizes that every act of evaluation is a political act, and "research as praxis" critiques the status quo in order to build a more just society (Guba & Lincoln, 1989; Lather, 1986). The purpose of this study was to examine LPDCs to understand their dynamics in order to move toward their transformative potential in which teachers and administrators engage in true collaboration, redefine their decision-making roles, and take an active role in the transformation of professional development in Ohio. As the results of this study show, much more work is necessary, over time, for LPDCs to realize their potential, and even then, structures may exist on the local or state level which present formidable barriers for some districts.

"Praxis-oriented inquirers seek emancipatory knowledge"--an awareness of hidden contradictions and possibilities for social transformation (Lather, 1986, p. 259). Through this emancipatory social research, my goal has been to become a change agent as well as becoming changed myself (Lather, 1986). Within this framework, I selected an alternative research paradigm which suggested that through close personal, empathetic interchanges, I could gain a meaningful insight into Local Professional Development Committees (Maguire, 1987).
As an LPDC member, I shared common experiences with other my fellow LPDC members, and through informal interactions with teacher LPDC members on my own and other committees, I have found a common ground for discussion. I utilized my position as an LPDC insider to establish an empathetic relationship with other LPDC members. In addition, as an insider in my own district, I already had established personal relationships with all identified stakeholders that facilitated dialogue within our interview sessions.

Outside my district, I made an effort to bring myself closer to an insider role through my interaction with LPDC members during their meeting times, as well as placing myself in a position to be a resource to these LPDCs. During meetings, I participated at times, particularly when I had knowledge that the LPDC needed for clarification or comparison. Because I took field notes on a laptop computer, I was frequently called upon to share their content, and my records in many instances served as minutes for various LPDC meetings. Because they were kept in the form of a running record with parenthetical research notes, I was able to delete those notes prior to sharing my data.

Additionally, I earned a position as an LPDC process consultant with the Central Ohio Regional Professional Development Center. In this role I act as an LPDC liaison between the regional center and seven districts in the central Ohio area, providing LPDC support to all of those districts, including the three districts under study. I also became a member of the State LPDC Advisory Council, along with individuals from both of my outside study districts. As a result, I have worked more intimately with all my districts in a variety of roles which have enhanced my position as an insider to their LPDCs.

One of my greatest challenges as a teacher researcher was recognizing the effect my relationship to both teachers and administrators in the study had on my data collection and analysis. As a teacher, I felt a sense of camaraderie with my fellow teachers based on our common experiences and was accepted as an ally. These teachers granted me access to formal LPDC meetings, and also informal gatherings where frequent political discussions deepened my understanding of their perceptions about district and LPDC issues.
In the same respect, my positioning as a teacher placed me outside the inner circle of administrators who discussed political issues with me in guarded and sometimes vague language. With some administrators in my own district, our interviews felt strained. In District Three, with its active political conflict, administrators chose to defend their actions rather than explore motivations when I questioned them about controversial issues, perhaps from a concern that I might be sharing information with teachers in the district.

I have attempted to present administrative viewpoints throughout my analysis, and the teachers and administrators who have responded with feedback consider my representations to be accurate. However, the administrative feedback I had hoped for in my final member checking has been minimal. Ultimately, my study which defines many ways that lines are drawn between teachers and administrators is from my “teacher” perspective.

Rationale for the Choice of Methodology

Lincoln and Guba’s (1985) naturalistic paradigm is the basis for the methodology for this research study. Within this paradigm is the recognition that multiple realities exist and that the knower and the known are inseparable because knowledge is constructed through relationships which are bound in both time and context. My data collection has taken place through qualitative methods of observation and interviewing in natural settings with a goal of constructing grounded theory about LPDCs.

Guba & Lincoln’s (1989) revision of their earlier work on qualitative methodology into a form called “fourth generation evaluation” stresses negotiation as a key dynamic. Responsive focusing on the stakeholders—the agents, beneficiaries, and victims—determines both the questions and the information gathered. Because I have been informally collecting data on my own LPDC for over a year, my own experiences have formed the basis for my initial research questions. Constructions of the stakeholders have
been used to make sense of the data which has emerged throughout the study, in full
disclosure that these constructions are shaped by the constructor's values, including my
own.

The negotiation of meaning through dialogue in interviews and member checks has
been ongoing through the research process. In an effort to reconstruct the participants'
reality of LPDCs and understand the LPDC's place in the larger organizational framework
of school districts, I have continually shared data and analysis with a subset of stakeholders
and asked them to reflect on both the information and their own understanding. Because I
have had the opportunity to work with LPDC members in a variety of roles, I have taken
advantage of informal opportunities to test theory and ask for clarification, in addition to
formal member checks.

The moral imperative of the responsive constructivist evaluator is continuously to
be on the alert for--indeed, to seek out--challenges to the prevailing construction (however
much it may be supported in consensus), and to stand ready to refine, change, or even
reject that which is currently believed in favor of something else that, on examination,
seems more reasonable and appropriate to those in the best position to make that judgment
(Guba & Lincoln, 1989, p. 47). Only through this type of collaborative reciprocity can a
study of LPDCs have emancipatory potential as an agent of change.

As emancipatory social research, self reflection and deeper understanding on the
part of the stakeholders is facilitated through this collaborative reciprocity (Lather, 1986).
The procedures for this type of reciprocity need to be carried out not only in the beginning
of the research, but throughout. In order to accomplish this, interactive, dialogic interviews
were conducted involving self-disclosure on my part of both my theoretical positioning and
my own role as an LPDC member as well as an activist (Macguire, 1987). These have
been followed by additional conversations with individuals who agreed to participate in
member checks. Negotiation of meaning has taken place through the recycling of analysis
and description through these respondents, including shared interview transcripts and
descriptive analysis. Discussions with respondents have taken place to reveal any false consciousness that may exist to the extent that this is possible (Lather, 1986).

The three LPDCs in the study exist within varying degrees of traditional educational organizations. Level of authority in these districts is usually still defined by role. Discussions involving the transformative potential of LPDCs have involved critiquing beliefs surrounding these roles and their authority. Ultimately, because the goal of participatory research is to produce and share critical knowledge, analysis and findings have been shared with the participating districts as well as The Ohio Department of Education.

Selection of LPDC Sites

The LPDC sites chosen for this study provided for both depth of investigation and variety in LPDC operation. The three sites that were selected provided maximum variation sampling and allowed me to utilize a descriptive methodology which allowed for case analysis (Patton, 1990; Evertson & Green, 1986).

The first site, District One, is the LPDC in my home school district on which I currently serve as a member. Having been a part of the planning of the LPDC in the 1997-98 school year, and formally participating as a committee member since January of 1998, my own experience provided the initial basis for my questions, and the length of my tenure as an LPDC member provided extended interaction with a research site. District One is in a traditional school district, organized hierarchically, and it has limited experience with reform initiatives.

The second LPDC site, District Two, is in a neighboring school district and was one of the original 21 pilot districts that had an LPDC in operation for the 1997-98 school year. This district is mostly site-based and uses the Critical Friends Group model for its
LPDC. Over the past decade, District Two has had experience with a wide variety of
reform initiatives and has been recognized for its innovations through a variety of state and
national organizations.

The third LPDC site, District Three, was also a pilot district, considerably larger
than the first two. This district has seen a great deal of growth over the past decade, and its
large geographical area encompasses urban, suburban, and rural populations. Although
there are site-based structures in place, District Three is still traditionally hierarchical in
organization (see Figure 3.1).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DISTRICT ONE</th>
<th>DISTRICT TWO</th>
<th>DISTRICT THREE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>non-pilot LPDC</td>
<td>pilot LPDC</td>
<td>pilot LPDC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>hierarchical organization</td>
<td>site-based organization</td>
<td>hierarchical with site-based elements</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7,229 students</td>
<td>5,335 students</td>
<td>17,027 students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>711.5 employees</td>
<td>431.7 employees</td>
<td>1,900.2 employees</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Statistical Data from ODE, EMIS District Profile--FY97 (Final)

Figure 3.1: District Comparison Chart

My goal in looking at a variety of districts was to see if any recurrent themes related
to LPDCs would emerge across districts, producing structural corroboration on which to
build theory (Eisner, 1998). I selected these three districts to provide comparisons on a
variety of levels. District One had no specific professional development structure whereas
District Three had a very organized, well-established professional development delivery system. District Two was selected for its reputation for site-based structure and models of collaboration which contrasted with District One's hierarchical structure. District Two was also smaller than District One, whereas District Three was considerably larger than either of the other two districts. These three particular districts provided additional diversity in terms of district organizational structure and LPDC structure.

Procedures

Data Collection and Time Frame

Data collection took place within the last half of the 1998-99 school year, beginning in January 1999, and ending in June 1999. Data was collected from each of the three designated LPDC districts as well as from The Ohio Department of Education. By necessity, data collection had to be scheduled throughout the study to correspond with meeting times of the selected LPDC sites. Initial contact with each site provided information which allowed me to schedule observations for the remaining months. Interviews were scheduled at times convenient for the participants and occurred concurrently with the meeting observations.

Participant Observation

District One was studied through participant observation. As a member of District One’s LPDC, I was active participant of the committee during the time of data collection and attended all scheduled meetings (see Table 1). In this respect, I maintained the dual role of a participant-observer—engaging in situational activities and observing the situation (Spradley, 1980). In order not to be a “disturbing element” in my researcher capacity, I tape recorded and took minimal field notes during LPDC meetings, but expanded them
later through transcripts and reflections (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Through this insider/outsider role, I utilized Spradley's (1980, p. 82-83) descriptive question matrix as a partial guide for observations and referred to it later to identify emergent themes. District One provided an in-depth case study from an emic perspective.

Participant observation of District One was advantageous because as a member of District One for seven years, I have knowledge of the historical context of the setting which is necessary to understand the impact of this context upon the LPDC. I also have built relationships of trust with the other stakeholders in this district, and I have already established entrée. My tenure as an LPDC member gives me knowledge over time, and allows me greater depth of information from which to address my research questions.

An obvious limitation of participant observation is my own bias. Having insider knowledge and historical relationships with stakeholders within my school district, my data collection and interpretations were influenced by my own assumptions both implicitly and explicitly. I explored these assumptions through reflections in my researcher journal and included them as part of my data set. The primary data sources were field notes from LPDC meetings (see Table 1). In addition, I included journal reflections, documents related to the LPDC, and in-depth dialogic interviews of LPDC members, the association president, and the superintendent.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Meeting</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2/1/99</td>
<td>Meeting 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2/10/99</td>
<td>Meeting 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3/3/99</td>
<td>Meeting 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4/7/99</td>
<td>Meeting 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5/10/99</td>
<td>Meeting 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5/26/99</td>
<td>Meeting 6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6/21/99</td>
<td>Meeting 7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6/22/99</td>
<td>Meeting 8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1: District One meeting schedule
Non-participant Observation

Because all LPDCs are unique in construction, membership and operation, an in-depth case study of a single LPDC with all of its idiosyncrasies was not adequate to understand LPDCs in different contexts; therefore, two additional sites were selected. Districts Two and Three were studied primarily through observation of between three and four LPDC meetings each over a period of six months (see Table 2) through passive participation (Spradley, 1980). In some instances, however, I did actively participate, either asking questions or providing information that the LPDCs needed to further their discussions. Observations, by necessity, were planned around individual LPDC meeting schedules which varied by district. In District Two, I attended one full-day meeting of the LPDC and three meetings of various Critical Friends Groups. In District Three, I attended three full meetings of the LPDC, one of which was a day-long meeting. These sites provided an edic (outsider) perspective of LPDCs.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>District Two</th>
<th></th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3/17/99</td>
<td>Meeting 1 (CFG--H.S.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5/10/99</td>
<td>Meeting 2 (Full LPDC)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5/19/99</td>
<td>Meeting 3 (CFG--El.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5/19/99</td>
<td>Meeting 4 (CFG--Jr. H.)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
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<tr>
<th>District Three</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2/23/99</td>
<td>Meeting 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4/28/99</td>
<td>Meeting 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5/26/99</td>
<td>Meeting 3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2: Districts Two and Three meeting schedules
I am very knowledgeable about LPDCs in general and my own in specific, but because each LPDC is unique in context, construction and operation, Districts Two and Three allowed me a broader base for my study and an opportunity to explore across cases in order to contrast behaviors, roles, policies, and other factors that impact LPDCs (Evertson & Green, 1986).

Although I was familiar with some of the stakeholders on these LPDCs through personal contact or reputation, I had limited personal historical district information which influenced my observations. Although my own LPDC experience focused my observations, as an outsider, I saw different LPDCs function in new contexts, allowing more idiographic interpretations of the data collected (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Each LPDC is described within its unique context, and was analyzed first within the immediate context of that particular district, including the LPDC’s role in its own district, the relationship of the LPDC members to each other and within the district, etc. Additionally, Districts Two and Three were chosen because they are different in general from District One, and my critical analysis also took into account how those general differences may influence LPDC functioning across contexts.

Interviews

LPDC members, the association president, and the superintendent in each district were interviewed utilizing an interview guide constructed around the study questions guiding this study (see Table 3). Although guide was used in all interviews (see Appendix A), certain questions did not apply to individuals outside the LPDC, such as the superintendent, and those questions were omitted. The first question asking for personal background was omitted after the first interview due to its irrelevance to the study. As themes began to emerge, additional questions about the district’s professional development
system were added. I asked interviewees to describe their district's professional development philosophy, either explicit or implicit, and I asked them to describe their professional development delivery system.

Question 1. What are perceptions of administrator and teacher LPDC members concerning their roles both in the district and as LPDC members with regard to decision making and power?

Question 2. How do LPDC members interact with each other in working situations?

Question 3. What are perceptions of superintendents and teacher association presidents concerning their historical positioning in the district relative to each other and its influence on the LPDC?

Question 4. How does the structure of the LPDC affect power relationships within the district?

Question 5. What factors may exist at the committee level and/or the district level that impede an LPDC from being an effective reform initiative?

Table 3: General questions that framed the study
Each interview took between 30 minutes and an hour, and all interviews were transcribed. Because of the dialogic nature of the interviews, other issues that arose were explored in regard to their relationship to the study, and I also used these interviews as a means of informal member checking of emergent analysis. Each interviewee received a copy of his or her respective transcript along with a request to correct or expand upon the information contained therein.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>District One</th>
<th></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2/25/99 Teacher 1</td>
<td>Association president</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2/24/99 Teacher 2</td>
<td>LPDC member</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4/19/99 Teacher 3</td>
<td>LPDC member</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3/5/99 Administrator 1</td>
<td>Superintendent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3/11/99 Administrator 2</td>
<td>Assistant Superintendent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2/19/99 Administrator 3</td>
<td>LPDC member</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2/22/99 Administrator 4</td>
<td>LPDC member</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>District Two</th>
<th></th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5/5/99 Teacher 1</td>
<td>LPDC member/Association president</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5/4/99 Teacher 2</td>
<td>LPDC member</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4/20/99 Administrator 1</td>
<td>Superintendent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4/26/99 Administrator 2</td>
<td>LPDC member</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
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<th>District Three</th>
<th></th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2/8/99 Teacher 1</td>
<td>LPDC facilitator</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5/3/99 Teacher 2</td>
<td>LPDC member/Association president</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4/22/99 Teacher 3</td>
<td>LPDC member</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5/11/99 Administrator 1</td>
<td>Superintendent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5/3/99 Administrator 2</td>
<td>LPDC member</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4: Interview schedule
Content Analysis

Documents gathered from all three LPDC sites and the Ohio Department of Education supplied the data for content analysis. These documents were reviewed, and relevant information was organized thematically. Analysis focused primarily on how the policies and procedures described in these documents affected the day-to-day working operation of the LPDC. Documents served as a secondary data source as well as a means for triangulation.

The documents collected for analysis included the following:

1. Collective bargaining agreements that have LPDC content;
2. District policy pertaining to LPDCs;
3. Documents generated by the LPDC as part of their initial set-up and ongoing operation;
4. ODE documents pertaining to LPDCs;
5. General district publications.

Additional Sources of Data

In my role of researcher as agent of change, I took advantage of opportunities to become involved with different levels of LPDC operations that were presented to me. As a result, I obtained a position through the Central Ohio Regional Professional Development Center as one of six LPDC process consultants for the central region. All three of my study districts fall under my consultancy. In this role, I interact with my districts in order to provide a conduit of information between the regional center and the districts, as well as among all the districts in the central region. As a process consultant, I have access to a much broader base of LPDC data within and outside of my districts of study. I work
closely with one of my study participants in this position. During regional meetings, I kept running field notes which I have utilized throughout my analysis to provide additional triangulation for theory construction.

In addition to my role at the regional level, I have also become a member of the State LPDC Advisory Council which is preparing a document for dissemination to LPDCs statewide. In my role on this council, I have the opportunity to participate in shaping statewide policy. Three members from my study districts also serve on this council and two of them are working closely with me in a writing sub-committee which is currently drafting the state policy statement. Through my work with the state-level group, I again have broadened my knowledge base about LPDCs in general, and used meetings as opportunities to discuss the themes and issues surrounding my research. I have kept the minutes for the meetings of this group, and have used the data I gathered as further triangulation for theory construction.

Data Analysis Procedures

Preliminary, informal data collection began in January 1998 when I began participating as a member of my own LPDC. My experiences and reflections, as well as informal discussions with my peers on my and other LPDCs lead to the initial research questions for this study. LPDC Team members at The Ohio Department of Education have also proven instrumental in constructing the basis for this study. In an informal meeting in the summer of 1998, Dr. Susan Witten, LPDC Team leader, offered support for this study as well as providing potential avenues for research. Various meetings throughout the 1997-98 school year involving Ohio Department of Education LPDC Team members, and meetings, phone calls, and e-mail correspondence in 1998-99 have also provided information for the study. The formal study began in January 1999 with initial district contacts.
Analysis of data was on-going throughout the study. This allowed emerging patterns and themes to be identified, and allowed me to alter data collection to investigate these new avenues, fulfilling the emergent design requirements for naturalistic inquiry (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Approximately a quarter of the way through the data collection period, issues surrounding professional development emerged, and the interview protocol was changed to reflect the new theme. Questions about each district's professional development philosophy and delivery system were added and the information these questions generated evolved into an important theme for the study.

Inductive analysis methods, including both narrative and descriptive systems have been used (Evertson & Green, 1986). Data transcribed from interviews and collected during meetings has been categorized by themes. Interview excerpts coded with different themes were copied from transcribed files and organized into single district thematic files.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>D1 Comp A2</th>
<th>District One, compensation questions, administrator</th>
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<td></td>
<td>2 responses</td>
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<tr>
<td>D3 Pol/Pro T1</td>
<td>District Three, policy and procedure questions, teacher one responses</td>
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Table 5: Examples of the interview file coding system

As issues emerged during the data gathering process, they were discussed with selected stakeholders for member checks. Several themes are the result of these discussions including the theme of the illusion of democracy that LPDCs create. A great deal of informal member checking took place throughout the study as I initiated discussions with individuals involved in my study and other LPDC stakeholders about
these themes that were emerging. Many times through these discussions, I found new areas to explore such as the different paradigms of professional development that teachers and administrators have which also become defining themes for the study. I also specifically scheduled a meeting with District One’s assistant superintendent to discuss various research findings and my interpretation of their impact on the district, and to discuss a proposal to create a position to address some of the recommendations that resulted from my analysis.

Formal member checks came in two phases. First, I gave all interview subjects a typed transcript of their interview requesting comments and other feedback. Next, after my analysis was complete, each district’s subjects received a copy of their district’s descriptive analysis with a request that they review the analysis and provide me with feedback about my representation of multiple viewpoints.

I received feedback about the interview transcripts from only a few individuals involved in the study, usually to add information or correct facts. Initially, I received little feedback for the analysis sections from all districts. Because the input of my subjects was important for validity purposes, I followed up with phone calls encouraging my subjects first to read my analysis and then critique it. I had limited success in eliciting feedback from all participants, particularly from administrators. In District One, the assistant superintendent, personnel director, and curriculum/staff development coordinator had not read the analysis in their possession for the two weeks prior to my phone inquiries. After I contacted all of them, the assistant superintendent designated one administrator, the coordinator, to represent feedback from all of the administrators, even though they hadn’t read the material. I found this to be intriguing, and it supported my analysis of District One’s political structure.

Data was used to analyze the political and organizational structures of the district at both the district level and the LPDC level, using organizational theory constructs, including systems theory, to design the models representative of these structures all three districts.
The models allow a visual comparison among all three districts as well as clarification for the text-based description.

I identified selected peers to assist me in clarifying my interpretations by acting as both sounding boards and peer reviewers. These included both dissertation co-chairs and total outsiders to my study, including professional colleagues and family members. They provided checks on the logic of my analysis and the scope of my data collection, as well as offered suggestions to improve readability.

Analysis began as District One data were collected. As themes emerged, they were used for comparison in Districts Two and Three. Each site was analyzed and described separately at first in order to understand its unique aspects as an LPDC in its district context, and then analysis was conducted across cases in order compare similarities and differences, and to establish discussion themes for LPDCs within and outside the study.

Validity/Trustworthiness

Validity/Trustworthiness of the study has been achieved through parameters identified by Lincoln & Guba (1985) and Glesne & Peshkin (1992). These included time, triangulation, reflection on the researcher’s own subjectivity, review by the researcher’s peers, and member checks. Extended research time has been fulfilled by the long-term case study of District One, and the multiple visits and interviews for Districts Two and Three. Patton (1990) states triangulation is achieved by multiple sources of data, method, and theory. This study fulfills those requirements by utilizing three sites and a variety of stakeholders, varying methods through interviews, observations, and content analysis, and analyzing through interpretive critical theory and organizational theory. My analysis checks with study and non-study LPDC members outside of the study in regional and state LPDC organizations also contributes to trustworthiness of the data.
Additional issues of construct validity, face validity, and catalytic validity are also addressed in this study (Lather, 1986). Construct validity has been achieved through systemized reflexivity via my own reflection notes and peer reviews. Face validity was addressed through the recycling of description and emerging analysis back through respondents through formal and informal member checks. Catalytic validity has been achieved through my influence in the regional- and state-level LPDC organizations. It has also been achieved in my study districts as these participants have become more aware and gained new understandings about their own LPDCs and the areas that need to be addressed in order for LPDCs to fulfill their potential in transforming professional development.

Summary

The methodology utilized in this study addresses both critical theory and the imperatives it holds for researchers, and the constructivist/interpretivist framework through which I view the world and have interpreted the data. Although initial research questions were generated from my own experience as a member of an LPDC, emergent themes and areas for exploration from data and analysis of the other sites have been used to guide the later stages of the study. Analysis and findings have been shared with stakeholders throughout the study, and through collaborative reciprocity, a better understanding of LPDCs and their transformative potential has emerged.

In my role of researcher as change agent, I have created avenues of influence on a regional and state level, as well as created proposals for my own district to guide them through the changes in professional development that the LPDC should ultimately bring about.
CHAPTER 4

DATA ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

Introduction

In the following chapter, the three districts represented in this study are described through their district and LPDC structures within the framework of both organizational and critical theory. Because much of this study dealt with the political system in which the LPDC are embedded, this chapter explores the organizations and their politics through the data collected.

The purpose of this study was to understand how LPDCs operate, both on the micro level of the committee and the macro level of the district. The results of the study are written to reflect those two systems with relationships between them noted throughout. Although originally the study was to provide an in-depth view of one district with comparative data from the other two, I found it necessary for all three districts to be described in greater detail because a detailing of the nuances of the systems in each of the districts is necessary in order to frame my conclusions.

In my position as researcher as agent of change (Guba & Lincoln, 1989; Lather, 1986), it was my intention to create a document that will be shared beyond the scope of this study in order that other LPDCs understand their own systems and the implications from this study that apply to their committees. To that end, I have adopted a descriptive writing style usually associated with ethnographic research which I believe to be more accessible.
than the writing style of positivist research and more useful to the practicing educators who will read this study in order to understand LPDCs (VanMaanen, 1998; Apple, 1986).

I have included a number of tables and figures with which to illustrate my findings, presenting a clearer depiction of each district structurally and politically. I use interview and meeting excerpts throughout to illustrate particular points and to allow my interpretations to be supported through my respondents' words.

As I write, my role in this narrative evolves as I continue in my roles of participant and researcher. Although my text, by necessity, will reach its conclusion, the call to action through which my research was conceived compels me to continue on in my quest for reform (Darling-Hammond, 1988; Aronowitz & Giroux, 1985, 1991). By disseminating my work, I hope to influence LPDCs in fulfilling their role of transforming professional development in Ohio.
DISTRICT ONE

General Demographics

District One is a suburban school district in central Ohio where I have been employed since the 1992-93 school year. It is located in a middle to upper-middle class suburb of Columbus, Ohio, and in the last decade has grown considerably out toward its eastern boundaries as well as within incorporated areas with a current population of approximately 36,000 people. New housing consists of both single-family and multiple-family dwellings, with an average home valuation of $108,000, and as a result of the steady housing growth, the population of the school system has also grown (Ohio Department of Education, 1998; District One High School Profile, 1998; District One District Publication, 1998).

At the end of the 1997 fiscal year, District One had an average daily membership of 7,229 students and 711.5 staff members, over 500 of whom hold teaching certificates. The average per pupil expenditure in District One is $5,798 with 85% of all expenditures going toward staff salary and fringe benefits (Ohio Department of Education, 1998). The district has opened a new middle school and a new elementary school in the past decade, and has also built additions to the high school with plans to begin additional construction in the upcoming year.

The district itself consists of seven elementary schools, three middle schools, and a high school with an approximate enrollment of 2,000 pupils. The central administrative office is located in a building adjacent to the high school, and a private residence across the street from the high school was purchased two years ago in order to house overflow programs, including some special education services. Growth is projected to slow, and school enrollment is projected to level off in the next few years, and then begin a decline.
District Organizational Structure

District One is a traditional hierarchical education organization. Using a modification of Mintzberg’s structural model (Bolman & Deal, 1997) to illustrate, central office administration occupies the strategic apex of the district determining the district’s mission and focusing on the outside environment. Building principals are in the middle line of the administrative core where they supervise, control, and provide resources for the teachers beneath them. Teachers occupy the operating core of the district where they perform the basic work of the district--teaching. The support staff that facilitates the work of the other components occupies a position outside of the decision-making structure. The technostructure which is present in many organizations “houses specialists and analysts who standardized, measure, and inspect outputs and process” (Bolman & Deal, 1997, p. 62). In the case of an education organization in Ohio, this function is usually carried out not within the district, but externally through the Ohio Department of Education (see Figure 4.1).

In District One, all key decisions are made by central office administration. Although input from building administration is invited through an administrative council which meets regularly, input from teachers only comes from a few specific committees. Ultimately decisions are made by central office administration and communicated down the chain of command to building staff. Central office administration also controls district resources, dividing some of them up among buildings to be used by building principals for various purposes. Information moves down through the administrative council to the building staff, but movement of information back up the chain goes through limited channels--either building principals or association officers. Although some teaching staff occasionally make direct contact with central office administrators, this is usually only for specific concerns that may involve district-level policy.
The central office administration is divided hierarchically as well, with a superintendent, an assistant superintendent, two executive directors, three directors, four coordinators, and a supervisor. The superintendent's primary responsibility is to provide district leadership and general coordination of all the areas of operation. The assistant superintendent is in charge of all instructional services and the day-to-day operation of the district. The director and coordinator positions report directly to the assistant superintendent and are each responsible for a segment of district operations. The executive
directors coordinate with the assistant superintendent and the superintendent. Central office also houses the treasurer and his staff as well as various support staff.

At the building level, each elementary has one principal with teaching and support staff; each middle school has one principal, one assistant principal, teaching and support staff; and the high school has one principal, four assistant principals, teaching and support staff. Elementary teaching staff generally organize by grade level, middle school teaching staff organize on grade level teams and cross-team content area groups, and high school teaching staff are organized in content area departments.

**Teacher-Administrator Leadership Roles**

Teacher and administrator roles in District One are influenced by historical relationships. Veterans of District One describe their relationships with earlier administrations as “paternal” because administrators took care of the teaching staff who, as one 30-year veteran remarked, said “thank you for the crumbs.” In the past district administrators were promoted from within, and they usually occupied coaching-teaching positions prior to their administrative appointments. Central office and building administrators were most often male, and had a long tenure with the district.

Under the last superintendent from the preexisting structure, relationships between teachers and administrators were strained. Central office was staffed by several strong personalities who gained a reputation among both teachers and building administrators for being authoritarian and inflexible, particularly in the area of personnel issues surrounding teachers. Tensions erupted during contract negotiations where, for the first time in the history of a district which didn’t even have a teachers’ association until the mid-1980’s, the teachers openly rebelled against administration, staging public protests and forcing negotiations to federal mediation.

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In recent years, this scenario has changed. Remnants of the old administrative cabinet have been transitioning out, and new administrators from outside the district have filled many vacancies. The number of female administrators has increased as well. However, the new administration has had to work hard to redefine their roles and to establish trust between themselves and the teaching staff, a process that is on-going.

Even though the personalities have changed, the basic structure of the administrative hierarchy remains largely the same. Leadership in District One is formally housed in the administrative positions. Administrators are in roles which give them control over decisions and resources while the teaching staff carries out these decisions and negotiates, both formally and informally, for resources. Leadership is stratified hierarchically among the central administration with the superintendent, assistant superintendent, executive directors, and some directors and coordinators having decision-making power over other administrative positions in the district.

Much of the district's decision-making and resource-allocating power lies in the office of the assistant superintendent for instructional services. The responsibilities of the assistant superintendent cover a wide range of services for pupils and staff. In many districts of this size, these responsibilities are split among different individuals, but the assistant superintendent in District One carries the major operational load of the district. Because of the nature of this role, the assistant superintendent is a very visible entity in almost all operations involving certificated staff.

Building level principals are recognized as leaders in their buildings, and their relationships with their staffs are based on individual leadership styles. Building administrators have access to other district leaders via their participation on the district administrative cabinet. Assistant principals have leadership roles in their building, but do not generally participate in leadership positions at the district level.

Within buildings, teachers serve in formal leadership roles as committee chairs, department chairs, grade level team leaders, and other work-related leadership positions,
and some are recognized as informal leaders as well through their work in the building. However, teachers in District One rarely have opportunities to take on district leadership roles with the exception of teacher association leadership positions or representation on district-wide committees. In the past, a few individuals held the title "teacher leader," but their sphere of influence was limited to very specific areas or grade levels. In this position, teachers performed more administrative functions. The lines between teacher and administrator roles are very much defined by function, and recently two of the individuals who held the teacher leader position were made into administrators. Currently the teacher leader position no longer exists, even though administration recognizes a need for the quasi-administrative role in some areas throughout the district.

The roles of teacher and administrator in District One are defined by function. Teachers are classroom-based, with the exception of counselors and educational technologists, and anyone who has a role outside of the classroom is considered to be an administrator, and given the title "manager," "coordinator," or "supervisor." District One's board of education has made their position very clear throughout the past several years: the role of teachers is to be in the classroom teaching children. Their stance is represented through central administration who are charged with carrying out the policies of the board.

Perceptions of Teacher-Administrator Relationships

The perceptions of teacher and administrator relationships are influenced by the historic roles associated with those positions in the district. As a result, perceptions about district teacher-administrator relationships vary in District One between teachers and administrators, veteran district staff, and newer district staff. Most interviewees agree that building level principals are a key factor in building teacher-administrator relationships, and that throughout the district these relationships vary.
Excerpt from administrator LPDC member interview, 2/22/99:

I think that it just completely, this is the thing that I've seen from the whole, you know, seeing the whole picture, it totally varies from building to building. Totally different. It depends on the leader, because some are very comfortable, have committees for everything, let teachers direct what's going on, and some make the majority of the decisions themselves.

Excerpt from teacher association president interview, 2/25/99:

The relationship between teachers and administrators in District One is something that is determined by building, is something that is definitely determined by the principal in the building. We have principals who wish to try to run their buildings site-based, collaboratively, involve the teachers in every decision, and we have buildings where the principal makes the decisions. Even though there are supposed to be committees of teachers to help, it is always an administrative decision. There is a clear line between teachers and administrators in every building, as it pertains to the working of the district, and especially issues concerning curriculum.

Excerpt from superintendent interview, 3/5/99:

There are, to streamline that to buildings, there are different degrees of relationship between administration in buildings. There are buildings that, where teachers will be so close to the principal that they would all say good things because there's that, that trust is so great, at the same time that may not be the building where it's moving forward as much as some others. There are others that would be the opposite of that, and those are ongoing relationships that are shaped daily as well.

In discussing district administrator-teacher relationships, however, administrators and teachers in District One have very different perceptions about the nature of their relationship. Administrators characterized the relationship as "solid" or "positive" or "collaborative." This may be attributed to the directed effort that the administration has put into rebuilding relationships with teaching staff. Central administration has addressed the teaching staff's concerns that they feel undervalued and have made concerted efforts to change that perception, including establishing collaborative building councils for resolving operations issues. The teacher's association and the new superintendent have also constructed a working relationship based on mutual respect, meeting on a regular basis to
discuss district issues. The last contract negotiations was as close to a collaborative process as the district has ever seen. In fact, two of the administrators specifically addressed this collaboration.

Excerpt from assistant superintendent interview, 3/11/99:

I hope that it's a trust, trusting kind of thing, that there is a trust level there, that they feel valued, respected, that they feel they're treated as professionals. I know I try to deal with teachers in that regard and hope that they understand how much I value what they do. And we try very hard when we do professional development, we have curriculum teams, you know, we get input on everything that we do, and I think that's important that teachers feel they have input and feedback and all that kind of thing. We really do try to do that.

Excerpt from administrator LPDC member interview, 2/22/99:

I think personally with the curriculum instruction department that we try very hard to have a good rapport with teachers and to let them guide everything that goes on, I mean aside from, and also give them the big picture, so we're taking everything we hear from the state, everything that we have to do from law, and trying to help them, let them make the decisions that we're allowed to make. And, so I think that we try to make sure that we do that.

Teachers, on the other hand, still did not believe that they had much input into district decisions. They described district committees as being staffed by the same people throughout the years, with little input from outside a small circle of teachers. Issues of trust and respect between the roles of teacher and administrator are still simmering beneath the surface. The role of central administration as authoritarian leader still exists, particularly among teachers who have taught under several administrations. It would seem that the authoritarian roles that have been established historically in the district are still defining central office, and any behaviors reminiscent of previous administrations reinforce that perception in the mind of the teachers.
Excerpt from teacher LPDC member interview, 2/24/99:

I think sometimes they don't respect us as teacher professionals and teaching professionals. They espouse that they do, but it's not always reflected on their actions. I think on this committee, they're doing it obviously 'cause they have to do it, but on their gut, they still want to be in control.

Excerpt from teacher LPDC member interview, 4/19/99:

My experience working in this district has been, I guess I would not define as collaborative efforts. My experience in the district has been more of a, that they believe in a more directed approach to getting things done....And so there's very little creative thought or even opportunities for you to express, in fact I would even go a step farther to say that if you are an independent thinker, and if you do suggest ways that are not meeting their prescription and their menu, then you are set aside and not really invited to participate in a lot of committee work where your ideas may be suggested and someone else might like them.

Excerpt from teacher association president interview, 2/25/99:

I served on a strategic planning committee and several curriculum committees. I had to work collaboratively with community members, and teachers, but there was never an opportunity to have collaboration with administration. It was always a committee duty assignment, and at the ground level there was collaboration in carrying out the assignment, but at the administrative level there was no collaboration.

Teacher's perceptions of their political power are shaped by their role in the hierarchy. Leadership positions for teachers have decreased throughout the years, rather than increased at both the building and district levels. Some of this is due to belt-tightening measures that levy failures have brought about, and some of this is due to the way that teacher and administrator roles continue to be defined by both the board of education and the staff in general.
District One's political infrastructure is tied directly to its organizational structure and influenced by historical relationships and fiscal policy. Currently, decisions and resources are both controlled by central office administration with some delegation to building level administrators. Tight central control over decisions, which ultimately lead to distribution of resources, derives from the district's history of fiscal conservatism. Previous administrations prided themselves on their fiscal management and often ended the fiscal year with a sizable budget surplus. Resources allocation was controlled by one administrator for several years, through several different central office positions, including business manager, assistant superintendent, and superintendent. He was recognized as a respected member of the community through his 30 plus years in the district, and his involvement in various local civics organizations. He earned a reputation for his spending conservatism recognized in both the district and the community at large. The community, during this time, never failed a school levy.

As District One's community has grown and changed, and as central administration has undergone various incarnations, the district has found itself unable to pass school issues without a great deal more marketing and accountability to the community. Central administration has maintained a tight rein over district decisions and finances in order to prove themselves responsive to the community, particularly some of the district's very vocal critics. From the perspective of the teaching staff, though, these outside constraints are not as evident, and central administration's control is sometimes interpreted as oppression of teachers' creativity and innovation.

Within buildings, the distribution of decision-making power and resources are dependent upon the building principal and his or her leadership style. Because of these differences that exist at the building level, teachers' perceptions about administrative power
vary. Many teachers have stayed in buildings as administrators have changed, further complicating the political structure with trust issues.

Differing perceptions between teachers and administrators in District One about their relative political roles reveal a conflict that affects the LPDC. Whereas teachers want input into decisions made about the work they do, and believe as professionals they should have the ability to exercise creativity in order to make changes they see as being positive, they perceive that administrators keep them from the decision-making process based on their role as teacher and its limited area of influence.

Excerpt from teacher LPDC member interview, 4/19/99:

[I]f you're not ever allowed to think on your own and you only have to do what you're told, do you see, and then you try to put people together that really want to think and want to make it the best it can be and are not satisfied to just say, “well we've always done it like this,” or “this is the way they want to do it” and they're not letting you use the scope. They're not letting you look at all the possibilities because they're tying you to, well, this is the way it's going to be. The meetings have to be here, they have to be at this time, and no you can't be over here. You can't make things convenient for people, you can't do it right, because of whatever trivial reasons that [administration has].

Administrators see the participation of teachers as being integral to the decision-making process, but operate under constraints from both the board and the community that place responsibility for continued fiscal conservatism and accountability for resources distributed squarely in the hands of central administration.

With regard to change and innovation, there is a perception on the part of administration that teachers are the ones reluctant to change, particularly with respect to new policies that involve increased responsibility for teachers. District administrators cite that very few educators volunteer for committee positions and complete surveys which would give them more input, and teachers' lack of participation is perceived as lack of interest. Teachers are seen as needing direction and not being willing to do more than they have to do in order to fulfill minimum requirements. This has been reinforced by ongoing
disagreements over supplemental pay and addendum contracts between the administration
and the teachers' association. The administration would like to see teachers become more
involved in the district’s professional development process, and willingly take on the new
responsibilities required of them by state law; however, administrators believe overcoming
past practice will be difficult.

Excerpt from superintendent interview, 3/5/99:

I think that some of the major shocks are still to come for individual
people, and I think trying to help our folks to relax and be comfortable with
those while maintaining appropriate standards will be a challenge, maybe a
major challenge.

Excerpt from administrator LPDC member interview, 2/22/99:

I think for a lot of people [the LPDC] has a negative connotation.
They just want to try to get out of it, I don't why, how come, they are just
so used to the way that things are as far as certification goes, that I mean the
fact that we have out of 187 or whatever, we have one person that's doing it,
a professional development plan. They don't understand the benefits, they
just want to get out of it, get done as fast as possible kind of thing, and so
that negative connotation is a problem.

From the teachers' perspective, they believe they have little power to influence
decisions made concerning their role within the organization. Even district curriculum
committee members, regarded by administration as having a great deal of input, have
expressed concern that they are not making true decisions, only selecting between choices
predetermined by administration. They view their role as being a rubber stamp committee
with no real power to research and explore other options that may be available. Without
the opportunity to go beyond administrative choices, teachers see the administration as not
wanting to explore innovative possibilities that may lead to significant curriculum and
instructional change.
Indeed, administration’s perceptions about teachers’ lack of involvement and teachers’ perceptions about their lack of influence only serve to reinforce each other. As teachers who do participate see their influence restricted to limited decision making with no input into resource distribution, they opt out of a process that for them is superficial in bringing about change. As more teachers opt out, administration takes over more control to fill the gap left by the teaching staff, while still operating under the outside constraints that have been part of District One’s political structure for several decades. Changing these perceptions is necessary for administration and teaching staff to be able to work together to achieve effective change in the district. The political maps below (see Figures 4.2 and 4.3) represent these conflicting representations of the political structures of power and change in the district. Change represents any change that either teacher or administrators see as improving the district from each of their perspectives. Status quo represents maintaining current practices, teacher-administrator roles, and their respective areas of influence.

![Diagram of District One's Political Map -- Administration's Perspective](image)

Figure 4.2: District One's Political Map--Administration's Perspective
The professional development system in District One is administered through the office of the assistant superintendent who oversees the instruction department. Working directly beneath the assistant superintendent is the coordinator of curriculum/staff development who described her responsibilities as to “revise, support, and develop curriculums, course of studies for the district in all subject areas, and all grade levels K-12, and provide professional development opportunities for the district K-12.” This coordinator has a broad range of responsibility because, instead of being administered by separate individuals, both curricula and professional development fall under her area of responsibility. In addition, beyond clerical support, she has no district staff through which
to delegate tasks. As a result, this coordinator must work with various building staffs and teacher committees in order to carry out her work.

According to the coordinator, “much of the professional development offered K-8 focuses on curriculum, and then also teacher needs.” Professional development is designed to support new courses of study as well as addressing areas of weakness that have been identified through district proficiency test reports and other district data. At the high school, professional development is based on a cafeteria approach with speakers, workshops, and meetings comprising the majority of the activities. An assistant principal is primarily responsible for the coordination of high school professional development.

**Philosophy of Professional Development**

District One’s Continuous Improvement Plan, which is still in the drafting process, addresses professional development by setting a goal of increasing the number of professional development opportunities and the amount of participation by staff members. Neither the quality nor the scope of professional development is delineated in the plan. District One also addresses professional development through its board policies and administrative guidelines, and its strategic plan. These documents outline what can be interpreted as the district’s philosophy surrounding the professional development of its certificated staff.

Excerpt for District One Board Policy 3242, “Professional Growth”:

The Board of Education believes that continued study is a prerequisite for continued professional growth of staff and, therefore, encourages the participation of professional staff members in in-service and other training programs.
Excerpt from District One Administrative Guidelines 3243, “Professional Meetings”:

The Board of Education, in order to enhance the school program, wishes to encourage and support staff members to attend meetings which are for the purpose of furthering the well-being of the District.

Excerpt from District One, The Strategic Plan Report 1996-97:

**Goal II**—Through annual appraisal of District personnel, demonstrate the commitment to Personal and Professional Development and the services we provide to the District One School District.

**Link to Vision**—Through the commitment of continued Personal and Professional Development the District One School District will be able to provide the best educational services to the students of the district.

All of District One’s published documentation supports the professional development of its staff; however, District One’s policy documents do not address standards of quality or assessment of the professional development that is offered in the district. One section of the administrative guidelines entitled “Six Questions for Determining the Effectiveness of Staff Development Programs” focuses primarily on the process of providing staff development including clearly stated objectives, content, organization, instructor competence, materials and environment, and end-of-program evaluation rather than quality issues surrounding assessing and meeting the needs of the professional staff.

District One’s official policies about professional development reflect the previous model for professional development in the state that used earned hours as the sole basis certification renewal. In this statewide model, teacher professional development was based on attendance at workshops or classes in order to earn renewal credit, primarily for seat time. The meaningfulness or relevance of professional development activities to an educator’s job was not required. Because the professional development paradigm is
shifting to a quality-based model, the LPDC is revisiting these policies through their committee discussions.

Origination of Needs

Professional development needs in District One are currently determined by the coordinator of staff development and other central office administrators through feedback from staff. This feedback comes through committees, such as curriculum committees which have representation from the primary level buildings in the district, and proficiency area advisories at the secondary level. Individual staff members also request particular professional development opportunities. Other professional development expenditures are determined by grant funds available for professional development and for what areas they are specifically designated.

Excerpt from District One LPDC meeting transcript, 5/10/99:

(coordinator) Well, we have to support the new courses of study, and we need to do technology support because we have funds specifically for that. We offer the other question, you know, of other suggestions in case there are, you know, needs that we haven’t seen, but with our limited budget, we haven’t had professional development funds other than grant funds that deal with language arts, and that deal with technology, that deal with math, and all of our grants, the things that pay for our professional development, are funded by those grant funds which are written to support those things. So we have to spend them on those things.

In addition, a survey is distributed to the staff in the spring for them to give input into summer professional development offerings. The 1999 survey consisted of six questions which were constructed as a series of predetermined selections that dealt with preference of time and format for offerings, categories of interest in two courses of study and technology, and one open-ended question that asked for other suggestions (see Appendix B). Of the over 550 surveys that were sent out, 151 were returned, and the
coordinator compiled statistics for the first five questions. The administration sees the low response rate as indicative of teacher indifference, but does acknowledge that the survey system could be improved. Because teacher input is limited, central office administration constructs professional development offerings based on state requirements and grant funding.

Survey results for the query for other suggestions were not documented by the coordinator; however, she reported to the LPDC that there were not many suggestions and those that were made were questionable with regard to their usefulness in planning professional development.

Excerpt from District One LPDC meeting transcript, 5/10/99:
(coordinator) There weren’t many [suggestions], though, I mean, people basically put comments, for example, other ideas, you should offer technology courses in June and August. You should offer more evening courses in summer.

The validity and reliability of the survey instrument itself became an issue for teacher members of the LPDC during a discussion of needs assessment. Because the majority of the survey was constructed of predetermined choices, the teacher members questioned whether or not the survey was accurately representing district professional development needs.

Excerpt from District One LPDC meeting transcript, 5/10/99:
(mw) I think one of the limitations of this survey was that it just had, people had choices between very specific things. And I don’t know if this is the best way of figuring out what our staff needs are.

Excerpt from teacher LPDC member interview, 4/19/99:
(teacher 3) You can’t lump professionals in that kind of a grouping, and then complain that they’re not getting any back. Well, maybe it’s the
selection. Maybe it's the form. Maybe it's because nobody cares because they don't think their ideas have been addressed before. I mean there's just too many variables to make any kind of a survey like that, to have the data be reliable. It's not reliable.

I know we do get the surveys. It is true that they do pass out the surveys, they do ask people what they want. What I don't know is what kind of response rate they get, what are the kinds of numbers, and how is the final determination made. We've never been given those numbers to be able to know. It just seems that sometimes that some of the things that are chosen are maybe not as appropriate as maybe some others that might be of more crucial nature.

A challenge in District One is accurately assessing the needs of the staff. The lack of feedback from the teaching staff results in central administration determining professional development based on other criteria. Historically, teachers have had little input, particularly in earlier administrations, so there is a perception that their views are not validated by the administration, and as a result, they choose not to participate in the survey. The format of the instrument itself, selections among predetermined choices, reinforces that perception. This, in turn, translates into teacher indifference from the perspective of the administration who then takes more control, again reinforcing teacher perceptions. This feedback loop must be interrupted in order for the system to change.

Control of Resources

Professional development funding comes from two different grant sources: a professional development block grant issued by the state to be used for general professional development and various grants that have been written by central office staff, and awarded to the district based on specific programs or areas of utilization. The legislation authorizing the state-issued block grant states that it is to be used for "locally developed teacher training and professional development and for the establishment of local professional development committees." The remaining grant funds are used to provide
professional development training in specific areas of technology, language arts, and math. The majority of the training is being offered at the primary grade level where new math and language arts curriculums have been adopted and where SchoolNet-sponsored projects have been initiated.

In District One, all professional development funds are administered through the office of the assistant superintendent. The block grant is divided up among each school building for principals to use to send staff to professional development activities.

Excerpt from assistant superintendent interview, 3/11/99:

The block grant that we receive, you know it is supposed to be used for professional development, and we use it right now to provide...we divide it up among the schools based on the number of teachers that each school has, and the number of administrators. We give so much, we designate so much, a certain amount per teacher and per administrator, and then we put that into a line item for each school. It's just all one chunk of money, so we're not saying that administrators have to use it or they don't have, you know it's just all one big chunk of money for that particular school to use. Then the decision is at the building level, and that varies. I know some principals try to divide it up among all the staff. Some principals will just say, as you find out about, give me your requests early, and I'll look at them and see what we can support and what we can't support. That's on each building principal, does it a little differently, I think, and staff, you know, some get staff input, some don't, that's gonna vary. But anyway, we divide most of the money that way. There's also a little bit of money for, that we set aside to do things, if we want speakers to come in, and other technical kinds of service, and some for, in just kind of a fund like for technology people, or special ed people, or other people who need to go places that maybe aren't part, or psychologists, they're not part of a building as such.... And then there's the amount for the LPDC, and I pretty much administer, I kind of oversee that, and I've set aside $5,000, and we get about $30,000 to $35,000.

To use the portion of the grant that is set aside for the use of the LPDC, the committee requests specific items, such as stipends or file folders, in writing through time reports or purchase orders, which are then moved through district channels until they
receive approval by the assistant superintendent. Because the LPDC represents a new configuration in the district, the channels for accessing funds are unclear to both committee members and clerical staff. There have been some delays in accessing the funds due to this confusion.

Although the block grant is designated specifically to fund the LPDC, the LPDC members have no direct control over its allocation. Again, there was uncertainty how the grant was supposed to flow to the LPDC since it is administered through the superintendent. The teachers on the LPDC have been especially frustrated by their lack of information about the use of the block grant, since they want the LPDC to play a more integral role in the district’s professional development system, which would include having some control over professional development funding.

Excerpt from teacher association president interview, 2/25/99:

The professional development block grant is administered according to a 3-letter word, and that is “may.” The money “may” be used for LPDC. As the professional development monies have been already allocated, they are in a set pattern of allocation, and now the LPDC, as I said, becomes an add-on. And that money for that committee has not been successfully allocated to this point.

Excerpt from teacher LPDC member interview, 2/24/99:

Really, we have no say on that either at this point. And as far as I know, it should be going to the professional development fund, but I’m kinda thinking that it just goes into the general fund. But I don’t know, we’ve never, they’ve never accounted how the funds are used. Not to me. Maybe they have to you, or, but they never have accounted it.

Excerpt from teacher LPDC member interview, 4/19/99:

My understanding is that it’s applied wherever the administrators see fit.
Delivery of Service

Professional development in District One is generally delivered by internal providers. Professional development activities generally take place on-site at buildings and are structured around specific topics. Some workshops are also offered during the summer with opportunities to earn university credit. The district calendar provides two inservice days and two early release days that are generally used for either building or district professional development. The use of these days is determined through the coordinator of curriculum/staff development, particularly for the primary and middle grades while the high school has more autonomy in scheduling professional development for their staff.

Excerpt from District One LPDC meeting transcript, 5/10/99:

[T]here are certain things that everybody has to do, that we need. When we are implementing a new course of study, and there is a new set of beliefs, a new course of study that a committee has worked on for a year, and you need a chance to present, let people know the process, let them process it themselves, there are times when you need to do that, too. And that’s why we’ve tried to do that one of the professional days and let buildings do one of their professional days, do something one of the early release days, and let the buildings do the other early release day.

LPDC Organizational Structure

District One’s LPDC consists of five members, a three teacher majority as prescribed by law, and two administrators. The teachers represent elementary, middle, and high school level while the administrators are the human resource director and the coordinator of curriculum/staff development, both central office administrators. All five members have been part of the committee since it began organizing in January 1998.
Member Selection

Teacher members of the LPDC are association members who are appointed by the association president through a process that involves the approval of the association’s executive board consisting of officers, committee chairs and building representatives. The teacher members must always represent the three grade levels so that when one member rolls off, a member of the same grade level will be selected to replace him or her. All three of the current teacher members have continuing contracts and their experience in the district ranges from one member with seven years to two with almost 30 years each. Each of the teacher members has been involved with various district and association committees in the past.

Administrative members are selected by the superintendent with input from the assistant superintendent. The superintendent considered the human resource director a “sort of an obvious selection” based on his role in the district, and because the district is organized with staff development housed in the curriculum and instruction department, the superintendent also selected the person who had the primary responsibility for the development of staff.

Models of Collaboration

Historically, in District One there have only been a few ways in which selected teachers and administrators have had opportunities to collaborate. Some of these have involved the strategic planning process, curriculum development, and contract negotiations. A new district committee, the Professional Staff/Administration Committee, was established during the last negotiation session and provides a new venue for collaboration between teachers and administrators, so new opportunities for teacher-administrator collaboration are available.
Most members of District One’s LPDC defined collaboration as working together, adding that the work involved achieving a goal or dealing with a problem or an issue. Some of the teachers, through collaborative experiences outside the district, had a more complex understanding of the processes involved in collaboration.

Excerpt from teacher association president interview, 2/25/99:

My definition of collaboration is the ability of two parties to sit down and talk about differences, to list the interests that they each have, each party has in an issue, to list options that each party comes up with, and to come up with some sort of agreed-upon solution.

Excerpt from teacher LPDC member interview, 4/19/99:

Collaboration to me means that we have a goal and that everyone that is involved in the collaboration is contributing their expertise on what they know, what they feel is best and most efficient way to get things done. That there is sharing of thoughts and ideas. That we critique our own. That we talk about them, that we try to be sure that everything is very detailed so that when, before you put information out it’s done correctly and well thought through. And, if we have disagreements that a collaborative effort means that we’re all in it together with the same purpose and therefore all working to try to get things best together, so there is a lot of give and take and sharing and that kind of thing.

Both teacher and administrator LPDC members believed that District One’s LPDC worked collaboratively by citing the fact that all decisions in the past year and a half have been reached through discussion and consensus. However, the extent of the committee’s ability to collaborate openly was called into question. An issue arose among teachers concerning hidden agendas on the part of the administrative members and how that affected the level of collaboration among committee members.

Excerpt from teacher LPDC member interview, 4/19/99:

I would say our LPDC doesn’t work like I’d like to see it work. I feel that, and here again as I’ve already stated, I don’t know any, I have not
had any real previous contact working collaboratively with, but in order to work collaboratively, for it really to work, you have to have a premise that you respect every person there, and that they have things to contribute that no one is addressed differently than the other or thought to have better ideas than the other or thought to be more correct than the other. And I think that that is a problem. I think to also to be collaborative in the true sense of the word like I felt we were in Discovery [a statewide curriculum program] when I brought together so many different levels of people that worked together what I would determine collaboratively, it’s the idea that you listen to people’s ideas and it doesn’t mean that you have to agree with everybody’s idea, but when you sit around the table, everyone has to speak what they really feel, not what they think someone wants to hear, or what they’ve been told they need to say. And that’s missing from our table because of just the setting that we’re in and then the direction that the people have that are there. Because they [administration] all answer to someone, and that’s why they have a problem with a professional such as myself. I don’t answer to anyone except myself. And they can’t, they have a hard time dealing with that when you really, I only have one purpose and that’s kids. That’s why I’m here. And making teachers more professional and more capable of doing their job and being able to work with kids and such, I mean that’s what we’re here for, and that’s the only goal I have, so I don’t… but they have other agendas.

Excerpt from teacher LPDC member interview, 2/24/99:

[W]e’ve seen some power struggles kind of come out. I think the administrative element in the LPDC, you know they’re not there because they want to be there, it’s a “have to be”, and we have one member that I don’t see her very frequently, and I don’t know why that is, other than she always has commitments. And the other member is just, it’s a “have to.” So do we work well? I’ll go back to your original question, do we work collaboratively. I would say 60 to 80% of the time, yea we do. Other times everybody just kind of just does their own kind of thing. They have their own agenda. Either that or they just tune out the agenda.

The teacher members had concerns in particular about the how much influence the assistant superintendent had in the committee’s work. The coordinator of curriculum/staff development reports directly to the assistant superintendent and has acted as the assistant superintendent’s spokesperson on various issues that have arisen in committee discussions. The assistant superintendent, on several occasions, has acknowledged that the
coordinator does act on her behalf and reports back to her about all LPDC decisions. Even though not a member of the committee, the assistant superintendent's power and influence are present in most committee discussions at which the coordinator is present.

The personnel director, the other administrator, rarely expresses an opinion in discussions, asking only infrequent questions. On several occasions when there was dissension between teachers and the coordinator about planning staff training sessions or accessing block grant monies, the personnel director deferred to the coordinator to represent administration. Outside of meetings, however, he let teacher members know that he had supported their position, even though he didn't take a stand during the meeting. In terms of the district political structure, his power is limited to personnel issues related to hiring and recruiting. Although he does not report directly to the assistant superintendent, through his actions, or non-actions on the committee, he defers to her power.

Neither of the two administrators on the LPDC have been empowered to make administrative decisions without the agreement of the assistant superintendent. The personnel director has not been given the opportunity to represent the assistant superintendent's power on the committee. He, like the teachers on the committee, is lacking in influence as a result of his position in the political structure. The coordinator who represents the assistant superintendent still lacks power to make autonomous administrative decisions. As a result, neither administrator has the same freedom that the teachers do to represent an independent opinion, limiting the LPDC's ability to work collaboratively at a level deeper than defined by simple consensus.

LPDC administrators and teachers are both positioned outside the power of making significant LPDC decisions, allowing them only the "illusion of deciding" (Freire, 1989, p. 159). In many ways, the administrators on the committee occupy a similar role to the teachers, disempowered by the organizational structure which gives control over the majority of district operations to the assistant superintendent.
Work Distribution

The distribution of committee work was a source of discontent among the teacher members of District One's LPDC. The administrative members saw the work basically being divided up equally, depending upon needs, although one administrator did qualify this by saying, “[s]ome members I think have a strength where others may not” and as a result “perhaps have assumed those responsibilities by default.”

Teachers felt that they carried the greater burden of the work, especially any work that needed to be done outside the committee, such as drafting policy documents.

Excerpt from teacher association president interview, 2/25/99:

I think the teachers take the initiative to carry out the work because they have a strong desire to have it be successful and to see it done right. The administrators on that committee are less enthusiastic about picking up more work and doing it.

Excerpt from teacher LPDC member interview, 2/24/99:

Well, I think there have been some uneven-nesses or inconsistencies, that would be a better word to use. It seemed to me that there were times when maybe the teacher members did more of the load.

Another issue which affected the distribution of work was administrative attendance. The coordinator of curriculum/staff development was frequently absent. Her position requires attendance at a variety of meetings and workshops. Although the LPDC specifically scheduled meetings to accommodate her other responsibilities, her attendance was sporadic. For the LPDC meetings that she did attend, the coordinator arrived late most of the time. The personnel director also arrived late or had to leave early for several meetings, and was frequently called out of meetings to attend to other administrative
business. As a result, the committee work feel predominantly to the teacher members at the meetings.

The inequities in work distribution seem to also reflect the different paradigms of committee work under which teachers and administrators operate. Administrative committees are frequently meeting-based and informational in nature, reflecting administrative training which combines organizational theory and business management. Administrators on committees usually serve in a decision-making role, and any work that results from decisions is delegated to appropriate staff in the operating core to be carried out. On the other hand, teacher committees are usually work-based, focused on a goal or an issue that needs to be addressed at the local level. Teachers enter into committees with the knowledge that they will be completing some type of work, particularly since teachers do not have the same access to clerical assistance.

On the LPDC, these two paradigms collide and create feelings of frustration for both teachers who have a need to work through constructive processes and administrators who need to see the agenda move forward quickly. Administrators also placed LPDC work at a different priority level than teachers, evidenced by their meeting attendance record and their willingness to leave LPDC meetings to complete other administrative tasks.

Compensation

Compensation for District One LPDC members was the focus of several discussions. During the 1997-98 school year, teacher members were compensated by release time if the committee met during the school day, and through a $20 per hour stipend for summer work. By the beginning of the 1998-99, the teacher members had received compensation for nine of the twelve hours they worked during the summer.

Both the superintendent and assistant superintendent were under the impression that the teacher members were also being compensated on an hourly basis for the work done
during the 1998-99 school year that extended beyond the contract day. When it became apparent through this study that there was a misunderstanding about compensation practices, the committee discussed the issue with the association president in attendance on March 3, 1999. By late spring of 1999, teachers were being compensated for time beyond their work day, as well as having received compensation for work from earlier in the school year. The compensation remained at $20 an hour, but each teacher member was paid based on her individual school day, which meant that for a 12:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. meeting, the elementary and high school teacher members were paid for one hour’s time since their work day ended at 3:00 p.m., and the middle school teacher member was paid for only 15 minutes since her work day ended at 3:45 p.m.

Although the teacher members were compensated for the majority of their work in the 1998-99 school year outside of the school day, the method of compensation was not one that they preferred.

Excerpt from teacher LPDC member interview, 2/24/99:

Now obviously we get release time, but for me that is no big deal. If I have to go from 3 to 5, you can see, when I leave here, I have to have someone to cover for these kids. You can’t just put these kids everywhere. Or anywhere. So it’s no big deal. I mean it’s really not, 3 to 5, I mean, I’m still having to plan for the entire day and it extends my day, and I still don’t get paid for it. [The administration is] in control on that, so they just, and I don’t know where we’re gonna go with it unless, we’re just gonna have to negotiate it. And that’s next year. I think we should be on the addendum [extra-curricular] salary schedule. That’s the right way to do it. It goes up, we get, I mean, you should get the classification you feel is appropriate for the number of hours that’re put in, and go from there.

Excerpt from teacher association president interview, 2/25/99:

At this point, I think for this district, LPDC committee membership should probably be an addendum contract or a supplemental contract. And it should be a set fee both for teachers and administrators.
Administrators on District One’s LPDC are not compensated monetarily in any way. They, too, are released from other duties in order to attend LPDC meetings, but on many occasions, administrative members were absent, arrived late, left early, or had to leave meetings temporarily due to other commitments that were in conflict with LPDC meetings. Administrators are not compensated for serving on other committees, but the work requirements of the LPDC are very different from the informational administrative committee paradigm. Both administrative members expressed an interest in being compensated in some way because of this heavier work requirement; however, the administrative parameters which define their role also limit their compensation.

Excerpt from assistant superintendent interview, 3/11/99:

[Administrators] work until 4:30 or 5:00, and I don’t think your meetings generally go past 4:30 or 5:00, so, whereas a teacher’s day might be over at 2:30 or 3:00... and see most of the administrators work until 4:30 or 5:00, so you can’t double dip.

District Policies, Procedures, and Practices Affecting LPDCs

District One’s formal policies are set down in a pair of handbooks outlining board guidelines and administrative procedures for carrying them out. These policies are contained in loose leaf binders housed in each administrator’s office, school library, and central office. As policies are revised, new pages are created to add to the binder, and administrators are instructed to remove outdated policy. Additional formal policy is found in the district’s negotiated agreement.

Informal policies are the procedures by which the district carries out day-to-day operations. Most of these policies do not appear in a written format; however, past practice defines these procedures as policy.
Documented Policies

In addition to the previously delineated district policies concerning professional development, District One's negotiated agreement contains general language describing the LPDC's membership and referring to its responsibilities under Ohio Revised Code, Section 3319.22. The language delineates the appointment of bargaining unit members on the committee with regard to their grade level representation, and defers other governance responsibilities to the committee itself.

The negotiated agreement also outlines policy for professional leave which is contingent upon the approval of the building principal and can accumulate up to five days each school year. Curriculum development and program implementation, field trips, and IEP conferences and writing are not counted as part of those five days. The policy outlines the conditions for reimbursement of expenses, as well as limiting the use of professional leave for athletic clinics.

The board policy manual contains an additional policy, 3242, that directs the superintendent to establish a professional development committee under the terms of state law and the negotiated agreement. The policy also lists some of the guidelines by which the committee is to function and directs the superintendent to report periodically to the board on the operation "of this important committee."

Undocumented Procedures and Practices

Releasing teachers from their workday to participate in LPDC meetings is within the parameters of District One's professional leave policy; however, this release time is subject to limits set through the assistant superintendent's office concerning the number of teachers who can be released with substitutes on any given day. These limitations were put into place to alleviate the substitute shortage in the district, as well as to discourage staff
from taking leaves on days adjacent to weekends and holidays when absences are greater in
the district, shown through documentation. The restriction is set to no more than ten
teachers on professional leave on any given Tuesday through Thursday district-wide, and
no more than seven on Mondays and Fridays. Even though this limit was imposed to
address the lack of substitutes, it is upheld even if substitutes are available. The LPDC has
had to schedule its meetings based on these restrictions for the teacher members.

The administration of the block grant that is another procedure that affects the
LPDC. The assistant superintendent sets aside an amount for the LPDC, but in order for
the LPDC to order supplies and materials, a member must fill out a purchase order and
submit it through the clerical staff. Because the LPDC is different from other district
organizations which have their own accounts and account access, the procedure for using
the grant is still unclear. Block grant account distribution information has not yet been
made available to the LPDC members.

Restricted compensation for teacher committee work is a policy that affected the
LPDC in the beginning. A maximum limit of $200 has been set for any teacher who
works on committees outside of the parameters of regular duty assignments. The pay
varies slightly by the type of committee, but teachers are limited to 20 hours of work at $10
an hour for curriculum committees and 10 hours of work at $20 an hour for all other
committees.

Facilitating and Inhibiting Practices

District One administrators and teachers have different perspectives about the
various policies, practices, and structures that affect the operation of the LPDC. In general,
all administrators cited the policies that allow release time and the designated days available
to teaching staff for professional develop as facilitating policies. The assistant
superintendent who worked in another district previously views the current policy, which
allows up to ten days for professional leave, as being very generous based on her previous experiences. The superintendent also noted the “cooperative working relationship between teachers and administrative staff in the district” as an enhancing element.

Two of the four administrators interviewed saw no inhibiting factors. The inhibiting practices recognized by the other administrators tended to fall in the affective domain of district relationships, including historical relationships between administrators and teachers in the district that were recognized as issues that would have to be worked through from time to time. The district staff’s not understanding the LPDC process came out as a hindering factor as well. One administrator also saw the lack of time to carry out the LPDC’s job as another obstacle.

Teachers, on the other hand, saw both formal and informal policies as more of a hindrance to the LPDC’s function. The current policy language surrounding professional development was seen as an area of concern. The association president believed the formal policies that are currently on the books “may or may not come into conflict with some of the guidelines that have now been established by the newly organized LPDC,” while another LPDC teacher member saw district professional development policy as existing “...in such a broad, vague manner that it gives no power or authority to anyone in that it’s so broad that it would encompass anything.” The policy that has been revised to include language about LPDCs only outlines the committee’s general governance structure, not its role in professional development.

Teachers also believed that the $200 limit on committee work was definitely a hindering factor. After realizing the amount of work involved with the LPDC and the length of time necessary to create policy and process renewals, the teachers at first believed that most of their LPDC work would be unpaid.
Excerpts from teacher interview, 2/19/99:

In a lot of ways, saying that you have a limit of $200, that’s the limit of the value that you are to the district when you give beyond your school day.

I think that rule about the $200 limit, I think that’s a hindering thing. My god, that’s a hindering thing.

The LPDC, through the association president, approached the superintendent about the long-term nature of the LPDC’s work and the time commitment that getting it up and running would require. After that meeting, the policy limiting committee compensation to $200 was waived for teacher LPDC members who are currently paid at the $20 an hour rate for any time worked outside of their school day. Because the three grade levels have different school day times, compensation for each teacher member is different.

The LPDC at Work

District One's LPDC meeting is scheduled from 3:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. in the central office conference room. At 3:00 p.m., the high school teacher and personnel director have arrived and make small talk until the rest of the members show up. By 3:15, one elementary teacher has arrived after having driven in from her school building. The middle school teacher's school day does not end until 3:45, and finding coverage for her students has been difficult in the past, which may explain her lateness. The coordinator of curriculum/staff development drops off her laptop which contains LPDC working documents and heads back down the hall. By 3:25, the middle school teacher arrives.

The personnel director places a stack of documents on the table. Several district educators have sent in various forms of documentation to certify they have completed certificate renewal requirements. The high school teacher turns on the computer and begins to start a file to record the day's work. The high school teacher then checks the LPDCs
voice mail for messages while the personnel director and middle school teacher begin sorting documents. The elementary teacher moves to the filing cabinet to pull information needed to verify paperwork from teachers such as records of hire dates and lists of certificate numbers.

Once materials are sorted, the high school teacher moves to the filing cabinet to pull folders for individuals who have sent in materials. The next hour or so is devoted to reviewing and verifying renewal requirements for the educators who have sent them to the LPDC. The coordinator of curriculum/staff development arrives at 4:00 and joins the group's work. This moves in assembly line fashion with one person checking transcripts, another verifying dates and numbers, a third organizing the file and signing forms that will be sent back to the educator. The elementary teacher makes a list of all actions taken which is then transferred to computer by the coordinator of curriculum/staff development. The high school teacher refiles folders and addresses envelopes. Twice during this time the personnel director has had to leave to attend to other business, and because a computer file has been inaccessible, the curriculum/staff development coordinator returns to her office to retrieve the information.

Once the paperwork has been completed, the group moves onto the questions left on the LPDC's voice mail. They discuss the answers to those questions, once calling the Ohio Department of Education for clarification of an issue. The high school teacher begins to return calls, usually leaving messages on the school district's voice mail system.

The rest of the group continues to discuss what they need to do in order to get educators who have yet to send in necessary paperwork to respond to the LPDC's repeated requests. They decide that another letter is needed, and after returning calls, the high school teacher moves to the computer to call up an older letter for revision. The LPDC thinks out loud and revises the letter which is printed to the coordinator's office.

The group then resumes their discussion from the week before about their role in the school district's professional development system. At the last meeting, there was
dissension by one of the administrators who saw the LPDC's role differently than the rest of the group. The discussion continues without the personnel manager who has had to leave early to attend an interview. The meeting goes ten minutes beyond the 5:00 ending time, and since the group has not finished their discussion, they schedule another meeting in two weeks, working around everyone's schedules and the room's availability.

**The LPDC’s Role in the Professional Development System**

Currently the LPDC's role in the professional development system is under discussion within the committee and has brought to the surface different perceptions about the purpose of the LPDC's work. The teachers share the belief that the purpose of the LPDC is to improve professional development within the district and to renew certificates and licenses as a by-product of that process.

Excerpt from teacher interview, 2/19/99:

I believe the purpose of the LPDC should be to, well first of all, follow the mandate of the law which is to be the organization within a district that renews teaching certificates. But they also have a wider scope, and that is to guide and direct professional development within the district, and there's a possibility there to, I would hope, to raise the level of professional development within any district.

Excerpt from teacher interview, 2/19/99:

I was led to believe that the purpose of the LPDC was to guide the professional development of all the staff in that particular district. That the LPDC was to provide the procedures, the guidelines, the parameters of professional development, the workshops if necessary, that if teachers needed to know how to fill out a form, if they needed to know about the goal setting or objectives and aligning objectives with assessments and anything that they needed to know in order to succeed as a professional, then that was our purpose. And to make sure then that it would follow, that not only would their skills improve, and their whole professionalism, their attitudes, their, all of those things would not only improve, but also then have them ready to meet the standards of licensure as they move through the system.
For the administrative members, certificate renewal is currently seen as the primary purpose. This fits into the administrative paradigm where making a decision and moving on are the norm. The process-nature of the LPDC’s work and its potential influence throughout the district, requires administrators to adopt different ways of carrying out committee work, and the administrative members have expressed frustration that the “work” of the LPDC does not seem to get finished. The administrators did see the possibility of the LPDC having a more of a role in the future, but not until the licensure process is more completely in place.

Excerpt from administrator LPDC member interview, 2/19/99:

I tend to see it as, because we’re not doing anything with, we haven’t required IPDPs yet, we’re not into determining professional development in the district, so I see our role pretty much as almost clerical. We count up the hours, if we say it’s OK, and send it back, and send us the form back, and ask them to complete that.

Excerpts from administrator LPDC member interview, 2/22/99:

[The purpose is] to provide renewals and new licensure, renewals of certification and the licensure for the people who are transferring to it.

I think that in the future, though, that it can be part of the data collection for professional development because when we get to the point where we have people doing plans and things, that it’ll be real important to have a overview of what people’s plans are, what their goals are, for example if a bunch of people are trying to do higher order thinking, ‘cause that’s one of our weaknesses in the district on all of our tests, then, and several people have a goal on that, then we could provide some classes or that kind of thing.

The LPDC’s participation in the current professional development system is limited to processing renewals and approving preliminary Individual Professional Development Plans for staff who voluntarily choose licensure. The committee does not have access to much district professional development data at this point, nor have they had an accounting of the use of the professional development block grant by building administrators.
Knowing what buildings are spending professional development funds for could assist the LPDC in assessing building needs. Although the coordinator of curriculum/staff development serves as a committee member, as of this time, the LPDC has had no substantive influence in the professional development structure in the district. Where the LPDC fits into the existing structure, or even if it has a place in the existing structure has yet to be determined. Although the LPDC exists outside the organizational boundaries of the personnel and staff development departments, it must coordinate information with them both, and ideally, collaborate with both on professional development issues. The future role that the LPDC will play in the district’s professional development system has yet to be determined, and may continue to be influenced by the underlying political structure in the district.

The LPDC’s Influence in the District’s Political Structure

By law, LPDCs are positioned laterally with school boards in school districts in Ohio. LPDCs set up their own policies and procedures following the guidelines set down in the Ohio Revised Code. They determine their own governance, and are not under the direct supervision of any existing administrative structure in a district. LPDCs are only accountable to the state department of education for their procedures. However, because they exist within organizations, they become a hybrid of sorts, coordinating their work with both personnel/human resources departments and staff development departments. Political positioning is dependent upon the system already in place and the power relationships that exist within that system.

In District One, a traditional hierarchical education organization, decision-making and resources are controlled at the administrative level. At this point in time, the LPDC only has jurisdiction over decisions concerning certificate/license renewal requirements. However, even by establishing those requirements that administrative and teaching staff
must adhere to, the LPDC is creating a new position of power that falls outside of the administrative power hierarchy.

As District One’s LPDC struggles to define its role in the existing structure, and with a push from teacher members, attempts to take a more active role in the professional development system in the district, it imposes itself into a political structure which has historically resisted change even though the individuals occupying various roles in this structure have changed over time. As the LPDC moves to enlarge its influence by setting standards for professional development providers and by collecting data and making recommendations, it is in effect shifting power from the central office administrative roles, particularly the assistant superintendent’s, to the committee. One issue that has surfaced in committee discussions about the growing role of the LPDC in the professional development system is the perceived threat to the administrative power structure. Administrative resistance could eventually limit the LPDC’s role if the district’s professional system is not restructured to meet new licensure requirements.

This power struggle currently plays out in the roles of the committee members. From the teachers’ perspective, they feel disempowered by the political structure in which the LPDC is placed that limits the influence the LPDC is “allowed” to have in the district.

Excerpts from teacher LPDC member interview, 4/19/99:

I guess for us I feel that we are, we have a very prescribed role dictated to us that this is how much you can do. ...I don’t see the LPDC at this point anywhere on the [organizational] flow chart. I feel that we’re in name only. I mean I think our existence has been recognized, I understand. And I don’t mean to be critical about it, it’s an acceptance. ...I know it exists, and I know that, but when you say that you really have no authority and you really can’t guide professional development, and you can’t schedule anything, and you can’t really say that you’re really doing anything. ...But, our LPDC is, as I say, I think we’re a procedure group right now. It’s that we are to be sure that all staff is informed, and we are to be sure that they turn in their materials, that we check them off and send the appropriate form. But it’s not a thought process, it doesn’t involve any creative kinds of approaches, and it really is not meant to change anything that’s existing right now.
The administrators who are currently part of the structure which controls professional development see limits in the LPDC's role in changing professional development in the district. Although they see the LPDC playing some role in providing data and recommendations about professional development needs eventually, although the extent of that role remains uncertain.

Excerpt from administrator LPDC member interview, 2/19/99:

I don’t see it determining [professional development], you know, solely determining professional development. I see it playing a part in determining it. I think all they probably can do at this point is suggest, and it may have to come from the constituency or from the staff itself, you know, requesting that of us, of the committee, requesting that of the district to allow the LPDC to help determine that. But I think that may be one of the ways it will come about. You know, if the committee feels that strongly about it, emphasizing its role in determining that then perhaps a meeting with the superintendent or the assistant superintendent that influences that pretty dramatically would be warranted.

Political tension contributes to that uncertainty, because as the teacher-majority LPDC works to take a more active role in the district's professional development system, the administration could perceive it as a political challenge on the part of teachers on the committee to take over a role clearly defined as administrative since control of district decisions and resources associated with professional development rests primarily in the office of the assistant superintendent.

Excerpt from administrator LPDC member interview, 2/19/99:

Well, it could be perceived by, assuming that we meet with the superintendent, it could be perceived by him, unless he knew differently, that it's merely a power play on the part of the LPDC...to take away the superintendent's role in determining professional development. Obviously he himself doesn't do that but delegates that, but he could see that as a move by the committee to take that away from the administration.
Discussion in the LPDC about increasing its influence in the district-level function of professional development has already been met with resistance from the coordinator of curriculum/staff development who may likely be defending her own position or the assistant superintendent's position. A possible outcome of administrative defensive posturing could be enforcement of organizational limitations that prohibit the LPDC from functioning in a role that would allow it to explore a variety of professional development possibilities (see Figure 4.4).

Teachers on the committee currently feel the LPDC is being restricted in the role that it is allowed to play, and the more visionary members see any creative possibilities as limited by administrative defenses.

Excerpt from teacher LPDC member interview, 4/19/99:

I would say the freedom to create is our biggest pitfall right now. To design, to be creative, it has to involve the scheduling, it has to involve the program, what is actually being offered, it has to involve making sure all staff are addressed, not just some staff, and we need to be able to get into our buildings and talk freely about what can be done. We don't have any of those freedoms. From what I can see, my interpretation is they don't see that as our role. Our role is only to have a paper trace, that we have documented that they have 8 hours over here and 6 hours over here. That to me is much more secretarial. I don't need to be a professional educator to count how many hours someone has. And I don't feel that that was the role of the LPDC. I feel that the LPDC was meant to be a professional group, and that is built with people who have a knowledge base for not only curriculum, but for portfolios, for professional development, for all the Pathwise domains and all the teaching strategies, and we have that expertise on staff so that we could offer workshops on any area such as that, if we were only given the time and only given the freedom to do that.

As District One's LPDC members work together to define the LPDC's position in the professional development system, underlying role structures of teachers and administrators on the committee, as well as within the district, are called into question. The limiting influence of the assistant superintendent on the committee also affects the LPDC's position in district operations. Unless these roles are also redefined or the political
structure changed to accommodate the new committee, the LPDC in District One may not succeed in fulfilling its transformative potential.

Figure 4.4: LPDC/Administrative Conflict System
DISTRICT TWO

General Demographics

District Two is another suburban school district in central Ohio, slightly smaller than District One. It is located in a middle class suburb of Columbus, Ohio, and has also experienced growth as a result of new home construction. The community has an average home valuation of $73,174, and projects a steady growth in school enrollment averaging about 2% per year for the next several years (Ohio Department of Education, 1998; District Two District Calendar 1998).

At the end of the 1997 fiscal year, District Two had an average daily membership of 5,335 students and 431.7 staff members, of which approximately 71% are certificated. The average per pupil expenditure in District Two is $5,256 with 85% of all expenditures going toward staff salary and fringe benefits (Ohio Department of Education, 1998). The district is expanding several buildings, including the high school, junior high school and the middle school, with a $6.2 million dollar grant from the Ohio Department of Education (District Two District Calendar 1998).

District Two consists of five elementary schools, one middle school with grades five and six, one junior high housing grades seven and eight, and a high school with an approximate enrollment of 1,800 pupils. The central administrative office is located in a strip mall approximately 1/4 mile away from the high school on the same street.

District Organizational Structure

District Two has had a site-based organizational structure since its 1989 affiliation with the Coalition of Essential Schools and the later advent of the Venture Capital program. There are few administrators throughout the district, in central office as well as at the
building level, and the district is largely teacher-driven in day-to-day operations. Buildings have individual freedom to structure their programs to best suit their students needs, and central office staff are not visible in buildings on a regular basis. Because of its site-based structure, District Two has strong building identities.

Central office administration in District Two consists of a superintendent, assistant superintendent, treasurer, business manager, pupil services director, and a variety of support staff. There are no central office administrators specifically in charge of either personnel or curriculum and instruction, although these areas fall under the assistant superintendent’s jurisdiction. For the most part, the support staff handle processing of personnel documents, and since both curricular and instructional decisions are made at the building level, central office maintains a "hands-off" status unless a problem occurs.

Each elementary school in District Two has one principal. The middle school and junior high each have a principal and one assistant principal. The high school has one principal and three assistant principals. Within buildings, there are many different committees which are charged with much of the decision-making power in the district.

Utilizing another of Mintzberg’s models (see Figure 4.5), District Two’s organizational structure can be defined as divisionalized with quasi-autonomous units, the individual buildings, doing the majority of the district administrative work in order to serve its own pupils (Bolman & Deal, 1997). Decisions are rarely made at the district level because the operational focus is at the building level. Decision-making that is usually the responsibility of the central office level in traditional districts, such as staffing and budget, is redirected to buildings in District Two. Central administration remains largely uninvolved, only setting parameters for the district’s total number of staff to be hired or the amount of the money to be disseminated. Then, building principals are brought together to collectively decide where staff and resources are to be best utilized in the district, making these issues the responsibility of the operating core of the district.
Teacher-Administrator Leadership Roles

Because of its site-based organizational structure, leadership is distributed throughout both the administrative and the teaching staff. Although central office administration makes some district-level policy including district budget and operations, the day-to-day operation is left to the staff, so central administration's leadership role is limited to district-wide operations.

Excerpt from administrator LPDC member interview, 4/26/99:

We don’t have a director of personnel, we don’t have that. We don’t have curriculum directors, curriculum coordinators. Central office is pretty much four people plus the support staff, business manager, treasurer, assistant superintendent, superintendent, and a couple retired guys that come in and help. That’s pretty much it.
At the building level, administrators are seen as instructional leaders, and there are many leadership positions occupied by teachers, as well. Building committees provide opportunities for teachers to take on positions of responsibility and leadership in various capacities. The teachers' association also provides teacher leadership positions. Within the professional development system organized around the Critical Friends Group model, a trained teacher or administrator assumes the position of coach which is a position of leadership within the group.

**Perceptions of Teacher-Administrator Relationships**

Teachers and administrators in District Two described their relationship to each other as "positive," "wonderful," and "democratic." The real strength of their relationship exists at the building level where teachers and their administrator(s) work together to achieve building goals for their students. Building staffs operate as teams and have an identity based on building affiliation.

Excerpt from superintendent interview, 4/20/99:

"You'll find a lot of collaborative efforts within a building. What you probably won't find here that would be different from most others is district-wide academic, we don't have curriculum committees. We adopt the state model curriculum and then what we do is focus, the buildings focus on the delivery system for that model curriculum and matching the learner objectives. So, I think that the collaboratives would be, exist in each of the buildings within the buildings. You'll find innumerable ones from, on any topic.

The relationship between central administration and district teaching staff is more distant due to the fact that central office administrators are rarely involved in building operations and are not visible on a regular basis. The teaching staff has little district-level interaction with administrators, in contrast to their close working relationships to their
building administrators. As a result, central administration is detached from the operational core of the district.

Excerpt from teacher association president interview, 5/5/99:

We don't see central office personnel. ...[G]enerally teachers do not see those people at all. Now, [the superintendent] does come to the buildings once a month, and he has a time when he sits down with staff. Unfortunately it's in the morning and most of our staff has things, they’re busy, they don’t have time to sit and chit-chat, which is a shame because you can pick up a lot of information, it's very informal. But unless you get involved with projects on a district level, you have no connection with anybody else.

Political Infrastructure

District Two’s democratic political infrastructure is a result of its decentralized organizational structure. Power and resources are, for the most part, handled at the building level with a high level of input from staff. This does not, however, occur in every building due to changeover in administrators who are in the process of familiarizing themselves with the district’s site-based operating structure. In buildings where administrators are new to the district, and are operating from a more traditional hierarchical leadership style, tension exists between principal and staff, and the collaborative working structures characteristic of most of the buildings are in a tentative state.

For most of the district, however, decisions are made through a variety of collaborative structures, commonly building-level committees that can include parents and other stakeholders. Collective ownership of students and programs prevails among individual staffs, and teachers are a necessary part of the decision-making process. Individual buildings set their own goals and construct their own programs using the state-model curriculum with teachers making the majority of curricular and instructional
decisions. Teachers also have a great deal of power over individual building budgets. After a decade of site-based organization, District Two has evolved to the point where teaching staff is integrated into almost every district decision under the belief, according to the LPDC administrative member, “Who works with the kids; that’s who should make the decision.”

Excerpt from administrator LPDC member interview, 4/26/99:

I think it’s a largely teacher-driven district. The decision making isn’t necessarily, well there are so few administrators for one. Kind of by necessity it ends up being the collective responsibility of everybody to make decisions for the buildings in the whole district.

District Two’s decisions are largely guided by data, and the collection of data within the district has played an important role in plotting its direction. Data collection takes place at all levels in District Two, from individual teachers and Critical Friends Groups, to buildings and the district as a whole. District-wide, schools monitor test results and other components included in the state’s new district report cards. Teachers collect and monitor classroom-based student achievement data. The focus on data comes from the district’s long-standing participation as a Coalition district and its involvement with various initiatives that require on-going needs assessment. The climate of the district contributes to everyone’s playing a role in the data collection and analysis process, and it is all integrated back into the professional development system through Critical Friends Groups and their required portfolios.

Excerpt from administrator LPDC member interview, 4/26/99:

I think that administratively, there’s a lot of freedom to teach the way you need to teach in order to make a difference for the kids in your classroom. I think that helps. I think there’s a large degree of respect for ability to choose the right thing for kids. They trust, the administrative staff trusts that the teachers can choose something that’s gonna benefit kids, and
that makes the way we do it work. I trust that you're going to work for the benefit of the kids, and that's why we also built in all of those accountability things. Highly accountable district. Everybody's accountable for stuff. We want to see measurable differences, and it's everywhere. In elementary, you could walk into [a school] and ask them about accountability and they will tell you we are responsible for how our kids perform on those tests, and that doesn't happen in very many districts. We're not in the, oh that test is bad, that test is horrible any more. It doesn't do us any good. And I think that we've done, administratively and throughout the teaching staff, we've done a good job of evolving through that. Everybody gets mad at first, especially when you don't do so well. But, it doesn't change that the test is not going away, and so since it is a test of minimum standards, and everybody'll say that, it's a test of minimum standards, we'll get the minimum done, but we're gonna do more. Administratively, they ask what are your advanced standing scores. They don't ask how many kids passed. That's the second question. The first is how many have advanced standing and how many had advanced standing in reading.

In more traditional hierarchical districts, access to data is generally limited to central administration with some dissemination to building administrators. Limited access equates to limited decision-making capabilities, and in most hierarchical districts, access to data is the realm of the administration which is control of decisions, and not the teaching staff. In District Two, the democratic structure of decision-making requires that information be accessible to all the stakeholders, and the superintendent supports access by all of his staff in order to make changes that promote the district's mission.

Excerpt from superintendent interview, 4/20/99:

Data analysis, in our school improvement plan, what we're trying to do is lay a district-wide improvement plan as an umbrella over, with our goals, over the individual improvement plans for each of the buildings. An umbrella would probably be a good analogy, but one of the weakness that we see right now here, and I suspect everywhere, is the availability of viable data to, I mean I can get it because I can direct people to get it to me, but the issue I think is we want to get that data as it relates to questions a classroom teacher has in a way that's real, accessible, and not cumbersome so that they can say, I have this question, and we pose it in the data system and get the information and answer the rhetorical questions that teachers may have about learning and where students are and correlations between factors. The teacher has that information and the principal has that information, not just
the superintendent has that information. So one of our major focuses of our school improvement plans and our district continuous improvement plan is going to be data acquisition, compiling it and making accessible at the teacher level, and maybe the parent level. If we believe in data, and the data drives changes, then we have to get the data down for the people who are doing this. And available easily because it can't eat up their time. We need their time to be teaching kids in the most appropriate way.

Although buildings set individual goals, they are directly connected to the collective mission of district, "dedicated to continuous improvement." This mission is largely influenced by the vision of the superintendent, and he promotes district initiatives that support improvement in a viable way. District Two is unified by its mission. Unlike some districts where a mission statement is little more than a poster on a wall, District Two's mission is woven into the fabric of its operations, and shared throughout the district on all levels from central administration to individual teachers. As long as the collective vision of change for improvement remains in place, the superintendent willingly defers to his staff.

Excerpt from superintendent interview, 4/20/99:

I happen to believe that professional development should be for teachers, in turn then, should be controlled by the teaching staff, especially, and my issue was, with relationship to what we do here and our mission, which was raising student learning. So, as far as I'm concerned when that was culminated, I'm a happy guy. And giving people autonomy as long as the target's all right, it's something I believe in, so there's not one way to skin this cat. There's a lot of ways to do it, and I certainly don't have all the answers on the processes, and so long as our mission impetus, the processes are aimed at the same goal; I don't want them going the other way.

District Two's political structure is more democratized (see Figure 4.5), rather than stratified as in a traditional hierarchical district, and both administrators and teachers describe the structure in a similar way. However, because political positioning is still based
on the traditional values assigned to the roles of teacher and administrator, democracy in any education organization is a relative state. Administrators are still accorded more status with typically higher salaries and privileged decision-making power.

Excerpt from superintendent interview, 4/20/99:

[T]here's a lot of people that got recertified when I was in school, got certified administration when I was in school just to get the higher salary, had no intention of being administration. What we want, I guess what I'm looking for, is teachers go back to being, if they want to be teachers, they want to get higher on the salary schedule, not to take administrative course or guidance courses 'cause they're easier. I'd rather have them take the more in-depth education and delivery system courses that are going to help them in the classroom, if that's what they want to be.

Figure 4.6: Political Map of District Two--Shared Perspectives

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District Professional Development System

With its decentralized organizational structure, the professional development system of District Two is further localized within buildings to teams of five to ten educators who comprise a Critical Friends Group (CFG). The concept of the CFG originates from the Annenberg Institute for School Reform, National School Reform Faculty program. In District Two, the CFG concept was introduced to the district by one former high school teacher who has become a high school assistant principal and the sole administrative participant on the district’s LPDC.

Excerpt from administrator interview: 4/26/99:

It was kind of my idea to start with. As a teacher, working with professional development and wanting to know why it is I have to do something if it's not meaningful to me. Why is it that I have to do it that way? And I think that's a question that a lot of people were asking; why is it we have to do it this way? It's not that I directed it, it's not that way at all. It's a group of teachers working our professional development here. I think we had 15 teachers in the first group, decided to try to do it differently and to examine the practice more closely, everybody's practice more closely, so that we can see what is meaningful and what is not, and that was Critical Friends Group. We started that in '91. Our first group was in '91. With that, you know, we all quit twice because it's hard work. We did. We all gave up twice, and then said, OK, c'mon back. Let's try it again. Let's try it again. The actual LPDC thing is Critical Friends Group, and I wrote the grant.

Each CFG is facilitated by a coach who has received additional coaches' training. CFG participants commit to a two-year membership. All CFGs are required to meet a minimum of two hours per month, but most meet in excess of that time. In some buildings, CFG time is built into the school day; in others it takes place before or after school. In these meetings, educators (teachers and administrators) share the work they are doing to achieve a goal they have set that addresses a need they have identified in their
practice. The CFG supports, critiques, and provides accountability for the individual educator's work, and it is the educator's responsibility to seek out whatever professional development he or she believes is necessary in order to work toward the goal. At the end of two years, the educator has compiled a portfolio documenting progress toward the goal which is presented to the CFG. At the end of a third year, the educator may present the revised portfolio to an outside panel and then he or she receives the title of Distinguished Faculty and is recognized as a district role model.

Excerpt from administrator LPDC member interview, 4/26/99:

You have to have a portfolio. Your portfolio has to show growth. We don't want a showcase, we don't want to see your best work. We want to see where you started and where you ended. And in that we want to see measurements of differences in the way that kids perform, and that makes a difference.

The CFG fulfills the mentoring component required under the new licensure standards for entry-year teachers as well. Participants on CFGs range from teachers new to the district who are required to participate in a CFG, to career veterans. Some of the members of District Two's CFGs will never be required to transition to a teaching license, but have joined a CFG because of its emphasis on professional growth.

Excerpt from teacher association president interview, 5/5/99:

We have people just joining our CFGs for the first time, new teachers, that are overwhelmed with new things, and they can just listen for a while to some of this conversation. We have old, I don't mean old in age, but teachers with lots of experience who don't need any of this. They're never gonna need a license, but they're part of a CFG because of the conversation, and because of needs they still have in their classroom. So, we have all kinds of people on our CFGs.
Because the program is currently voluntary, not everyone in the district is affiliated with a CFG, nor is there an active CFG in the middle school at this time. Staff members who do not participate in the CFGs go about professional development through the traditional avenue of university course work. As the new licensure standards come into effect, District Two participants will still have a choice whether or not to be involved, but as one central office administrator qualified, there will be "natural, logical, and legal consequences for not volunteering" since CFG is the model for renewal that District Two has selected. Teachers who choose not to participate will eventually be unable to renew their licenses in order to continue teaching.

**Philosophy of Professional Development**

The mission of the CFGs in District Two is "to increase student achievement through reflective practices." The CFGs operate under the following set of assumptions:

- Collaborative inquiry will increase school improvement activity;
- Collective inquiry creates the structural conditions for improvement;
- Staff development structured as inquiry into curriculum and instruction will provide synergy and result in initiatives that have greater student effects;
- Connecting the faculty to the knowledge base on teaching and learning will generate more successful initiatives.

*(Project Overview, LPDC Pilot, District Two 1997)*

**Origination of Needs**

Under the CFG format, student needs are identified by individual educators based on a variety of assessments. Everything done in the name of professional development to
address those needs is tied back to the mission of the CFGs which reflects the district’s vision of improving student achievement. Educators set a goal based on identified needs, and whatever professional development activities they need to achieve that goal, they seek out and do. Their professional development is not measured through traditional seat-time credit equivalents, such as Continuing Education Units or university credit, but by the progress they have made toward achieving their goals. Meaningfulness defines quality professional development which is an entirely different paradigm than the embedded quantitative model that has historically defined educator professional development in this state. Through CFGs, educators in District Two are constructing a new model of professional development based on collaborative discourse and practitioner reflection.

Excerpt from administrator LPDC member interview, 4/26/99:

The thing that I’m most proud of the teachers and myself for is that we aren’t constrained by seat time for professional development. It’s very difficult for people to understand. You have to see it to know it because, you’ll be in a couple Critical Friends Group meetings and it’s a different atmosphere. And all of the meetings we now that we have, everywhere is different. School improvement is different because of the way people talk. It’s a different way of talking to one another. Collaboration isn’t just talking, it’s knowing, understanding and developing, and that makes a difference.

Control of Resources

Resources for professional development in District Two are administered by one of the co-coordinators of the LPDC/Council of Coaches. The professional development block grant goes into a fund that is accessed by the coordinator of the LPDC to pay for meetings, retreats, food, and professional development activities. In addition, the district has negotiated a $2 per pupil amount that goes into the LPDC fund in the treasurer’s office and its use is controlled by the LPDC/Council of Coaches.
Excerpt from teacher association president interview, 5/5/99:

Well it all goes into a fund, it all goes into two accounts at the treasurer's office; the block grant is separate from the district money. But the categories that we have used basically came from the pilot grant. We pretty much stayed to the same thing—stipends, and meetings, we have an account for meetings to fund those, whatever we need to conduct a meeting, supplies, our handbooks, our booklets that we give out to anyone who wants them that tell about what we're doing, all those things come out of supplies. And then we have professional development, and that's our largest category. From that we have used that money for conferences, totally paid for, and this year we didn't spend a lot of it because the conference was during our our spring break, so we didn't have too many go. But that's basically what that's for. Anything that we can find that we need people to use professional development for, that's where that section comes from.

The access to district funds by the teacher who serves as one of the coordinators is indicative of the site-based structure of the district. Resource decisions are removed from the central administration and placed at the local level where decisions over their use are determined by the practitioners whose work puts them in a position to best determine needs. In District Two, one of the teacher coordinators handles the administration of the two accounts. This is the first time that this particular teacher has had to administer money on a district level, and she has been working with central office support staff to learn the procedures for doing so. However, there has been no administrative oversight, and the LPDC/Council of Coaches is in total control of the distribution of its resources.

Delivery of Service

While District Two is still in transition from old standards to new, there are still several types of professional development going on in the district. As more and more teachers receive coaches' training, more CFGs are becoming established in schools throughout the district. Additional professional development activities are taking place for the staff in general, and the nature of these activities is dependent on building needs.
Excerpt from superintendent interview, 4/20/99:

It probably varies from building to building. There's no central clearinghouse in this office for staff development. I've always believed that the more central office tends to get involved in diagnosing, prescribing staff development, probably the less effective it is. And we try to be a site-based type of organization, so again the burden falls again on the building principals. What we do is target goals and outcomes and measures, and give principals a lot of autonomy to work with their staffs and the parents to meet that. Now, there are pluses and minuses to that. Some buildings do a better job of staff development than the others. Some of it's very, very coordinated to the building and district goals, others is more of a smorgasbord type of approach, and "I'd like to go here, I'd like to go there" and unconnected. I think for the most part our elementaries do a pretty good job of focusing in as a group and doing a team or building-wide team approach to staff development and adding some extra support for maybe related but not focused staff in-service. Those tend to be retreats in the summer that we think have been really, really positive because of one, it builds the rapport that exists within the building that's important for the commitment to improvement, and it does not fracture...when you have staff development where somebody wants to go hear something which spurs new ideas, which is good, but it does not congeal a staff around that if you only have one or two people going. You probably need both. I guess I'm more leaning toward the team and the building-wide happenings. It's much harder to do when you have 60 staff members, than when you have 20, so our middle school/jr. high with 60-70 staff members, that's more cumbersome. The high school with over 100 is very cumbersome. That's probably the one that does the most smorgasbord-type of, is the secondary schools and particularly the jr. high and high school.

LPDC Organizational Structure

District Two's LPDC/Council of Coaches consists of all current CFG coaches. The structure of the committee is based on a ratio of one member to 500 students, and minimum standards require there to be one CFG per elementary school, two for the middle school and junior high, and five for the high school. At this point, however, there is no CFG at the middle school and some difficulty in organizing CFGs at the junior high.

In addition to facilitating their own CFGs, coaches also serve as the district's 15-member LPDC with the following representation: one coach from each elementary, two
each from the middle school and junior high, three from the high school, one administrative representative, one central office representative, and the education association president. The central office representative participated minimally during the pilot year, but no longer plays an active role on the committee, so only one administrative member represents the entire administration.

District Two’s LPDC organizational structure is unique in the state of Ohio. The district, as a pilot, took a risk in merging the LPDC model into their existing Critical Friends structure, and had to receive a waiver from the state department of education in order to create this hybrid LPDC model.

Excerpt from teacher association president interview, 5/5/99:

Well, we’re very different than a normal LPDC. We don’t have CEUs, we don’t have any program for CEUs. It is all individual goals, individual professional development goals relating to improving student achievement. The way you develop your portfolio to achieve those goals is truly up to you. If you want to take course work aligned with your goals, that’s perfectly all right. If you want to do research, that’s certainly accepted. However you choose to do it. Assessments, a lot of people are working on goals that involve assessments and that kind of thing. Everything that is done is done through the building Critical Friends Group.

Member Selection

One requirement for membership on the LPDC/Council of Coaches is being a trained building-level coach of a CFG. Because not all buildings have an operational CFG, some of the LPDC representatives do not currently meet that requirement, but are working toward creating a CFG in their buildings. New coaches may be added as they are trained, so the size of the LPDC can grow.

The administrative member is a former teacher who introduced the concept of the Critical Friends Group to the district in 1991. She is responsible for starting the first CFG
at the high school, and has gone on to work nationwide with CFG programs. As a result, her role on the LPDC/Council of Coaches is slightly different.

Excerpt from administrator LPDC member interview, 4/26/99:

I'm the only administrative participant. I'm like the CFG touchstone person, resource person, 'cause I'm a National School Reform faculty member with Annenberg Institute, so I train Critical Friends Groups all over the country. I think that I'm a resource person when it comes to questions about what should we do next. I run all the trainings in the summer for the district.

Models of Collaboration

Critical Friends Groups are entirely collaborative in structure, and the LPDC/Council of Coaches operates collaboratively as well. Because the district has a substantial history of localized collaboration, the CFG structure fits into both the philosophy and operation of the site-based organization. CFG meetings are constructed around collegial conversations focusing on educators' work. Because the work is defined in terms of process and not product, the CFG becomes a part of the process. Through its collaborative structure, the CFG allows educators to take risks in a safe environment with the support of their peers. The structure of the Critical Friends Group promotes collegial relationships by bringing educators together to discuss ways in which they can deepen their work and improve student achievement.

Excerpt from administrator LPDC member interview, 4/26/99:

Collaboration is, for our groups, it's the ability for each individual to come to the table with something that they really want to work on for the benefit of the kids, get help from people in the group or resource from people in the group if needed, or to develop a different direction so that this problem can get solved. And then it would be open so that everyone in the group can do the same thing. It's not just one person, it's every person. So,
it's not just talking about it, it's finding the resources and solving the problem, or deepening the relationships so that everybody has the opportunity to find their resources and solve the problem for the benefit of the kids.

Excerpt from teacher LPDC member interview, 5/4/99:

Some of the greatest work I've done as a teacher has been as a result of the work in CFG, I think. You're putting together a portfolio which is probably, as a teacher, one of the most labor-intensive things I've done, and you're held accountable for that, for what you're doing in your classroom through that portfolio, 'cause you're sharing. And it's counter-cultural for teaching, I think. You don't go in your room and shut your door and nobody knows what you're doing and you don't have, it's like in CFG you share your failures and I think that's even, I mean, we were presenting to a school up north and one of the teachers came up to me and said, that'd be like a doctor sharing all his failures. You wouldn't probably go public with that if you were a surgeon. Here we're asking professional teachers to do that, to share with each other their failures and stuff.

The professional, collegial climate created through the CFGs provides a safe place for educators to take risks and to try things that may ultimately not work. Success in a Critical Friends Group is not measured through successful outcomes, but through the continuing quest for improved instruction. Because the focus is on the process, educators are deepening their work on an on-going basis, and even their failures are learning experiences.

Work Distribution

Unlike other LPDCs where the work associated with renewal is carried out by the committee, District Two's LPDC/Council of Coaches serves a more administrative and policy-making function. The real professional development work behind certification is done at the CFG level. Building CFGs document the progress that individuals make toward certification, and once CFG requirements are fulfilled, the building-level coach
takes that information back to the LPDC/Council of Coaches who approves the renewal based on the coach's recommendation. Information is distributed back down to the building CFGs through the coaches.

Excerpt from teacher LPDC member interview, 5/4/99:

Everything is located in the building, so if you're a CFG member, you're gonna go through your coach to get your licensed renewed. And then it's the coach's responsibility then to take the forms and stuff and get it pretty much rubber stamped by the coaches' council and sent to the state.

Within the LPDC/Council of Coaches, the work consists mainly of discussion of issues and sharing of CFGs' work. Coaches are asked to report on the status of the CFGs in their buildings and to bring any items for discussion to the meetings of the district group. The co-coordinators are responsible for scheduling locations and preparing materials for the meetings as well as processing any additional district paperwork and storing materials, and they receive additional compensation for doing so. One of the coordinators has taken on more responsibility for the LPDC functions and serves as the district's official signator for documentation that goes to the state department of education. She works closely with support personnel in her own building as well as central office to expedite LPDC work.

Excerpt from teacher LPDC member interview, 5/4/99:

The rest of the work, actual work is done by the coordinators because you just can't have six people doing that kind of work. Anything that comes through LPDC that we want our members to have, I usually write it up and our secretary is being reimbursed by our grant to do all of our typing. Anything the members, the coaches want, that they want the rest of the coaches to have, they filter it to me, and I get it to our secretary and we take it to the meetings. Not being with those people, except once a month, is kind of difficult, to ask them to do anything.
Compensation

Compensation for the LPDC members comes primarily from the negotiated $2.00 per pupil that is designated for the committee. During its 1997-98 pilot year, District Two's ten LPDC/Council of Coaches teacher members were paid a stipend of $150 from the pilot grant. The following year, the coaches who comprised the LPDC were paid a $400 stipend, but that amount came under discussion this spring. The LPDC/Council of Coaches agreed to increase the amount to $500 for the subsequent year. Coordinators are paid an additional amount for their additional responsibilities.

Excerpt from teacher LPDC member interview, 5/4/99:

We set up a budget in the fall, and in that budget was compensation for the coaches and the directors, or the coordinators. When we set that up in the fall, we were kind of ignorant as to how much we should do. We went very low. People are inclined to go very low when they're organizing money for themselves. So, we estimated very low. We're probably going to change that even before this year. It's been more work than anybody ever thought. If you're going to do something in an organized fashion, and you're going to give out information, you're going to spend time on it away from your, from school. And that's what we have found is we were really too low.

District Two follows the same compensation protocol as District One and most other districts statewide: administrators are not compensated. Because there is only one administrative member who sits on District Two's LPDC, she is the only one of the fifteen members who does not receive compensation. This is an area where District Two's democratic organizational structure comes into conflict with more traditional role definitions. Because of the different contract agreement for administrators, with the implication that the administrators' work day and responsibilities are defined differently from the teachers', administrators do not receive compensation for their participation on the LPDC. Even though there is only one active administrative member, she recognizes that
her role has changed now that she is an administrator, and she does not expect to be
compensated for her LPDC work.

Excerpt from administrator LPDC member interview, 4/26/99:

There's a stipend; I'm not compensated for being on the LPDC
because I'm administrative.

District Two teacher members have also received release time in order to have all-
day meetings. This has only happened twice this year since the majority of the meetings
have taken place after the school day and off-site, usually at a restaurant. The general
consensus among both teachers and administrators is that educators need to be in their
schools and classrooms during the day, so the LPDC/Council of Coaches has typically met
at restaurants for dinner meetings.

Excerpt from administrator LPDC member interview, 4/26/99:

It's not for the work, its for the meetings at night. They're thinking
of increasing it...because they do meet at night, not during the school day.
We don't want to miss school. We don't want to be out of the classroom.

District Policies, Procedures, and Practices Affecting LPDCs

Because District Two's operations are so closely integrated with its organizational
structure, there are not many district-wide policies in place that are identified by district
members, either teachers or administrators. The district's organizational structure itself
becomes the factor which most affects the LPDC's functioning since the LPDC's design is
formally integrated into the site-based structure.
Excerpt from administrator LPDC member interview, 4/26/99:

I don't think that this, that our concept of LPDC could have happened had it not been a site-based management system. I don't think that it's easily done in a more bureaucratic atmosphere, I don't think. So that's big. I think that administratively, there's a lot of freedom to teach the way you need to teach in order to make a difference for the kids in your classroom. I think that helps. I think there's a large degree of respect for ability to choose the right thing for kids.

Excerpt from superintendent interview, 4/20/99:

I think the lack of policies probably facilitates the operation of the professional development committee.

Documented Policies

The negotiated agreement is one documented policy that addresses district professional development. In addition to the stipend used to fund the LPDC, District Two's teachers' contract supports teachers' professional development by encouraging paid professional leave, with no documented restrictions. The district also provides reimbursement for travel and hotel expenses. Teachers who attend these professional development activities are listed every month in the board of education's agenda.

An additional section of the negotiated agreement states, "No teacher shall be required to attend a school-sponsored class or workshop after school hours" (District Two Negotiated Agreement, 1998). This is a stipulation rarely found in teacher contracts because the prevailing model of professional development includes teachers' staying after school for workshops and meetings. District Two teachers are, however, required to participate in an on-going in-service program at the building level. The CFG component satisfies this requirement for staff members who participate. Partially paid sabbatical leave is also a provision of the contract with an obligatory one-year commitment to the district upon return.
Undocumented Procedures and Practices

Although teachers in District Two are encouraged to pursue their own professional development, the state substitute shortage has affected their ability to do so. Although not documented, the superintendent reserves the right to cancel leaves if no subs are available. There is no preset limit to the number of teachers who may take professional leave on any given day, and teams frequently attend workshops together.

Several of the CFGs meet during the school day and have organized in such a way that the members of the CFG have common free time. Other CFGs meet before or after school. The district also provides a number of professional development opportunities throughout the summer for its own staff and outside participants. However, the continual challenge throughout the district is how to create the time and space for professional development without taking educators away from their students.

Excerpt from superintendent interview, 4/20/99:

[One issue is] the superintendent’s belief in time on task with classroom instruction and trying to balance that with professional development. I think as a state and as a school district, we need to look at alternative ways to try to get that professional development done in ways that don’t take it away from the kids, because they need that. If you believe that you have the very best people in the classroom, how is it then that we can then say we’re going to take these very best people out of the classroom, bring subs in, and still hope to meet our mission? I know some of that has to happen, but we aren’t a 230 day operation here with teaching. With our summer school we’re moving that way, so there are opportunities. What we’ve done quite a bit with our grants that we’ve had is to do the extended the teamwork in the summer in addition to a considerable amount of staff development.
Facilitating and Inhibiting Practices

The same site-based structure which frames and facilitates the Critical Friends Group model also impedes some of the work that the LPDC needs to do. One negative political consequence of District Two's site-based structure is building competitiveness for district resources including staff, funds, and programs. Building staffs are unified, but the district as a whole lacks a sense of interconnectedness.

Excerpt from superintendent interview, 4/20/99:

Since we're not centralized with the operation either in professional development, the site-based could be a detriment. Depending on the leadership of the building, depending on the principal and the philosophies, that there could potentially be problems.

Excerpt from teacher association president interview, 5/5/99:

Basically buildings are given freedom to do things in their own way. We use the state model, of course, and most of us have aligned our curriculum, and our principals have worked with us and supported us during that time that we were doing the alignment. Teachers in buildings get very possessive of their building. It's a competitive type situation. Buildings are competing with one another. We no longer feel, have a district feel for District Two. We feel like eight separate buildings; we compete for, the 5 elementaries compete for test scores. The principals are forced to compete for staffing. The staffing wars. We don't feel; a competitiveness with the middle school, junior high and high school, but we don't feel attached to them either. We don't work as a K-12 district.

The term "staffing wars", common throughout District Two, refers to the system of staffing buildings where this competitiveness comes to the surface. Building administrators come together and are informed of the staffing allowance for the upcoming school year. They then must decide among themselves where the new staff would be best utilized within the district. Each administrator represents his own building's interests, and the resulting encounter pits building against building.
Excerpt from administrator LPDC member interview, 4/26/99:

But [competition] can hurt an LPDC. It doesn’t really impact it, but it kind of does, because you’re always looking at what does that building know about my building and how are they gonna use it? Say you redistrict the elementary buildings and you take 100 kids from here and put them over here. Well, they don’t want to lose their staff, even though they really should go where the kids are going. So, they’ll not say something maybe in great depth to this building because they don’t want his building to know that they have more teachers than they actually need at this time. Those kind of things.

The lack of district unity creates building isolationism throughout the district. Missing is articulation among buildings and between levels that could enrich the experiences of all the educators in the district by providing inter-building opportunities to share both concerns and best practices. Even though this type of collegiality is fostered by CFGs, it is limited to the building level by the lack of networking opportunities that allow building staffs to build a district identity.

Excerpt from superintendent interview, 4/20/99:

If you talk to the teachers’ union, and I probably would somewhat agree to it with the, is that they would talk about the lack of interaction between the buildings as a limitation of site-based. Fourth grade talking with other 4th grade teachers. That is somewhat a concern. I may be more concerned about the articulation between the levels, our elementary level and middle school level, our middle school and our junior high, so between 4th and 5th grade, 6th and 7th grade, and then 8th and 9th grade. It seems to me those are maybe more crucial points, not that, say that the others may not be as important, and how to create that more of a vertical continuity is important. ‘Cause we have some buildings that are moving, raising their expectations quicker than others, particularly in some of the secondary schools, so you have a discongruence sometimes between a particular elementary and middle school, or between middle school and junior high.

Excerpt from teacher association president interview, 5/5/99:

[When] I came to this district, we had K-12 collaboration. We got together, we had district meetings, we talked with other people about the subject areas, about problems, about curriculum, and we coordinated. I kind
of put coordination and collaboration together. We have grown so far apart in the last ten years, that I thank god every day for Critical Friends. This is the first time I've been able to sit down with some of these people and talk about this and have real conversations about situations within the classroom, problems within the classroom, new discoveries for the classroom. However, as an individual, as a member of an individual building CFG, I find I get that within my own building. But there is still not any individual collaboration among grade levels throughout the district. It's a wonderful experience for the particular building because those people are taking the time to sit down and have discussions and really collaborate together. Am I seeing that as much on a district level? No, not the work. We sit down and talk about building situations, we talk about our CFG situations, but we aren't able to get into the actual work and goals. I would like to know some other people's, some goals within a building, so that we can kind of say, gee, what's working, what's not working. We don't have that yet.

Another result of District Two's decentralized structure is the estrangement of central administration from building teaching staff. As individual buildings operate, for the most part, autonomous of central administrative intervention, the teaching staff tends to look to building administrators, rather than central office administrators, for the majority of its administrative leadership needs. Central office administrators are not members of individual buildings' cultures and are not perceived as an integral part of the operations "team." They are positioned as outsiders by teaching staff, and when central administration is visible within buildings, it is frequently a signal that a problem exists.

Excerpt from teacher association president interview, 5/5/99:

Central office is a different story. They don't come around unless something goes wrong. And then we become a district again when something goes wrong. Central office is very disengaged on a daily, even weekly level with our buildings. We communicate by way of the principals, and that's about it. We don't see central office personnel.

Excerpt from administrator LPDC member interview, 4/26/99:

We're very site-based, about as site-based as anybody I've ever seen. And that makes for a lot of strength in the working relationship; however, it makes for an alienation for somebody like central office. So
there's probably a little bit more alienation between teachers in the building and central office than there is between teachers in the building and their building-level administrator.

Because the majority of interaction with central office administration only takes place through limited involvement of building principals, the teaching staff feels disconnected from central administration. The major emphasis in District Two is student achievement, and the people who work closely with the students are accorded the most importance. Since the focus is so localized, central administration's operational value to the district is negated in teachers' perceptions.

Excerpt from administrator LPDC member interview, 4/26/99:

I think if you're going to pick a pocket where they think that they have, that the teachers would listen less to an administrative opinion, they'd listen less to central office...just because they're not touching the kids, working with the kids daily, and that's real important to people here.

The LPDC at Work

Critical Friends Group

The weekly meeting is scheduled for 8:00 a.m. before the elementary school day begins at 8:50. Seven teachers arrive by 7:05, and sit in too-small chairs around a table in the art teacher's room. They form one of the building's two Critical Friends Groups.

The coach begins the meeting by sharing with the group a new protocol that she and another group member learned at the national meeting they attended a few weeks ago. She describes the questioning protocol dealing with addressing a "sticky issue," and then she and the other teacher model the protocol through dialogue and a fictional situation. The
other group members ask questions to aid in their understanding, in order that they can use the protocol in the future with group members who need to work through "sticky issues."

The coach then moves to an item of business, asking who is available to attend an upcoming summer session for the next level of Critical Friends Group training. Three of the teachers express an interest, and the coach tells them she will obtain the school's laptops for them to use during the training.

Next, the coach asks two third grade teachers who have been working on a curriculum project to report their progress. They give a detailed account of the work they have done to create an assessment for math skills that can be used to track student achievement through several grades based on changes they have implemented in the curriculum. The rest of the group provides ideas and informal feedback while the teachers take notes.

The final piece of business is a reminder that one member will be presenting her portfolio in the next month. The teacher comments on both her apprehension and eagerness, and the rest of the group gives her encouragement. The meeting ends at 8:45 with the next meeting scheduled in a week.

LPDC/Council of Coaches

The LPDC meeting is scheduled for 6:00 p.m. at MCL Cafeteria. The coordinator has reserved a room for the meeting. Thirteen of the teachers are present, but the administrative member could not make the meeting due to another commitment. One high school teacher has not been to the last three meetings.

The teachers select their meals which are paid for through the LPDC's funds. Once they are seated and have begun eating, the teacher coordinator begins the meeting by asking coaches to share the work going on in their buildings. She takes minutes of the meeting on a laptop while she facilitates the meeting. Each coach reports on the progress of the
professional development work of individuals or teams in the groups, making special note of individual progress toward portfolio presentations that are due at the end of the year.

After all the schools have reported, the coordinator moves the group into a discussion about the district’s report card and how the work of the Critical Friends Groups is impacting student achievement in a measurable way. The discussion brings out several suggestions that coaches are asked to take back to their buildings.

The coordinator then hands out a new protocol for text-based discussions and goes over it with the group. She shares the success that she has had using this protocol in her own CFG, and encourages the other coaches to introduce it and try it.

Toward the end of the meeting, the coach asks for agenda items for the next meeting and then leads the group in a reflection of their evening’s work. After the group reflects, the coordinator asks the coaches for any paperwork that needs to be signed and taken to central office. The meeting ends at 9:00 p.m. with the next month’s meeting scheduled at another restaurant.

The LPDC’s Role in the Professional Development System

District Two’s teachers and administrators see the role of their LPDC/Council of Coaches as going beyond the state mandate. District Two prides itself on the fact that it has created a systemic model for professional development. The administrator who brought the Critical Friends Model to the district explains that professional development has become embedded into the practice of District Two educators, and is “more in the fabric than it is in the structure...more in the fabric of what you do, than it is in the structure of how you do it.” Because the district operates around a unified vision of improved student achievement, their LPDC model is completely integrated into their professional development system, redefining the state mandate.
Excerpt from administrator LPDC member interview, 4/26/99:

[T]he purpose from the state department is to ensure that there is accountability at the district level for professional growth and development. The purpose for us is to make sure that we're consistently working for the benefit of the kids in the district.

Excerpt from teacher LPDC member interview, 5/4/99:

I think a lot of people see that as just a license renewal. But I think that the LPDC through District Two has been changed to professional development. LPDC originally I think was just license renewal, whereas the LPDC at District Two is professional development and as an end result you get your license. And that's a big change in thinking from one to the other. You hear all these stories about certification, when I was going through, they come back and they take their basket weaving class and they get certified again. It doesn't happen that way, I don't think, through the LPDC. You're actually doing work and it's valuable work.

Because of its lack of a centralized professional development department, District Two's LPDC, through its Critical Friends Group, has become the district's professional development system. As more coaches are trained and more CFGs are put into place throughout the district, the "cafeteria" forms of professional development will most likely decrease as the staff finds greater relevance in the CFGs' work which is directly tied to individual goals and students' needs.

Excerpt from teacher association president interview, 5/5/99:

The purposes of the LPDC in the buildings, which are Critical Friends Groups, is to promote collegiality among teachers. That is what I feel is the greatest advantage of that. Allowing you to say, hey, I have this need in my classroom, this is my goal, I need this to help improve my students' learning, help me with it. A teacher needs to do the research of course and all that by herself, but to get advice, to get kind of sympathy or motivation, TLC from colleagues, is an absolutely wonderful experience. So I think that's the main purpose of our CFG in the buildings. It's truly the only way I've ever seen individual teachers get help with student achievement. They're not in there for any other, there's no other goal except to help students achieve. On the district level, we couldn't live without this.
The LPDC’s Influence in the District’s Political Structure

District Two’s LPDC was tailor-made to fit into the existing political structure, capitalizing on the close working relationships within buildings and the district’s decentralized administration. Within the site-based framework, the LPDC has no district-level decision-making function, but has a range of influence that permeates the district through the Critical Friends Groups in each building.

Needs are assessed at the local level, and student needs dictate the professional development requirements for each educator. The educators are accountable to their CFGs, which are, in turn, accountable to the LPDC/Council of Coaches. The vertical hierarchical model of traditional districts doesn’t fit District Two. Roles throughout the district are democratically interconnected in making decisions about how best to meet the needs of the student (see Figure 4.6).

Excerpt from administrator LPDC member interview, 4/26/99:

It’s kind of unusual because, let’s take school improvement. When you have teachers talking on a regular basis about the things that are hard to get the kids to do, or know, or be able to perform with, you find needs that you might not have found if you just look at scores, if you just look at performance rates that are general. And so, because of the discussions, the things that the building sets for goals change. So, it’s not just coming from the board of education saying, raise your proficiency scores, it’s also coming from these people working really hard saying, we need a better structure within the building to be able to collaborate among grade levels, or for instance, for an elementary building. Or at the middle school, they went to teams. We need this to be able to function well for the kids. And so those goals come this way, the decisions come from everywhere. It’s a circle. The kid’s in the middle. We’ve got the kid, the parents, the community, the teachers, the board of education, the administrative staff.
Decisions about students are made through a network that connects school personnel at various levels with the student's family and community. This model does not portray equal representation of all parties in decision making for students. Rather, shared vision in the district for each student's achievement leads to shared responsibility, creating interconnectedness in the system designed to serve that student.

District Two has constructed a unique model through which to carry out its LPDC functions. The Critical Friends Group model dovetails into the district's site-based organization, and reflects the underlying mission that guides the individual segments of the district. The Critical Friends Group format can be implemented in a traditional district as well, but its potential benefit to educators is enhanced when there is a structure which supports it.
DISTRICT THREE

General Demographics

District Three is located in the southern portion of central Ohio, and is the seventh largest public school district in the state. The district encompasses a broad range of socioeconomic groups spanning five townships and four municipalities with individual neighborhoods classified from urban to suburban to rural. Over 18,000 students are enrolled in its eighteen elementary schools, five middle schools, three high schools, and one technical/alternative school. Individual schools throughout the district reflect the socioeconomic variations within its wide geographic area.

The district has 31 total facilities and more than 2,100 employees of which over 1,200 are certificated teachers. Staff is organized into three associations representing certificated, classified, and administrative groups. The average per pupil expenditure in District Three is $6,008 with 82% of all expenditures going toward staff salary and fringe benefits (Ohio Department of Education, 1998).

The average property valuation per pupil is $85,042 and development has been steadily increasing, although some areas throughout the district are growing more rapidly than others (Ohio Department of Education, 1998). School-aged population has grown considerably, and the district has struggled to find adequate space for its students. Prior to the 1998-99 school year, after a levy failure, the school board decided to have split sessions in order to ease over-crowding in the district where classrooms are at a premium. After a year of the split schedule, the district is eliminating it for the 1999-00 school year and addressing overcrowding directly. Plans are underway for constructing seven new buildings to accommodate the growing student population, and discussion has begun concerning subsequent redistricting. Also, there are multiple renovation and addition projects underway for existing high schools, including athletic facilities and auditoriums.
District Organizational Structure

District Three has a traditional hierarchical administrative structure combined with site-based structures within buildings. Central office is also organized hierarchically through the superintendent, a deputy superintendent, and a large stratified network of administrators, including a personnel manager, a curriculum manager, a quality assurance manager who oversees all the support and business functions, an information services manager, and a communications manager. Each manager is responsible for the oversight of his or her particular area and supervises a central office staff that includes directors, supervisors, coordinators, and specialists assigned to support a particular division of the district. The number of staff in each division varies, depending upon needs, but managers can oversee over a dozen central office staff alone. The administrative inner cabinet consists of seven people including the managers with an extended cabinet of fifteen administrators.

Coordinators function in a variety of divisions, working particularly in curriculum and staff development areas, and are housed in buildings throughout the district. In most cases, these coordinators work under the supervision of one of the directors, usually the curriculum manager; however, some coordinators report directly to another supervisor. Staff members in coordinator positions are now usually administrators, although some of these positions are still held by teachers.

At the building level, different administrative organizational structures are in place. At the elementary level, each building has one principal as well as a staff development teacher. The staff development teacher position is either full-time or part-time depending on building size. The staff development teacher performs more building-level staff development and curriculum functions, and also sometimes functions as an assistant principal, depending on the school. Middle schools each have a principal and two assistant principals. At the high school level, there is one principal and usually three assistant
principals based on the size of the building and the different administrative functions, such as athletic director, that are needed.

In addition to the administrative roles, each building has a Site Steering Committee (SSC) that has teacher, staff, parent, and administrator representation. Some high school and middle school buildings also have student representatives. The Site Steering Committee meets on a regular basis and makes many of the governance decisions for the building. Although these committees are designed to function collaboratively, this is varies depending upon the leadership style of the building administrator and/or the amount of influence the teachers’ association representative has in the building.

Because the district is so spread out, much of its organization has been divisionalized in order to facilitate the managers’ ability to maintain consistency and uniformity at the district level. However, because buildings throughout the district are very diverse in both their populations and needs, the Site Steering Committees provide the opportunity to localize building-level operations to some extent. A combination of Mintzberg’s machine bureaucracy and divisionalized model best illustrates District Three’s organizational structure where important decisions are made by central administration and the day-to-day operations are controlled by local committees at buildings through procedures standardized by policy at the district level (Bolman & Deal, 1997).

The number of administrators in both the strategic apex and the middle line reinforce teacher perceptions of the district as “top down” in structure. The use of this term is a point of controversy in the district. Whereas teachers define the term from a structural framework, the superintendent defines “top down” with regard to his decision-making strategies. Because he sees himself as a shared decision maker, he feels the label is inappropriate because district decisions come from collaborations among administrative groups. However, because district decision making remains primarily within the administrative hierarchy, from a structural standpoint the decisions do move from the top down to the operating core.
Excerpt from superintendent interview, 5/11/99:

[We] have a cabinet which is seven people, we have an extended cabinet which is fifteen people and then we have department meetings and administrative councils and principals' groups, and all kinds of groups, and I think you collaborate with all those groups, but you make all kinds of different decisions at different levels, and I think where sometimes it breaks down in the minds of staff, sometimes in my mind too, is, well that's a top-down decision. No, there were 22 people involved with that discussion, but you weren't involved.

Figure 4.8 District Three's Organizational Structure
Teacher-Administrator Leadership Roles

Leadership positions in District Three are held by administrators and various teachers. Administrative leadership positions are concentrated in the central office hierarchy, extending out into individual buildings through principals. The majority of district leadership comes through the superintendent's cabinet which is responsible for most district-level decision making. Building principals can also serve on various committees at the district level, but are primarily responsible for leadership in their own buildings.

Teachers have a variety of formal and informal leadership roles throughout the district. At the district level, teachers occupy some of the coordinator and specialist positions where they are responsible for a well-defined area of district operation. Some of these positions are more autonomous from direct supervision, particularly in the staff development department, but most of them operate within the administrative hierarchy.

At the buildings, teachers have different leadership opportunities depending on level. At the elementaries, some teachers are designated staff development teachers. In many cases, staff development teachers have assumed some administrative duties characteristic of an assistant principal, rather than predominantly staff development and curriculum functions. At the middle schools, one leadership position formerly held by teachers had the title instructional leader. The position has since been phased out after it was negotiated out of existence by the administration with the agreement of the teachers association.

Another leadership position for teachers at the middle school level is the teacher leader position. Originally, there were approximately eight teacher leaders per middle school who provided communication between building administrators and building teaching teams. The position was later eliminated in a financial cut which resulted in a grievance being filed by the teachers' association. The teacher leader position was then
reinstated under a new job description that included both communication and curriculum functions. Their use in a school is determined by the building administrator. Teacher leaders have formal training through the teachers' association and function as a subgroup under Site Steering Committees, meeting regularly with building principals to discuss day-to-day operations.

At the high school level, some teachers are department heads with a specific area of designated responsibility tied to a curriculum area. In all buildings, teachers serve on Site Steering Committees as informal building leaders, but are required to have teacher leadership training through the teachers' association in order to sit on this committee.

The most visible district-wide leadership positions for teachers in District Three are affiliated with the teachers' association. Historically the teachers' association has had a strong presence in District Three. Several leadership positions are available to teachers through formal association offices and committees. The teachers' association has also implemented and administered a training program for teacher leaders that has been integrated over the years into many of the district leadership positions available to teachers. Over 300 teachers are now trained teacher leaders serving as various coordinators, teachers on special assignment, and on Site Steering Committees.

Perceptions of Teacher-Administrator Relationships

As in the previous two districts, at the building level, relationships vary. In a district the size of District Three, individual building climates are dependent upon many factors including the administrator's leadership style. Some administrators are very comfortable working with their staffs collaboratively and others prefer a more authoritarian
style of decision-making, even though all buildings in the district theoretically have collaborative Site Steering Committee structures.

Excerpt from administrator LPDC member interview, 5/3/99:

[T]here are some administrators that believe, that still think that decisions should be made by principals. And that’s, it’s a struggle because we’re not in that mind set at this point that, there are some things principals are always who make the decisions on, but there are other things that, it makes more sense to work with people that are closest to the problem and that might have more answers than principals do sometimes.

On a district level, teacher-administrator relationships in District Three have reflected the climate shaped by central administration. Through 1987, District Three’s superintendent was a top-down administrator, described by another administrator as a “‘you do it my way or the highway kind of person.’” Hierarchical relationships were reinforced with resulting tension between administrators and teachers. The next superintendent, from 1988 to the end of 1997, led the district with a very team-centered approach and was responsible for promoting many of the collaborative structures currently in place throughout the district.

Excerpt from administrator LPDC member interview, 5/3/99:

Our superintendent we had from about ‘88 to ‘98 was a very, “let’s work in teams, let’s work together”, so there’s been a transition. Is it as far as some people want, or it has gone farther than others want, it depends who you talk to.

Some individuals were critical of this superintendent’s team-centered approach, believing that too much power was shifted out of central administration. However, the resulting collaborative structures such as Site Steering Committees created a climate where relationships between teachers and administrators were strengthened.
Excerpt from teacher association president interview, 5/3/99:

[S]ome of the things that we've done, I'm talking a little longer term now, in District Three over probably the last 10 to 15 years, in terms of some of the quality practice and training, for instance, and some of the things we've done with site-based decision making, I think have...generally helped the relationship between teachers and administrators in the district. And I think especially at the site with the site-based decision making concept that we have, you know with the SSC or site steering committees, I think it has given people more of a sense, at least in terms of the way it's organized, of having some open dialogue about some issues. You know, maybe being equal players, at least in certain realms of our business.

In January 1998, District Three's current superintendent came on board, and the central administration's leadership style changed again. Relative to the previous superintendent, District Three's new leader has taken a more centralized position of leadership, still supporting collaborations throughout the district. Even so, the climate has changed and relationships between teachers and administrators are undergoing reassessment.

Excerpt from administrator LPDC member interview, 5/3/99:

He's probably closer to the superintendent that we had in the last one. He believes that things should be in a collegial fashion also, although he probably, I'd say he's not as far that way as [the previous superintendent] was, I mean there are certain things that had to be centrally controlled if that would be the right word, I don't know. And I think that's the struggle, is what things are collegially decided and what things are decided by the superintendent, or the principal, or the board. That's the struggle I think most districts are going through. It's a constant struggle.

Excerpt from teacher LPDC member interview, 4/22/99:

Past practice has been probably pretty open and pretty good communication level, but with the change of the superintendent, it has probably become more strained, less responsibility for, respect, less respect for teachers' opinions, a bigger drive that teachers shouldn't be out of the classroom for any reason.
A significant change in the relationship between administrators and teachers has resulted from the realignment of district leadership positions. The current administration defines teacher and administrator roles by their work and areas of responsibilities, and has restructured positions within the organization based on beliefs that leadership and district-level decision-making belong in the administrative realm.

Excerpt from superintendent interview, 5/11/99:

[A]t some point in an organization there are administrative functions and administrative roles. You make a decision to step into that realm. So, at what point is it not, there are times when you just can't get at that input and there are times that if you want to be involved with the administration of the school district, we do a disservice, and yet you still want to be an English teacher, OK. How many times can we pull you out to do administrative things, and if you really have that administrative interest and inclination, at some point don't you have to say, OK I want to get into the administrative side of it. Because if, and I'm all for teacher empowerment, I'm all for teachers being involved in that, but we have different roles. And for me, I can come in and talk to you as an English teacher about lesson planning, I can talk to you about presentation, I can talk to you about questioning, and wait time, and relationships with kids and all that, but I can't tell you whether or not you have really mastered Shakespeare or whether you teach Mark Twain in the most effective way possible. I can tell you about some of those mechanical things, I can talk to you about your relationship, their apparent attentiveness or lack thereof. How then as a teacher can you possibly understand the complexity of what I do as a superintendent?

Teacher and administrator roles are also differentiated by "perspective." District Three staff members frequently cite "association perspective" or "teacher perspective" and "district perspective" or "administration perspective," in regard to their positioning on district issues. The implication is that these views are not only different, but are potentially in conflict, perpetuating an "us/them" division between teachers and administrators.
Excerpt from superintendent interview, 5/11/99:

Now you can talk about it from [a teacher] perspective, but in my seat it's probably the most global seat in the school district.

Excerpt from administrator LPDC member interview, 5/3/99:

We just come at problems on [the LPDC] from such different perspectives. There're certain things that are flags for me that they don't see, and there are certain things that are flags for them that I don't see. I think we have a long journey ahead of us. Do I think we work together and try to make things better? Yes. I don't have any doubt of that. I think everybody's intentions are good. I just think we have different parameters of what good is.

Now, they, we've delivered [professional development] from a teacher perspective, and sometimes it needs to be from a principal perspective, and we probably should deliver that....

Excerpt from teacher association president interview, 5/3/99:

The other issue, and I would think the administrators perhaps would say well you're raising the same kinds of concern from the teacher perspective, maybe I am...

Political Infrastructure

District Three's organizational structure is clearly defined through its administrative hierarchy, but its political structure involves the teachers' association and is not as obvious. The recent realignment of leadership positions is part of a larger political shift in District Three. Several leadership positions previously held by teachers were changed to administrative positions requiring supervisory certification. The teachers who had held those jobs could only reapply if they were appropriately certified. Some teacher on special assignment positions were eliminated entirely, moving additional teachers out of leadership
A new administrative position has been created to supervise the previously autonomous staff development department, and to expand the staff development program to include more administrative and classified offerings. The administration created this position in order to expand staff development and include additional offerings for administrative and classified personnel.

Excerpt from administrator LPDC member interview, 5/3/99:

[O]ne of our teachers on special assignment that worked with [the staff development coordinator] is going to go back to the classroom, so we'll replace that person administratively and that person will work with the curriculum manager, and still I think will work, my intention is that they'll work very closely with [the staff development coordinator]. But there are some things that go on, as far as, things getting signed, certain things administrators can do, and certain things teachers on special assignment can't, signing certain documents, people are responsible for things, and so on and so forth. So, that's why.

The status of their leadership positions had been an issue of concern to teachers earlier in the year, prior to the reallocation of positions. A group calling itself the Teacher Leader Task Force, supported through the teachers' association, actively addressed their concerns about the isolation of teacher leaders in the district through correspondence to teacher leaders establishing a network to effect change in a "top-down system." The Task Force represented a critical theorist stance by challenging the status quo. The administration became aware of the group's correspondence and publicly expressed their disapproval of the Task Force's activities. The recent reduction of teacher leadership positions and increase in administrative positions has teachers questioning the motives of administration, recalling the earlier incident. The actions of both parties call into question relationships of trust that have been built through a decade of collaboration.

Administrators view leadership positions as part of the administrative hierarchy, and having them occupied by teachers creates a management conundrum. Because teachers who hold leadership positions are trained as teacher leaders through the association
and not the district, the association through its affiliated teachers takes on a more powerful district role that extends into the administrative hierarchy of the district. The administration questions whether teacher leaders represent teachers in general or a specific association agenda. Because teacher leaders are not administrators, they are not under contractual obligation to promote administrative agendas, and many have job protection through their continuing contract status.

Excerpt from superintendent interview, 5/11/99:

You’re an administrator, and you have folks who are under a collective bargaining unit working in an administrative capacity. How do you hold them accountable? How do you supervise them? They have a different contract status than other members of the administrative staff. OK, so you have staff development coordination, in this case, which is being accomplished by tenured teachers who have a different evaluation system, who have a different set of protections, a different set of responsibilities, and in some instances, a different set of loyalties. The one set of loyalties we all share in common is we want what’s best for kids. But in the end, who do I work for? Do I work for the board of education or the superintendent or however you want to look at that? Or do I work for the teachers’ association? And this is a big enough place, when you’ve got 1200 teachers, where does that lie? And where do I separate the role of my job as a District Three employee and my role as a teacher leader in the association, and how do I separate my professional time? If I’m doing work on board time that is really more supporting the advancement of the association than it is the education of boys and girls in my role as a teacher staff development person or whatever the case might be. See that’s, and then I have to answer to administrative staff, well, how come they get this treatment and I perform the same role, in a little different function, and yet I’m treated differently? That creates some real difficulty.

The reallocation of district leadership positions could be described as a shift in the political structure to move formal teacher positions of leadership back under administrative control. However, an underlying factor is the role of the teachers’ association in the district political structure with regard to teachers in leadership positions. The association specifically trains teacher leaders, and many of those individuals held district leadership positions. In fact, the training is mandatory by contract for teachers who hold certain

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leadership positions throughout the district, so the association's political influence has in effect moved up the organization's administrative hierarchy.

Excerpt from superintendent interview, 5/11/99:

Teacher leaders are, the staff development change was taking teachers who were on special assignment, who by contract to remain in that special assignment only up to two years, and the idea behind that is for, when you have specific needs to be able to create a position for a temporary period of time and then transition that person back into the classroom or you identify that as a position you need on an on-going basis. That's kind of where we ended up here. Teacher leaders here are a little different position, and I'm not sure I have a full understanding of just how that works and there's some [teachers' association] connection, and there's teacher leaders from a teachers' association perspective, and there's teacher leaders from a district perspective.

As decision-making and resource-allocating power held by teachers in district leadership positions moves back to the administration, the perceived influence of the teachers' association within the district's operating structure is reduced. However, the teachers' association maintains a strong political influence because it exists independently from the district in terms of operation and has its own leadership structure which has been integrated throughout the district through association-trained teacher leaders. Under the previous administration, these two political entities co-existed in leadership roles through a spirit of collaboration, shared decision making. With changes in both district administration and association leadership, these relationships have changed, and their leadership positions have been reestablished. Currently, the administration and the teachers' association have taken opposing positions on teacher leadership roles in the district that represent a political climate of potential conflict (see Figure 4.9).
District Professional Development System

District Three's professional development system is centralized through its Staff Development Office which is housed in a curriculum building separate from central administration. The Staff Development Office has been staffed primarily by two teachers on special assignment and one secretary assigned to the office. One of the teachers is the
coordinator of the Staff Development in the district and serves as the LPDC's facilitator as well as a member of the district's Staff Development Coordination Committee, a collaborative group representing certificated, administrative, and classified stakeholders.

School year professional development and planning for the district's summer program, the summer academy, are all coordinated through the Staff Development Office. The focus of the staff development system is currently determined by the superintendent, staff development committee, and the LPDC through the work they do in continuous improvement planning and policy setting. The actual planning for staff development takes place through the Staff Development Coordination Committee and involves all three stakeholder groups. Providers, whether internal or external, submit applications through the district's LPDC which has set standards for approval. Evaluation of the staff development system takes place on a variety of levels, including the superintendent's office, the staff development committee, the central curriculum committee, and the LPDC.

District Three's staff development system had been in place for about ten years prior to the LPDC's initial year, and has evolved into a smooth-running operation in a large district with diverse needs. At this point in time, the system's underlying structure is invisible to most district members who only see its work that results in professional development offerings.

Excerpt from LPDC facilitator interview, 2/8/99:

I think a lot of times our district, and school districts in general, don't always realize that some of the things that make things successful...we just assume that they just got successful and we don't always look at what were the foundations that were laid that make it successful and likewise when things fail, we don't look at what was lacking in the foundation that would have supported it to make it successful. And, for example, our staff development system, I still can tell you that a lot of people do not understand, they ask you what is the staff development system, they have no idea what I am talking about. For example, our district has been cited for some good things in staff development, but what they do is, they will look at big innovation. They'll go and talk to the teachers in the schools with it. But the network and the support basis from the staff development center that allowed that to flourish, is pretty much invisible.
District Three’s staff development system reflects the collegial processes that have transformed the district over the past decade. Building Site Steering Committees play a significant role in building staff development issues. The new LPDC coordinates with components of the existing structure, and there is overlap of participants to facilitate consistency and communication. The district’s Staff Development Coordination Committee is one of the most visible and successful elements in the collaborative network constructed under the previous superintendent because it is democratically organized with equal representation and input from all three staff groups. The structure of the committee will undergo a change in the next year, however, due to the creation of the new staff development administrator who will act as the committee’s chair.

Excerpt from teacher LPDC member interview, 4/22/99:

Well, the district staff development committee has probably been the best example of collaborative work because it is classified, administrative, and certificated, and it has always just been an excellent model for that. Everybody has that equal kind of opinion, everybody works together, everybody gets along, and that’s probably been very good.

Philosophy of Professional Development

The basis for District Three’s professional development philosophy is characterized by the climate of the district which has grown to understand and acknowledge the value of good professional development and support it through its staff development system. The major focus of professional development is that it be job-embedded and lead to the improvement of “skills and job effectiveness.” Formally, the Staff Development Coordination Committee has created a position statement exemplifying this focus.

The District Three Staff Development Coordination Committee wishes to support and encourage job-embedded staff development whereby sites may decide through a consensual process to provide staff development opportunities at their site. We envision the use of fee waivers, staff
opportunities at their site. We envision the use of fee waivers, staff meetings, professional leave funds and other budgetary allocations as the SSC may design, as possible means by which teams may provide for such activity at their site (District Three LPDC Document).

Another key component of the professional development philosophy is based on staff development research which concentrates on “transfer.” This recognizes that good professional development should transfer into improved student achievement which is the underlying goal of District Three’s philosophy.

Excerpt from superintendent interview, 5/11/99:

Well, we constantly look for ways to help people be better, more effective at what they do. I guess the focus is on helping people be more effective teachers, so that they can be better facilitators of learning, you can use whatever term you want. We want people to be their very best when they go into the room so we can take kids as far as we can in the time we have with them.

Excerpt from LPDC facilitator interview, 2/8/99:

Professional development is staff work that if done correctly, will increase the capacity of students to do their work which is student achievement. So what you look at is how effectively are we doing staff development and creating the kinds of conditions that will result in students’ achievement. Then when we see that those indicators indicate we’re at quality, then we can look at student achievement data.

Origination of Needs

Because District Three’s staff development system involves all three employee groups, needs arise at various levels. The staff development system in District Three works to meet the needs of all its employees, not just certificated teachers. In many cases, needs are determined at the building level through the Site Steering Committees, but needs
originate from different areas of the district and from different levels.

Excerpt from teacher association president interview, 5/3/99:

I think it's from a variety of sources. They do some data gathering or surveying of people from time to time. I think some of it comes from systems within the larger system. For instance, people who are aligned with the curriculum department will identify certain needs. There's been quite a bit of discussion lately related to our benchmarks program. The need for more training, especially as they move up into the middle school. So the people who have been given the charge to oversee that, they know and they go back to the staff development committee with recommendations that we need to do this, put something maybe in the summer academy as an example. Some of it I'm sure comes from the administrators, they see needs out there tied to a particular initiative where they would like to have training. Some of it is negotiated, for instance we have the commitment on training related to site-based decision making, we have a section in our contract tied to our least restricted environment advisory committee, where there's a training commitment through the life of the contract for inclusionary models. And not just for special ed, but for regular ed and special education teachers. We've negotiated some things related to training commitments. Within [the teachers' association] we have some training, for instance we have our teacher leadership course which is a fine program, and that is right now, and association training function. We have our training, which is a little more traditional in the union business, we have our training of our faculty representatives, and sometimes we set up things with OEA resources. So it's kind of a different strand. That's really not a part of the formal system, that's something we do within our association, but its addressing the needs.

Needs must also be supported by data. District Three's Staff Development Coordination Committee requires that requests for professional development be accompanied by a rationale aligning the program with the district focus and providing evidence that a need exists.

Excerpt from teacher LPDC member interview, 4/22/99:

The past history had been that [providers] were making decisions on what professional development was offered to teachers without any input from the teachers. And now, they have to be able to explain why it is they're doing what they're doing and to provide data. When they come in and say, this is what I want to do, we say, show us the data that this needs to be done. Is this needs of the teacher, is this needs of program, what can you show us?
Control of Resources

Control of resources for professional development occurs at a variety of levels throughout the district. In individual buildings, Site Steering Committees have some resources available for professional development activities, more so if they are a Venture Capital School. These resources can be used to fund providers who come in to a building or staff members who leave to attend professional development activities outside the building.

The Office of Staff Development has administered funds in the past, including the professional development block grant. Now, however, that grant is administered through central administration, and the staff development coordinator makes requests through the Director of Teaching and Learning who then allocates funds from the district staff development budget. LPDC requests have priority in the distribution of block grant funds.

Delivery of Service

Professional development during the school year is provided through internal and external suppliers who apply through the LPDC if requesting CEU or EOA credit. Internal providers meet on a monthly basis and are working through the LPDC to address issues of quality standards, which includes training to help them design better professional development activities. The scope and scale of the professional development is dependent on the needs and the number of individuals participating, and can range from small building-level sessions to larger district-based inservices.

District Three also provides a large summer academy with a multiple offerings for both certificated and classified staff. The summer academy runs for a two-week block in June and another two-week block in August with offerings from a number of different
providers. The teachers’ association is usually responsible for several offerings and have opened some of their leadership training sessions to out-of-district participants.

**LPDC Organizational Structure**

District Three’s LPDC is made up of ten members: five representatives of the teachers’ association, four administrators, and one facilitator who is also a representative of the teachers’ association. The facilitator is responsible for managing the work of the committee and also helps the LPDC work toward consensus in its meetings.

The LPDC works in collaboration with the District Staff Development Coordination Committee, and at least two of the teacher LPDC members must also serve on this committee. Currently, the facilitator also serves on the District Staff Development Coordination Committee, as have some of the past administrative members.

Meetings are held monthly throughout the school year with an additional retreat scheduled for summer. The meetings take place at various locations within the district including central office, the teachers’ association office, and the curriculum center.

**Member Selection**

Teacher LPDC members are appointed by the president of the teachers’ association, and of the five teacher members, one is designated as an elementary representative, one a middle school representative, and one a high school representative. Administrative LPDC members are appointed by the superintendent and currently include the personnel manager, two additional representatives from central administration, and one high school principal. All members will eventually serve a three-year term with rotating expiration dates, after the rotation pattern has been established. Teacher members have remained constant on the committee, but there has been some turnover among administrative members.
Models of Collaboration

District Three has collaborative models in place at various levels because of the work done throughout the district in the past decade, and LPDC members have all had experience collaborating in the district. Teacher-administrator collaborations take place at the building level with the Site Steering Committees and at the district level through committees created for specific areas such as staff development and insurance which also include classified representatives.

LPDC members agree that their committee works collaboratively and give a great deal of credit to the facilitator who was responsible for bringing the committee together as a team. District Three's facilitator addressed areas of potential conflict and walked the group through more constructive ways of coming to consensus on LPDC issues.

Excerpt from LPDC facilitator interview, 2/8/99:

I remember one of our very early team-building activities. We identified, I had the team identify what were undiscussible issues that right now we were too untrusting of each other, but we knew that we would have to talk about them but right now we didn't, couldn't talk about them, and one of them was student achievement. And so, we used a process of just looking at it a little bit and talking about what are some of the parameters of this issue without saying we agree or disagree with anything. And eventually, it worked for us because we got to it.

Excerpt from teacher association president interview, 5/3/99:

[When] we started this in the summer, in that first summer, whatever year that was, we had a retreat, a two-day retreat, and at that time we were still really trying to define what our work was, you know we spent a lot of time trying to find out what values we had and what values we shared between teachers and administrators. And we also, and again this is with [the staff development coordinator's] guidance, his facilitation, we knew we had, that we had some issues that we had to get on the table. I forget the term he used at one point, I think he called them the undiscussibles, and we went through that a couple of times, and people were pretty open. Some of the very basic trust issues that still from time to time will surface, but I think that, I felt as though that was a threshold for our committee.
Work Distribution

The LPDC facilitator/staff development coordinator takes responsibility for preparing meeting agendas and organizing the work that needs to be done. He has a secretary who also helps to handle the paperwork and performs the clerical task necessary to the LPDC's work. The secretary also maintains computer files for all of the documents the LPDC has created.

On the committee, work is divided among the members who take rotating turns sitting on sub-committees related to various issues. At their whole group meetings, sub-committee members are responsible for presenting their recommendations to the whole LPDC for consensus. One committee member is responsible for taking minutes and the personnel manager is responsible for bringing necessary personnel documents to meetings.

As in District One, there has been concern among the teacher members of District Three that they are doing the majority of the work. Administrative members have frequently been absent from meetings or called away in order to carry out administrative tasks. The issue was brought before the group, and they have attempted to distribute the work more equally.

Excerpt from teacher LPDC member interview, 4/22/99:

There’s no question that, even administrators will tell you, teachers are doing the majority of subcommittee work. That’s just where the work’s getting done, outside of meeting time. Sometimes they’ ll volunteer, but then they won’t be in existence. When [a teacher member] was doing CEU apps with two of them, they had a meeting set a month in advance and they call up and say I can’t do it, can we do it by telephone, can we do other things? Or you go and they’re doing eight other things while you’re there. We’re having serious meeting problems with them and we’ve come back and addressed that issue several times, addressed it directly with [the superintendent], who said, “Well, you know, part of the problem here is that they’re, that central office is heavily represented and they have so many other responsibilities.”
Excerpt from administrator LPDC member interview, 5/3/99:

[W]e had initially discussion about the teachers feeling that they got stuck with most of the work, and maybe they did. I'm not sure. But that perception was shared and I think there's been an effort on the part of the administrators to make sure that that's not true. I don't know if we've changed or not, but I think it's important, yea, I think that's important. But it was shared that there was this feeling that we're going to do this and you guys need to do this too, and we said, OK, we'll do it.

Compensation

Teacher LPDC members are compensated by release time with paid substitutes in addition to a $750 annual stipend. As in both of the previous districts, administrators are not compensated, based on the concept of the administrative work day and responsibilities, even though both teachers and administrators see it as being inequitable and are interested in revisiting the issue of administrator pay for LPDC work.

Excerpt from administrator LPDC member interview, 5/3/99:

I'm not compensated, nor are any of our administrators. [O]ur old superintendent had a very strong policy about, was we're on duty 24/7, that's our duty time. We don't have hours. If he called me on Sunday and wanted me to come in and do something, that's what I did, or 11 o'clock at night, so how could you get compensated for LPDC work because you're already on the clock, if you will.

Excerpt from LPDC facilitator interview, 2/8/99:

The administrators don't take it. They can't, only because they have some sort of an agreement that because of their salary schedule whatever they're on ...it's all inclusive. Some of the administrators are now saying they might want to revisit that because of the LPDC. And I think that they should. I think that there are certain times where we have to really kind of draw the line and say that everything is not all inclusive like that.
District Policies, Procedures, and Practices Affecting LPDCs

District Three’s LPDC has been integrated into the existing staff development structures including the Staff Development Office and the Staff Development Coordination Committee. The LPDC has adopted the policies created by the Staff Development Coordination Committee, and the existing staff development system has changed to accommodate new LPDC policies and procedures. Because the staff development system was already strong throughout the district, and because the staff development coordinator is also the LPDC facilitator, the transition to the procedures required under the new licensure law was more smoothly completed than in districts without a strong system of staff development already in place.

Documented Policies

Many of the policies employed by other segments of District Three’s staff development system affect the LPDC because it operates in conjunction with those segments. Some of the policies are overlapping, and others have been adopted by the LPDC for use within committee functions. The LPDC has also created policies that have a leveraging effect on other aspects of the staff development system.

The LPDC has adopted various policies implemented by the Staff Development Coordination Committee, including definitions for student achievement and job-embedded staff development. The LPDC, on the other hand, has created a procedure for CEU accreditation that impacts the professional development providers throughout the district and affects the decisions of the Staff Development Coordination Committee.

The basis for these policies and procedures stems from the culture of professional development that has been in place in the district. The negotiated agreement contains
specific language supporting inservice programs initiated and implemented by bargaining unit members. The original organization of the Staff Development Coordination Committee was also a negotiated item.

Excerpt from teacher association president interview, 5/3/99:

We do have a, this goes back to the staff development committee, we have a memo of understanding in our contract which talks about the collaborative spirit of the staff development committee. It was set up years ago. [I]t's kind of a philosophical statement as much as anything else, but the idea that we are committed to a collaborative approach to our district staff development. So I guess that, it's tied to the fact that we had in place already before we even got into this pilot, the staff development committee, we had summer academy, we had some things going which I think reflected that staff development is important to us. We think it's important to help kids and result in student achievement. So from the standpoint that we have all that in place, I think that has helped us facilitate LPDC.

The negotiated agreement also provides for funds to be set aside for bargaining unit members to attend professional meetings and conferences. These funds are allocated to each building whose Site Steering Committee determines their distribution. An additional fund is set up for teachers to use when implementing professional initiatives and administered by a committee staffed by members of the teachers' association.

Undocumented Procedures and Practices

District Three's board of education formally endorsed the LPDC under the pilot grant, and because of its connection to the strong staff development system, the LPDC became a legitimized part of the district to both teaching and administrative staff. Because the LPDC segued easily into the existing system, the conduits for information that were already in place through the Staff Development Office served to support its introduction to the district. In addition, the support network in place for staff development also serves the
the district. In addition, the support network in place for staff development also serves the LPDC.

Facilitating and Inhibiting Practices

Many structures that facilitate District Three’s LPDC were in place well before the LPDC came into existence. The staff development coordinator had both the knowledge and the position to take charge of the integration of the LPDC into the existing system. The overlap of his district roles has provided continuity and allowed the staff development system to evolve as an integrated unit. In his position as a facilitator, he also guides the work of the LPDC and keeps the group organized.

A practice that inhibits District Three’s LPDC is not unique to this district, but representative of all LPDCs. The previous state renewal system has become a part of the fabric of careers in education, and past practice has a strong influence on the acceptance of the LPDC and its new requirements. For most educators, the new licensure requirements of the LPDC, particularly increased responsibility on the part of individuals, represent a dramatic change in thinking.

Excerpt from administrator LPDC member interview, 5/3/99:

I think that the previous procedure of getting certification is so ingrained with people that it doesn’t mean anything. This is a complete turn around, and this is a state procedure. This is a complete attitude change for people that, quite frankly before I came here [LPDC] I never even though about certification, what are you talking about? And I think that’s true in so many of our teachers, and I don’t say it’s bad for them, that’s just the way it is. It was a meaningless exercise.

Another potential inhibiting factor is the creation of the new administrative position overseeing the Staff Development Office. One staff development position for a teacher on special assignment has been cut for the next year, and there is uncertainty about the role of
special assignment has been cut for the next year, and there is uncertainty about the role of the remaining teacher who has coordinated the staff development system for many years. According to the job description posted, the new administrative Coordinator of Staff Development will chair the district Staff Development Coordination Committee which, because of its collaborative structure, has never had a chair before. The new administrator will also serve on the LPDC, as well as oversee the use of the professional development block grant and other monies dedicated for professional development. This position, part of the administrative realignment of leadership positions, has created a climate of uncertainty in the staff development system surrounding the future responsibilities of the teacher coordinator and the administrator hired to supervise him.

The LPDC at Work

The LPDC monthly meeting is scheduled for a half day at the curriculum center conference room. It begins at 12:00 p.m. and there are snacks available for the members. All of the teachers are present, but two of the administrators could not come. One absent administrator has sent information about standards from the Ohio Teacher Education and Certification Commission for the group to review. One teacher takes minutes on a laptop computer. One administrator is filling out unrelated paperwork initially.

The facilitator asks the group if everyone has the information packets he has prepared and sent out in advance of the meeting. He then asks the group to review the minutes of the following meeting, and the committee reaches consensus on their approval.

The facilitator directs the group to the agenda, and starts a discussion about what the link to student achievement would look like for administrator professional development. As the group talks, the facilitator writes their ideas on a flip chart on an easel. The personnel manager is called out twice to take phone calls. The group spends the better part
of an hour discussing ideas back and forth until the facilitator asks them to begin wrapping up the discussion by reviewing what they have said and coming up with a policy statement they can all agree upon. He writes their key points down and asks if the group is in consensus about them. By a show of hands, they indicate their consensus.

The facilitator moves the group to the next agenda item and asks the current CEU sub-committee to present the applications it has reviewed and give the group their recommendations. Each member refers to copies of the applications in his or her packet. A teacher member of the sub-committee discusses the applications and the committee’s concerns over a few of them that do not meet the predetermined standards. Discussion continues in the group about the standards, and the committee eventually reaches consensus on the sub-committee’s recommendations to accept several of the applications, and return a few for additional revision.

The facilitator brings up the next agenda item which deals with the new alliance of professional development providers that has formed in central Ohio. He directs the group to look at the draft pamphlets in their packets and begins a discussion about blanket approval. Since the facilitator has worked with the regional professional development center which has organized this alliance, he presents to the group information about the standards that the alliance operates under and gives the group his recommendation for blanket approval. Discussion continues among the members as they explore possible outcomes of their decision. The facilitator notes these on the flip chart. After about 45 minutes of discussion, the group comes to consensus to give blanket approval to the alliance.

The last agenda item deals with upcoming renewals. The personnel manager reports that there will be about 300 staff members who need to renew. He volunteers to send them a letter outlining the procedures they need to follow.

The committee tables discussion over Equivalent Other Activity (EOA) procedures since time has run out. The meeting adjourns at 3:45.
The LPDC’s Role in the Professional Development System

District Three’s LPDC is completely integrated into the district’s existing staff development system. There is overlap in membership between the LPDC and the district’s Staff Development Coordination Committee, and the district’s personnel manager provides a link to the central office personnel data bank. The LPDC has set standards for effective professional development throughout the district and screens providers for compliance with those standards. Decisions that the LPDC makes are coordinated with the district-level staff development committee, and the work that each does promotes the district’s belief in the value of good professional development.

Excerpt from teacher LPDC member interview, 4/22/99:

As far as in the real system, [the LPDC] fit[s] lateral with the staff development system I think at this point. They are working hand in hand with what’s happened through the staff development system and that committee, and I think one is supporting the other. So I really see them side by side with that staff development committee.

The LPDC’s Influence in the District’s Political Structure

District Three’s LPDC has control over many of the decisions surrounding professional development in the district, most notably the CEU providers. By setting standards of quality and holding providers to them, the LPDC is reshaping the face of professional development for its staff. Because their budget is a priority item in the staff development system, their role in the district is legitimized and even elevated above other segments of staff development. The overlapping committee members also give the LPDC decision-making leverage in the district’s system.

The current political shift that’s moving teachers out of leadership positions affects the LPDC as well. The LPDC and the staff development system in general are both
heavily influenced by the teachers' association and its negotiated agreement which creates positions for its members and provides funding resources. As these teacher leadership positions are diminished, part of the climate of collaboration and cooperation through which they were established is being eroded. Administration and teachers have taken opposing positions in regard to teacher leadership. This positioning could carry over into the work of the LPDC where one of the "undiscussibles" has already been identified as a trust issue between administrators and teachers when reviewing administrators' work. If amplified by external politics, this issue could become a conflict within the committee.

Excerpt from teacher association president interview, 5/3/99:

I think the administrators are not buying into this as well as we need them to. And in fact they may request... to have a separate structure set up for the purpose of their renewals of their licenses. And, at this point, if they want to do that, I probably would say fine, let's do that. I think it will be kind of a set back in some ways for, in terms of the spirit of what we're doing.

Summary

Each of the three districts in this study have created an LPDC unique to the needs and structure of their organizations. The LPDCs continue to evolve as committee members revisit their previous work and make changes to effectively carry out credential renewal work and address professional development issues in their districts. Now in their second year, Districts Two and Three are refining their LPDC structures and helping non-pilot districts understand their processes. District One's LPDC has completed its first year in operation, and has begun a journey to understand its future role in guiding professional development in its district.
CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSIONS

Introduction

The purpose of the study was to explore how Ohio Local Professional Development Committees, established by Senate Bill 230, renew certification of educators and address issues of professional development in their districts. The study focused on the relationship between teachers and administrators who collaborate on the committee, and the influence their positions within the organization have on their committee roles. Another intent of this study was to understand how the collaborative structure of the LPDC functioned within a district’s organizational system.

The three districts studied had completely different organizational structures, all of which impacted their LPDCs. The one theme constant throughout the study, however, was the line that separates teachers from administrators and keeps them from occupying democratic positions on the LPDC. In a real sense, the design of this study perpetuated the teacher/administrator role division because it is based on my role identification as a teacher. As educators, we still don’t have a sense of “our” work, but we divide responsibilities, and often loyalties, into “teacher” and “administrator” categories that keep us separate and deny the possibility of democracy inherent in the LPDC structure.

Democracy is a site of struggle and is informed by competing ideological conceptions of power, politics, and community. This is an important recognition
because it helps to redefine the role of the citizen as an active agent in questioning, defining, and shaping one’s relationship to the political sphere and the wider society. (Giroux, 1988b, p. 170)

I attempted to become that active agent by exploring the political structures surrounding three LPDCs, and the affect these structures had on the LPDCs’ work. Through ongoing interaction with my study participants we arrived at new understandings about the systems in which we worked and the underlying assumptions which currently stand in the way of the LPDC’s being a vehicle for transformation. Using the framework of critical theory, I redefined myself as “teacher as intellectual” and carried out my work in the spirit of research as praxis.

Historically, change in education has been difficult, and the structures that have been in place for decades still dominate education organizations. The results of this study showed that in all three districts, even a site-based district, teacher and administrator roles are divided and reinforced in their division by organizational definitions representing historical bureaucratic structures and inequities. LPDCs, however, have the potential to blur that division and span hierarchical role boundaries. They could begin to redefine our roles as educators, and initiate a systemic change process that moves beyond the boundaries of the LPDC and into the district. The challenge is whether teachers on these committees will also take on the role of teacher as intellectual to examine the underlying assumptions in their districts in order to overcome barriers which prevent LPDCs from fulfilling their transformative potential.

The concept of teacher as intellectual carries with it the imperative to judge, critique, and reject all those approaches to authority that reinforce a technical and social division of labor that silences and disempowers both teachers and students. (Giroux, 1997, p. 103)
LPDCs and the Future of Professional Development

Redefining Professional Development

As part of the statewide effort to improve academic achievement for its students, LPDCs are charged with redefining professional development in Ohio. In and of itself, this task is difficult because the traditional ways of carrying out professional development are entrenched within Ohio’s school districts. The previous model for renewing certificates was based on a quantitative standard. Educators had only to accumulate the appropriate number of credits, either through college course work or Continuing Education Units issued by the state, in order to renew or upgrade their certificates. The old model did not take into consideration the nature of the credits, or whether they were even relevant to the field of education. The “basket weaving” metaphor for unrelated course work most certainly applied in the old model where credits for square dancing were equal to those for quantum physics.

With the new legislation and its link to Continuous Improvement Planning, renewal of credentials has been restructured along lines of quality and relevance, characteristics that represent a change in values as well as process. There are still minimum credit guidelines, but these exist in conjunction with new requirements that expect educators to meet the needs of their district, building, and students, as well as their own professional goals. LPDCs can take on an important position of power in a district’s professional development system by addressing quality issues and determining standards for the district’s educators.

Excerpt from District Two superintendent interview, 4/20/99:

I think the strength, to refer back, probably would be the professionalization of the professional teaching staff, and allowing them to take ownership of the relicensure of themselves and their peers to continue in education. I think that this is a new concept for them and I think that for some of them this may be eye-opening. But I think in ways that were probably, you don’t have administrators looking at compliance and you’re
looking at if they really are professionals, and it’s every need for them to raise the standards for their profession and raise expectations. And I think that’s what’s going to, I believe, happen. I believe that’s what we are going to see. Will there be examples of where that’s not happening, yes. Were there examples of that not happening under the old system, yes. So I think some of my peers are a little judgmental in that, but having some familiarity with the certification process in prior years, a recertification process, I just saw a lot of things that you worry about. So I see this as a positive step and I’m looking forward to it. Do I think there’s going to be warts on it, yes. Do I think it’s going to be better than the old system, probably. Is it going to be perfect, no. In the long term do I think it’s going to help the mission and the teaching staff, yes.

New Models for Teachers

The “cafeteria” approach to professional development is fast becoming a thing of the past. Disconnected, sporadic workshops and speakers will no longer fit the needs of Ohio’s educators who have been charged with the responsibility of assessing the needs of their students and planning their own professional development based on goals constructed around those needs. Professional development as an add-on “activity” is transforming into job-embedded practice which creates new opportunities for educators to design their own programs and take control over the professional growth component of their work.

Teachers now require different models of professional development to meet the charge of the new law. Because needs assessment is a vital component of the new model, teachers will have to be trained to apply different assessment methods to their classrooms. Teachers have the opportunity, now more than ever, to be researchers in their own buildings. They will need professional development to provide both a knowledge base and to create a support network for collegial research practices.

At the present time, teachers labor in the public schools under organizational constraints and ideological conditions that leave them little room for collective work
and critical pursuits. Their teaching hours are too long, they are generally isolated in cellular structures and have few opportunities to teach with others, and they have little say over the selection, organization, and distribution of teaching materials. (Aronowitz & Giroux, 1985, p. 42)

New professional development models should explore ways to bring teachers together, moving them out of the isolation of their classrooms into discussions with colleagues about the work they are doing. Teachers need to learn the value of reflection in their practice, assessing, implementing, and evaluating their work to move to the next level of growth. “[B]y viewing teachers as intellectuals we can begin to rethink and reformulate those historical traditions and conditions that have prevented schools and teachers from assuming their full potential as active, reflective scholars and practitioners” (Aronowitz & Giroux, 1985, p. 32).

Teachers need to understand the complexities of their profession and have the opportunity to interact with their peers. Teachers need both a knowledge base about issues of critique and power as well as a process for empowering themselves to become “transformative intellectuals” (Giroux, 1988b, p. xxxii). District Two’s Critical Friends Groups are beginning that process by providing a safe space for educators to share and reflect on their work and their role in change. This model holds promise for other districts as well, even those without a site-based structure.

Teacher empowerment should also be a component of the new model of professional development, not only for teachers who serve on the LPDC, but for the teachers who are redefining their profession by taking responsibility for their own growth and accountability.

Educators need to take as their first concern issues of empowerment, and the route to that goal is not through definitions of professionalism based on the testing of
teachers or other empirically driven forms of accountability. Empowerment, in this case, depends on the ability of teachers in the future to struggle collectively in order to create those ideological and material conditions of work that enable them to share power, to shape policy, and to play an active role in structuring school/community relations. (Giroux, 1988a, p. 214)

Through broader definitions under the legislation, teachers have the ability to explore new avenues for professional growth that can reshape their working conditions. LPDCs give teachers ownership for this responsibility that is important to their professional lives (Barth, 1990), and allows them to take over this aspect of their work that has historically been under the control of administrative bureaucracy. By designing and carrying out professional activities based on needs they have identified, teachers are validating their own professional knowledge, and taking on a new and potentially transformative leadership roles in the education institution.

Teachers need to provide models of leadership that offer the promise of reforming schools as part of a wider revitalization of public life. Central to this notion of leadership would be questions regarding the relationship between power and knowledge, learning and empowerment, and authority and human dignity. (Aronowitz & Giroux, 1991, p. 109)

New Models for Administrators

As professional development moves to a new level for teachers, it also challenges the old model for administrators as well. The current information-based paradigm of administrative professional development is insufficient to prepare administrators to meet the challenges of accountability they now face. If the bottom line determining the
effectiveness of professional development is increased student achievement, how does that speak to the professional development of administrators? Because they are not in direct contact with students in an instructional setting, and because the nature of administrative work is different from teaching, administrative professional development must promote growth in administrators in order that they may better facilitate the teaching process. New models don't discount the fact that the work of teachers and administrators is different; rather, they create connections between their roles instead of divisions which separate educators from each other.

In most districts "... educational authority relations have been formally patriarchal" (Apple, 1986, p. 35). New leadership models which base authority on ability and not organizational position charge administrators to become instructional leaders in a real sense, so that they may work together with their teaching staffs to construct a shared vision of "our" work as educators. To redefine these authority relations, administrative professional development should focus on the concept of stewardship in which administrators learn to exercise power through their teachers instead of over them (Block, 1996). Facilitation skills are an integral part of this training so that administrators can support collegial interaction and creative problem solving, helping their teachers function more autonomously and effectively (Sergiovanni, 1991).

Administrators must also become critical and reflective practitioners in order to validate the expertise of their teaching staff, as well as determine their own areas for growth (Schön, 1983). Administrators need the opportunity to have collegial conversations about their work with both administrators and teachers in order to examine and redefine their role. Within these conversations, space is created for sharing knowledge which can play an important role in redefining authority relationships in a district.
Time & Funding for Change

For LPDCs to truly reshape professional development in Ohio, existing district structures must find ways to incorporate LPDC models, and bureaucratic organizational barriers must be removed. "[A]ny notion of educational reform along with its reconstructed view of authority and pedagogy needs to focus on the institutional arrangements that structure and mediate the role of schooling in the wider society" (Giroux, 1997, p. 111). Time and funding represent two of these institutional “bureaucratic boundaries” that districts will need to address if LPDCs are to carry out their state mandates (Bennis & Mische, 1995, p. 36).

School time is structured according to delivery of service and presents a barrier for many LPDCs. LPDCs which operate within predetermined district schedules may find they are limited in their working capacity by organizational policy over which they have no control. Consensus building requires time for discussion, for everyone to be heard, and for information to be processed. Educating district staff also takes a great deal of time. Without enough time to complete processes, quality is compromised. LPDC members occupy other positions within the district, and time away from those jobs during the regular school day is undesirable. Some districts have allotted time in their calendars for professional development work during the school year, but many LPDCs are not empowered to designate any of that time for LPDC processes.

Excerpt from District One teacher LPDC member interview, 4/19/99:

We have not been able to offer any programs. We have not been able to set up any kind of a divergent schedule. We haven’t even been allowed to use our early release days or our, any time that’s already built in, supposedly for professional development.

Excerpt from District One administrator LPDC member interview, 2/19/99:

I think there are issues in terms of having the time to really do, it’s really, I mean, you almost need a full time person to do this, and you know
that's a tough one because we need good teachers in the classrooms as well, and to provide somebody to do it, it's taken somebody away from the classroom. But that's probably another issue, having the time, as I said before to be able to pull it off, and the knowledge. I mean, it is, it's a big job, and to be able to do that, that's tough.

Left with few options, some LPDCs work outside the school day. Compensation then becomes an issue for teacher members whose work day is structured through negotiated contracts dealing specifically with parameters for servicing students. Since LPDC responsibilities are different in scope and responsibility from the regular work load for teachers, lengthening their work day may create more time for LPDC work, but raises concerns about the quality of that work when the LPDC does not take scheduling priority.

Excerpt from District Two teachers' association president interview, 5/5/99:

One thing is we, you know as you said before, it's on your own time, and sometimes, I don't care how great the stipend is, when you're tired and you're up to your neck in responsibility and duties and things you have to get done, money is not an object--you're tired. That is a problem, having to come after school.

Funding in general continues to present a barrier for some LPDCs. Although every district in the state of Ohio has received a professional development block grant that is to be used for operating the LPDC, because there was no mandate to either set aside a specific amount of the grant for LPDCs or standard procedures by which LPDCs could access those monies, many LPDCs find themselves caught in a bureaucratic funding web. Lack of control over funding for its expenses, including stipends for members, represents the exclusion of the LPDC from district authority structures, and positions it in a hierarchical relationship with those structures. LPDC needs should determine their portion of the grant, but unfortunately this is not the case in many districts where the grant goes into district accounts to be allocated through administrative channels. If the LPDC is ever going to achieve its goal of transforming professional development in Ohio, these hierarchical
relationships will need to change. Long-standing ways of doing things must be challenged as districts look for ways to reallocate time and resources for LPDCs to carry out their work (Bennis & Mische, 1995).

As LPDCs redefine professional development, time and money will also have to be allocated for educators to take part in professional development within the context of their work day, acknowledging that embedded professional development of educators holds the most promise for reforming the current add-on system. Changing the professional development paradigm will take commitment on the part of teachers to become transformative educators in order to address control of time and resources that directly influence the change process.

Illusions of Democracy

In many ways, because of current underlying assumptions that differentiate educators' work by defining roles of administrators and teachers in terms of knowledge and power, LPDCs represent an illusion of democracy. Critical theory problematizes this positioning of teachers and administrators within relationships of power and dependency that are greatly influenced by a school district's underlying organizational structure (Giroux, 1997). Understanding the LPDC's role in transforming professional development requires revealing these relationships as a first step to changing them. "Without a vision of transformed power relations within schools and the larger society, education reforms will inevitably be reversed or used to maintain the existing authorities" (Aronowitz & Giroux, 1991, p. 22).

In a hierarchical education organization, tasks associated with positions of power such as district-level decision making and resource allocation are considered administrative in nature, regardless of who carries them out, and organizational barriers exist to resist change or decentralization of power. In most cases these barriers are institutionalized in the
operating structure of the district, but in some cases they have become even more explicit, revealing the underlying struggle over power relations between teachers and administrators.

District Three had a number of teacher leadership positions created over the last decade through the collaborative efforts of the administration and the teachers’ association. Under the new administration, traditional hierarchical structures have been reinforced, and teachers who performed administrative tasks have recently been removed from these positions by central administration’s reassigning their jobs to administrators or creating administrative positions to directly supervise them.

Excerpt from District Three superintendent interview, 5/11/99:

If you want to be a principal, then get your license and we’ll hire you as a principal, but until then there’s a limit to the input and to some degree the influence that you can have. But I think that’s a professional choice you make.

The message the superintendent sent to teaching staff about their position in the district was clear. In this district under the current administration, teachers’ range of influence is limited to specific areas of technical expertise, and teachers are again charged with carrying out the work designated by administrators, reestablishing a divisionalized bureaucratic power structure.

The tendency to reduce teachers to either high-level clerks implementing the orders of others within the school bureaucracy or to specialized technicians is part of a much larger problem within western societies, a problem marked by the increasing division of intellectual and social labor and the increasing trend towards the oppressive management and administration of everyday life. (Aronowitz & Giroux, 1985, p. 24)
For now, many LPDCs face these kinds of bureaucratic barriers that keep them from becoming true democratic structures. Unless power structures and their corresponding roles are redefined within districts, teachers and administrators on LPDCs reproduce those roles in their LPDC work. If these roles can be authentically reconceptualized, teachers and administrators may find ways to broaden their understanding of each other's worlds and develop mutual respect (Clark, et al., 1996). However, for LPDCs to begin overcoming these barriers, they must first engage in critique which would allow them to recognize their existence.

**Political Barriers**

LPDCs and their apparent democratic structure represent an anomaly in traditional education organizations because they really don’t “fit” into their typical hierarchical structure. By law, LPDCs are lateral to the board of education and have the autonomy to make their own policies and procedures through committee collaboration. In practice, LPDCs are staffed by district employees who are governed by traditional roles, responsibilities, rules, and regulations determined within bureaucratic structures. Many LPDC’s reproduce these hidden political structures that must be exposed before they can be addressed (Argyris, 1990).

[B]ureaucratic control signifies a social structure where control is less visible because its principles are embodied within the hierarchical social relations of the workplace. Impersonal and bureaucratic rules concerning the direction of one’s work, the procedures for evaluating performance, and sanctions and rewards are dictated by officially approved policy. (Apple, 1983, p. 147)
In traditional hierarchical systems, power over decisions and resources is maintained at the upper levels of the hierarchy at the administrative level. Putting LPDCs into the mix with their autonomous decision-making capabilities and state funding designated for their support, the traditional means of accessing and using this power is challenged. LPDCs represent a change that inherently threatens the distribution of authority and control, and districts that resist this change usually have hidden balancing processes to keep the status quo (Senge, 1990). In districts with hierarchically defined roles for teachers and administrators, the teacher-majority LPDC can be closed out of its decision-making capacities by administrative policies and practices that position teachers as technicians and/or represent defensive routines to maintain control (Bolman & Deal, 1997).

The concept of [teacher] skill not only denotes a technical relation to a particular labor process. It also, and fundamentally, is a social concept. It speaks to the successful or unsuccessful struggle to gain control over one's workplace and job content. It implies a connection between conception and execution that is a relationship of both technique and power... The continuing attempt by administrators and state bureaucrats to define the skills of teaching as a set of objectively determined and competencies and to rationalize the job itself through such competencies and through the overly standardized textbook, standardized teacher and student testing, and the computer, documents exactly this continuing connection between skill and power. (Apple, 1986, p. 187)

Whether explicit or implicit, these bureaucratic barriers can prevent an LPDC from carrying out their decisions or accessing necessary resources. As a result, the LPDC's apparent autonomy and democratic structure are negated because the committee is positioned beneath the upper levels of the hierarchy.
In all three study districts, barriers in the political structure had inhibiting effects on the LPDCs. In most cases, these barriers take the form of existing policies or practices that, by default, apply to the LPDC because of its insertion into the existing organization structure. The way in which the study districts defined teacher and administrator roles was a significant factor in political positioning of teachers and administrators, both on the committee and district wide. Other politics that existed at the structural level of the district also bled over into the work of the LPDC.

District One's bureaucratic political structure limits the ability of teachers to assume leadership positions and also limits the autonomy of the administrators on the committee. Most of the power in District One is maintained at the level of the assistant superintendent who controls the block grant that should be used to fund the LPDC. Policies and practices that affect when the LPDC could meet, how the LPDC can communicate to district staff, and where and how resources are allocated are all controlled through this office. Both LPDC teachers and administrators are constrained by their lack of influence in the district, and by their inability to leverage any of this power through the LPDC structure.

District Two's site-based structure with its lack of centralized power contributes to isolationism in the district. The two schools which are having difficulty getting CFGs established do not have a network of communication or a support structure available to them in the district due to lack of inter-building articulation. Because power is localized, neither the superintendent nor the LPDC coordinator takes responsibility to intervene in a building-level issue, and as a result, CFGs are not functional in the middle school and junior high.

District Three's political structure is having an effect on the LPDC and the relationship between administrators and teachers throughout the district. The new superintendent has reinstated traditional administrator and teacher roles in the district, effectively eliminating many leadership positions for teachers. As the administrative network grows larger, the division between teachers and administrators grows wider.
Other district structures such as the collaborative Staff Development Coordination Committee and the Site Steering Committee are at risk due to the “clash between collective leadership and hierarchical leadership” (Kofman & Senge, 1993, p. 18). The teachers’ association is already taking a stand against the administrative restructuring which has also affected the LPDC’s facilitator in his role as staff development coordinator. Because leadership trained members of the teachers’ association have key roles in the district’s decision-making committees, these groups, especially the LPDC, could be volatile sites where the struggle for power and positioning bubbles to the surface.

Existing System Barriers

Existing professional development systems that are situated within bureaucratic structures may not have a place for LPDCs, and may well have resist change to accommodate them. In professional development systems where administrative position and power are tightly guarded, change will be especially difficult. By law, LPDCs occupy a potentially catalytic position which could introduce a systemic change process, not just the fragmentary products that characterize many past education reforms (Kofman & Senge, 1993). This positioning of LPDCs by its nature challenges existing power structures, and organizational resistance could prevent LPDCs from becoming an integral part of a district’s professional development system. If this resistance is effective LPDCs will not be able to determine quality standards and evaluate programs. Their work could be limited to rubber-stamping renewals in minimal compliance with the law, representing the technical/clerical positioning of teachers’ work in bureaucratic structures.

District One had no formalized “system” of professional development. Rather, the assistant superintendent and her coordinator of curriculum/staff development administered professional development activities in the district. When the LPDC convened, it had no defined place in the district’s operations and no direct connection to any professional
development functions with the exception of the coordinator's membership on the LPDC. Professional development was considered outside the realm of the LPDC, given the fact that the administration saw its function as certificate renewal only. District One's LPDC has had to struggle to find its place and define a role for itself in district professional development, and it has confronted strong organizational resistance from the assistant superintendent.

District Two and District Three both had strong professional development models prior to the establishment of their LPDCs. District Two's Critical Friends Groups had initially begun at the high school and had been refined over almost a decade of work. The LPDC became the vehicle through which this model moved into the other buildings in the district, and the experienced high school teachers provided direction through their knowledge base of CFGs. District Two's site-based structure with few bureaucratic barriers has facilitated the integration of the LPDC through its building-based CFGs.

District Three's professional development system was a coordinated structure that originated from a district office staffed by teachers on special assignment, a district-level committee that represented all three employee groups, and a network of providers. The staff development coordinator was responsible for integrating the LPDC into the existing structure, and policy was created so that positions on the district Staff Development Coordination Committee overlapped with the LPDC. Until recently, the teacher who was the staff development coordinator held a position of district authority through which he orchestrated the integration into an already well-defined structure over which he had primary control. As a respected teacher leader with vision, he occupied a position that allowed him to facilitate the coordination between the new and the existing systems (Bolman & Deal, 1997). Currently, his role has been diminished by the creation of an administrative position which takes over much of his decision-making capacity.
Other Organizational Barriers

Existing systems and their organizational policies may prevent access to resources necessary for LPDCs to carry out their work. LPDCs operate within the context of the larger education organization. As a result, they frequently face additional organizational barriers that are situated both structurally and historically.

Schooling becomes a central terrain where power and politics operate out of a dialectical relationship between individuals and groups, who function within specific historical conditions and structural constraints as well as within cultural forms and ideologies that are the basis for contradictions and struggles.

(Aronowitz & Giroux, 1985, p. 24)

Access to space and time for LPDCs to meet and work are subject to additional conditions and constraints within district structures. If meetings are held during the school day, both teachers and administrators are removed from their primary jobs. Ability to meet together as a committee may be dependent on both availability of substitute teachers and leave policies that fail to accommodate the nature and duration of LPDC work which is so different from usual committee work. If meetings are held outside the school day, compensation also becomes an issue for teachers whose work day is usually specifically defined in their contract, and for administrators whose role expectations usually preclude compensation for committee work.

Carrying the work of the LPDCs beyond the committee is another process that becomes subject to organizational limits. Access to existing communication networks, or lack thereof, can impair an LPDC’s ability to inform and train staff so that they understand their role in compliance with the law as well as the new opportunities for professional development that have opened up for them. Access to clerical assistance becomes
extremely important as the paper load of LPDC work increases. If LPDCs cannot overcome political, system, or organizational barriers, they lose their potential to affect change in a district.

Committee Barriers

Superficial Collaboration

Within LPDCs, barriers can also exist that inhibit the committee's work. All three of the LPDCs in this study believed that they had achieved committee-level collaboration that allowed them to hold discussions, complete necessary tasks, and use a consensus model for decision making. However, in many cases the LPDCs varied widely in their ability to carry out their work at a district level, related to their positioning in the district's political system. The administrators and teachers who work together on the committee have socially constructed roles that they do not leave when they sit in LPDC meetings (Johnston, 1997). In addition, their interpersonal relationships are influenced by history, particularly the historic treatment of the faculty by the administration (Lieberman & Miller, 1992). The school district's cultural norms also determine who is usually involved in decision making (Johnson & Pajares, 1996). These relationships have a significant affect on committee collaboration.

Successful collaboration between teachers and administrators is dependent on equality of status (Million & Vare, 1997). Collaboration at the committee level in the absence of equal status only creates the illusion that administrators and teachers have democratic roles in determining the direction of LPDCs in the district. Most LPDC members in the study defined collaboration through their ability to reach consensus which, in most cases, amounted to agreement on issues. “To develop a critical version of collaborative learning, we will need to distinguish between consensus as an acculturative
practice that reproduces business as usual and consensus as an oppositional one that challenges the prevailing conditions of production" (Trimbur, 1992, p. 217).

All three LPDCs believed they had created sound working relationships within their committees, even though the depth of their consensus building and collaboration varied based in part on their understanding of their LPDC’s mission and the amount of experience and training they have had. Even beyond that, in actual practice “authentic collaboration” for LPDC members requires mutually agreed upon goals and equal participation in decision making in addition to equal status, qualities that District One had never even addressed (Million & Vare, 1997).

District One’s LPDC members have had limited experience in collaboration and consensus building in the district. The members who have been involved in collaborative structures have had those experiences outside the district or within very tightly defined groups of peers. District One’s LPDC had no formal training, and never spent time as a committee discussing their mission or creating a shared vision.

Another issue complicating District One’s LPDC’s ability to collaborate was the influence of an administrative agenda outside the committee. The two administrative members did not appear to freely present independent views, but regularly deferred to the authority of the assistant superintendent, moving actual decision making outside the committee. As a result, collaboration at the committee level was limited to consensus building that involved reaching agreement based on minimal discussion.

District Two and District Three have had extensive experience with a wide variety of collaborative structures. District Two’s site-based organizational model is grounded in building-level collaborations. District Three’s various collaborative structures have been evolving over the last decade and are both building-based and district-based. Both of these districts have achieved a deeper level of teacher-administrator collaboration focused on shared goals and more extensive participatory discussion that also revealed oppositional positions.
In addition to their experience, District Two and District Three provided training in collaboration and consensus building for the members of the LPDC. District Two’s training is embedded in the Critical Friends Group training that is necessary for participation on the Council of Coaches/LPDC. This training involves a number of different protocols for discussing issues with a group.

District Three begin its process with an LPDC retreat where they specifically worked on team-building, vision-building, and other models of collaboration. District Three also benefited from its LPDC facilitator who has had extensive training and practice in collaborative techniques. However, even with training District Three’s LPDC collaboration process was affected by strained teacher-administrator relationships in the district that surfaced later in the year through the reallocation of leadership positions.

Differentiated Work Paradigms

In all three study districts, the active participation of teachers on the committee was greater than the participation of administrators. District Two had a single active administrative participant, and all of the committees had a teacher majority, but individual participation and ownership was much greater among teachers for general than it was for administrators. One reason may be that teacher and administrator roles are differentiated by the way they define their work.

Teachers and administrators have different frames of reference for meetings based on the historical nature of their work. Much of the work of the administrative role is managerial, and administrative committee meetings are characterized by peer discussion and decision-making. Administrative meetings are frequently built around agendas addressing specific managerial issues, and work progresses by making a decision on one issue before moving onto the next. Decisions are not carried out by the administration, but
reported to the appropriate section of the operational core where they are followed. Any clerical tasks generated in these meetings are handled by the support staff.

Teachers' work historically has been limited to technical issues centering around their classes. When groups of teachers do have meetings, they involve discussion about classroom issues, and are usually followed by the teachers performing any necessary tasks. Teachers' classroom work focuses on their role as service providers, and much of their time is spent in both the planning and follow-up stages of delivering service to students. Teachers have long-term and short-term plans in operation which have usually been determined somewhere higher in the bureaucracy. Because they are the technicians, there is usually no clerical support for teachers who must do their own composing, copying, and cleaning up, and teachers do not generally delegate tasks, except to aides or assistants.

When administrators and teachers come together on the LPDC, their different models of work come together in a shared context. Teachers come to this committee expecting to carry out tasks, while administrators approach this committee as they do their other administrative committees—discussing and making decisions to be carried out by others. The work of the LPDC more greatly resembles teacher work because LPDC members are not only responsible for making decisions, but also assuming a more clerical in carrying them out. Because of these differences, some administrators have found themselves frustrated with sharing decision making and then having to carry out those decisions themselves. From an administrative perspective, the time-consuming work of the LPDC, such as recertification processing, as well as the large amount of paperwork involved, define this task as clerical and places it outside the paradigm of administrative work.

Excerpt from District Three administrator LPDC member interview, 5/3/99:

One of the problems, problems or good things, whichever way you want to look at it, we've taken an awful long time to get to where we are. Now, why is that? You know it'd be easier just to copy someone else's and put it in place and say here's what we're gonna do. We never do that here
at District Three. It's just not something we do. We're very much into process, which is very frustrating sometimes because time is so valuable.

Excerpt from District One meeting transcript (coordinator), 5/26/99:

I have not felt like I was a part of this committee and that's why I, I mean, and my attendance hasn’t been great, and I’ve been in and out, but it's to the point where I don’t feel like we're accomplishing a lot. I think that we come in and we scramble, scramble, scramble, and I don’t feel, I'm just being honest, that we come full circle with these things.

Expecting to carry out work generated by the committee, teachers have been inclined to take on the bulk of the tasks, and their perceptions are that administrators are not doing their share equally. In the two hierarchical districts, teachers addressed the issue with their administrators who responded by trying to be more actively involved. In the site-based district, the only administrative member was rarely available to attend meetings, and the rest of the LPDC teacher members expressed concern about her absences, but conceded that she had many other commitments throughout the district and was “overloaded” with administrative responsibilities, in effect acknowledging LPDC work as a teacher responsibility. Teachers in all districts recognized that administrators had other administrative obligations, but expressed concern that LPDC work did not appear to have the same priority for administrators as it did for teachers.

Excerpt from District Three teacher LPDC member interview, 4/22/99:

I think there is a bigger commitment of willingness on time on teachers’ part than there probably is on administrators’ part. It’s harder to get more time from the administrators.

Excerpt from District One teachers' association president interview, 2/25/99:

I think the teachers take the initiative to carry out the work because they have a strong desire to have it be successful and to see it done right. The administrators on that committee are less enthusiastic about picking up more work and doing it.
For administrators, district managerial tasks from outside the committee frequently took precedence over LPDC work in all three districts. Administrators were frequently absent from meetings, or had to arrive late or leave early due to administrative responsibilities. On several occasions, administrators were called out of committee meetings by clerical staff to attend to other business, such as phone calls and interviews. Some administrators also brought administrative paperwork into the LPDC meeting and completed it while the discussion went on around them, a fact noted by teacher LPDC members on several occasions. Administrative participation in LPDC paperwork tasks was limited by the administrators’ relegating that aspect of LPDC work to others.

Excerpt from District One administrator LPDC member interview, 2/19/99:

Well, to an extent, from time to time, or most of the time, I tend to see it as, because we’re not doing anything with, we haven’t required IPDPs yet, we’re not into determining professional development in the district, so I see our role pretty much as almost clerical.

Excerpt from District Three administrator LPDC member interview, 5/3/99:

I do worry so much about who’s going to look at all this stuff. The paperwork is unbelievable, and I’m not sure people that don’t work with that paperwork on a daily basis have an idea about what it’s going to look like, and I keep throwing that flag up, and I don’t know if people hear me or not, but that’s my biggest worry.

The issue of compensation for teachers and administrators also plays a role in administrative participation. Teachers who are compensated through stipends are being recognized for the extra technical work that they are doing above and beyond their usual responsibilities. Administrators receive no compensation for LPDC work that usually takes place within the parameters of their workday, reinforcing the notion that LPDC work
should be managerial in nature and occupy the same position as other administrative committee work. This perception is in conflict with the actual work required by LPDC members. For administrators who have recognized this conflict, receiving compensation for what they consider clerical work, and a great amount of clerical work at that, is attractive.

Excerpt from District One administrator LPDC member interview, 2/22/99:

It doesn’t bother me that we don’t get a stipend or anything because it’s part of our job as long as it’s within our work day. I don’t have any problem with it. And so, that doesn’t bother me about us not getting them. I think, I don’t think it’s bad right now to do it as we go, but I think maybe two years down the road, as we get a picture, this year’s not a clear picture because we’re just trying to breathe, and next year probably is, it’s going to be the same way, because next year’s already here really, and so I think maybe three or four years down the road when we get an idea and we take an average of what it is and that kind of thing, I wouldn’t be opposed to a year sum.

At the end of their first full year, new LPDCs are just now realizing how much of a commitment in time and energy their work requires, and this is no less true for administrators than it is for teachers. Compensation for administrators may increase their participation by acknowledging that LPDC work is not the same as other administrative work. In practice, LPDC work extends beyond the usual responsibilities of both teachers and administrators, but for administrators there is additional dissonance based on traditional bureaucratic norms of division of labor. Compensation specific to LPDC work for both teachers and administrators could help to further democratize their positions on the committee.
Politics and Praxis: Breaking Down Barriers

As a teacher committed to confronting problematic issues, one of my main goals in this study was to be an agent of change, as well as become changed myself (Lather, 1986). I saw this as my moral imperative throughout my work in all of my study districts, but particularly my own. As I observed and interviewed, I began to uncover the complexities of this thing called an LPDC. As the political barriers in my own district emerged through my research and in my participation on the committee, I decided to take the opportunity to bring issues of power and position to the LPDC table for critical reflection and discussion.

In particular, our LPDC’s biggest issue was the role that it would play in professional development in the district. The issue of the LPDC’s role had been simmering under the surface for several months, and I perceived our inability to discuss the issue as a barrier to the LPDC’s ability to carry out its work. I decided that I needed to provoke discussion among our LPDC members, and try to reveal some of the implicit limiting systems in place in the district, so that maybe, as a committee, we could have a better understanding of the barriers we were up against and could reach some consensus about our role in the district.

My research frame compelled me to take action, empowering myself to address issues surrounding my work as an LPDC member. The following chronology documents the LPDC’s exploration of the underlying political system and my leveraging that system to move the LPDC one step closer to becoming a participatory democracy. [Note: I reference myself as (mw) in the transcripts.]

May 10, 1999

The LPDC met in the central office conference room for a meeting scheduled from 3:00 p.m to 5:00 p.m. I was the chair for this meeting. The coordinator of
curriculum/staff development had sent word by way of the personnel director that she
would be a few minutes late. We spent the better part of an hour processing renewals from
educators who had sent in transcripts and other documentation. At about 4:15, we had a
small discussion concerning the upcoming LPDC retreat sponsored by the Central Ohio
Regional Professional Development Center. I would attend as a regional process
consultant and facilitator, and the other two teachers expressed an interest in attending as
well. The personnel director had to check his schedule for the July dates.

At 4:25, I addressed the issue that the coordinator had still not arrived. Her
attendance had been sporadic all year, and she had been present at about only half of our
meetings. I brought up the issue of her remaining on the committee if she couldn’t attend
meetings. This was particularly troublesome to me, because as a teacher on leave for the
school year, the administration had made an effort to have me removed from the
committee since technically I was not a “practicing” teacher as LPDC language designates.
This issue was discussed in committee, and we came to the consensus that as long as I
attended meetings and carried out my work, I could remain on the committee. To me, the
acceptance of the coordinator’s absences represented a double standard.

At 4:30, the coordinator walked in, and I invited her to join the discussion. I
directly addressed her attendance, and she volunteered to leave the committee. Since she
was appointed by the superintendent, I suggested she take the issue to him.

I had asked her to bring the results of her professional development survey (see
Appendix B) to the meeting. We went over the results, noting that few surveys were
turned in. I used the survey as a jumping off point in a discussion about our district
professional development system and its limitations, particularly in assessing the needs of
the staff. We had some discussion about that issue as well as our role in approving CEUs.
I emphasized to the committee that the LPDC’s primary role was professional
development, not processing paperwork. The coordinator disagreed.
Excerpt from meeting transcript, 5/10/99:

(mw) The LPDC is basically the gatekeeper of professional development in a district, meaning that we set the standards of quality that we want to see in terms of professional development.

(Coordinator) Now, where in the state department resources does it say that we’re the, we are the gatekeeper of professional development. ‘Cause it states that we are responsible for licensure and renewals, and we’re responsible to make suggestions for..

As we continued discussion about the district’s professional development system, the coordinator became more and more defensive of the current system, taking a stand that we had to construct professional development offerings around available funding. I repeatedly stressed that we needed to be able to assess needs better in order to provide more meaningful professional development.

Excerpt from meeting transcript, 5/10/99:

(personnel director) I have a question for all of us to think about. I have the impression that you, and I’m not being defensive. I’m asking a question and trying to learn something through this discussion, I have a feeling that what you’re saying is that what we’re doing now is not quality staff development.

(mw) I’m saying I don’t think we have a way of knowing that because if we can’t assess the needs, how do we know if we’re meeting needs?

(personnel director) Say that again.

(mw) If we can’t assess the needs accurately, how do we know we’re meeting the staff development needs that we have. And like I said, I think a survey that gives you choices between one thing or another is not...

(personnel director) Do you get the impression that most of the staff would, cares a lot about staff development.

(mw) I get the impression that if we assume that they don’t care then we make all their decisions for them, and it’s very easy to get into a model of being told what to do, but that’s got to change because individuals are now responsible for their own professional development, so we have to be instrumental in changing that whole mind set. I think when it comes to renewing your license, and what’s gonna count and what’s not gonna count,
yea, you do care a whole lot. But this is all part of that change, and it’s not gonna happen over night.

By the end of the meeting, it was clear that the teachers and the administrators had different perspectives about the role the LPDC should play in staff development.

Excerpt from meeting transcript, 5/10/99:

(personnel director) This is healthy, this is healthy discussion.
(mw) My goal was to be provocative. We need to have these discussions, we need to be a player in this whole transforming professional development ‘cause, honest to god, guys, renewing certificates and licenses should be a by-product not the end result. It should be a by-product.

(personnel director) But as far as the state department of education is concerned, we’ve got to get those certificates renewed.

(mw) Well, as far as they’re concerned they would agree with that statement 100%, that it’s a by-product and not the end result.

(coordinator) When would be the natural time to bring somebody else on the committee in my place? Would it be now, at the beginning of the process or...? I know, but I’m just saying when would we need to start talking about it.

(mw) Well, I think with anything, you’re gonna have to ease somebody into it, so there’s got to be a transition period for them to come in, and orientation, and it’s probably going to depend, I guess in your end, [the superintendent] is the one who pretty much decides.

May 26, 1999

The next LPDC meeting was scheduled again from 3:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. in the central office conference room. The meeting began with a continuation of the discussion of the professional development surveys and their results. The teachers emphasized that since response numbers were so low, and results were limited to a tally of answers to predetermined questions, the survey instrument was not an effective needs assessment tool.
I then suggested the possibility of creating a district-level professional development committee with representation from each building. The building representatives could be responsible for assessing building needs, and the larger committee would bring those together so that there was a better understanding of overall district needs. The coordinator agreed that a district committee could serve a purpose in the district.

Excerpt from meeting transcript, 5/10/99:

(coordinator) Well, I think, I mean, I'm real open to having a professional development committee. I don't have a problem with that at all, with a representative from every building, and...

As discussion continued, the real issue of the LPDC's future role was readdressed. I brought the focus of the meeting back to the underlying promise of the mission of the LPDC.

Excerpt from meeting transcript, 5/10/99:

(mw) I know it's hard for you [coordinator] because of the position you're in with your job, it's not a critique of what you're doing, it's a critique of this system and saying, OK, this is what we have, how can we make it better? What kinds of things can we do to really look at how we're providing professional development, and here's another thing, too. What about professional development for administrators? What do we do as far as that in the district? I mean [the personnel director] goes out to all these things and gets all these certificates from them. You know, but there's another avenue. Are we meeting the needs of our administrators in this district? I don't know if we are. And I think we might be able to better, so it's kind of like, you've got to look at what you've got, you've gotta look at what you need, and you want to see how you can do that all the time knowing that that goal up there is always going to be student achievement. It's not my next degree, or it's not my next cert..., it's kids in my classroom. So, that's what this committee is about.

(personnel director) Are you proposing a process, or of the [CEU application] form determining quality, quality professional development? Is this something that you could bring back and show us something for considering?
I am proposing that we start having discussions and as a district, we start establishing our own standards of quality. There’s a lot of stuff out there in terms of what is good professional development, and you can look at all that stuff, but you also have to take into consideration our district, our history, our kids, you know, what our particular needs are.

The discussion continued about the ways in which the LPDC could play a greater role in the professional development process. As the discussion deepened, the teachers in the group saw a real issue over the fact that the coordinator took a different position from them concerning the mission of the LPDC.

Excerpt from meeting transcript, 5/26/99:

Well, this is part two, OK. Then this committee has to determine, number one, yes it is doing an important job. Number two, devote the time and the energy to that job, which means that if we have to meet once a month for a whole day, you do that. If we have to do sub-committee work outside of our regular meeting schedule, we have to do that. You see what I’m saying? Of course. This is a very big job. Of course. But it’s got to become a priority because if you really believe, and this is where I’m coming from, that good quality professional development improves practice which ultimately results in increased achievement for students, then you have to be willing, that’s the question I asked before, would this district be willing to support the time, the energy, the resources to do that. Maybe that professional development block grant isn’t being used very well going out to all those different buildings and just sending people off on workshops because guess what, I can go to a workshop and I can get developed, but you know what, there might be a half a dozen people around my department or maybe even more in my building that could benefit from that, but I never have an opportunity to share that with them. You know what I’m saying? I can go off and get developed as I want, and we’ve got a lot of talent in this district, but I never have an opportunity to share that with them. You know what I’m saying? I can go off and get developed as I want, and we’ve got a lot of talent in this district, but we need to look at what we’ve already got, how we can start opening those lines of communication, and we can only do that if the district’s going to be willing to devote the time, the resources, you know, it all boils down to the dollar. Well, maybe we need to write some more grants. We’re hiring a grant writer.

I just come back to the point, though, where I think five people are not going to be able to accomplish all of this work. I mean we have trouble now, we struggle now, and even if we meet one day a week, we’re not gonna be able to do it. I mean we haven’t even started looking at the people that are up for renewal next year. We haven’t started that process, we haven’t finished this process.

(coordinator)
Well, we come in these little two-hour chunks, and I don't think that's effective. I don't think it is.

(teacher 2) No it isn't because it takes us too long to recoup just what our normal knowledge is.

(mw) You know there are LPDCs that go off on multi-day retreats in the summer and get all this stuff hammered out. They use their professional development block grant money, they go on a retreat...

(coordinator) Right, but what's that gonna do when we don't have paperwork, you know, for people, you know what I'm saying? I'm talking about the daily, the come in, the do this, the get the letter out today.

(mw) But see, why bother to do any of that if you don't really have a vision of what you are and what your purpose is, and I don't think we've ever sat down and had that discussion. 'Cause we, as a district who was not a pilot district, came into this, it was dumped on us, oh my god, what are we gonna do now? And we have been paddling like a duck trying to keep above the water to get everything done, but I think now is the time to take a step back and say, OK, wait a minute, who are we, do we share, it, it's kind of obvious to me that we do not share common goals or values around this table. You know, we don't have a vision, a common vision of what this group is and that whole idea of building a team and knowing how you're working as a team and what your goal is. I don't think we have a good, and the purpose of a retreat would be to have those discussions, to take time and start talking about those things.

(teacher 3) Well, personally, I don't need a retreat to start talking about this because I think we've been here, and I think that it comes down to, now maybe we don't share the same goal, I'm not sure about that, I mean, we had decided in the very beginning that we were gonna be more of a consensus rather than voting, but if we're gonna start having dissension and we can't have one or two people holding up if we're going to, and if we're gonna have to start moving with the majority, then we're gonna have to start moving, but we're dragging our feet because of that we continue to have these kinds of discussions, but you're trying to develop something, and are we on the same page?

When the meeting ended, the group still had no consensus on the LPDC's role in district professional development. The next meeting was scheduled over a two-day period in June where this issue would again be addressed as well as revision of all the previous year's documents and processing of any additional renewals.
June 9, 1999

The LPDC teachers met for breakfast along with the new teachers' association president and two high school teachers who had expressed interest in taking the position I would be vacating on the LPDC. Because I was actively seeking a new position more in line with my doctoral work, I had advised the committee and my former teachers' association president that I would need to be replaced.

The discussion at the breakfast table centered around two issues. First of all, the teachers expressed their frustration that the committee's work was stalled because of the coordinator's stand on a limited LPDC role. The teachers believed that the personnel director did not share her viewpoint, but also knew from past experiences that he would not stand against her.

The teachers made the decision to start the following meeting with a vote. The teachers all agreed that in order for the committee to move on, it needed to settle this issue. Since the teachers hold a majority membership on the committee, a vote would allow them to make the determination about the LPDC's role, at least at the committee level. The teachers agreed that not only should the LPDC approve providers, it should also have an active role in needs assessment and expanding professional development offerings. Whether or not the LPDC would carry out this role in the district, however, depended on whether or not limitations in the organization remained.

I introduced the second issue. I informed the group of my intention to meet with the assistant superintendent and discuss some of the issues I had uncovered in my research. I shared with them a proposal for a job description that I had created to address some of these issues (see Appendix C). They supported my effort to bring about change in the system, but cautioned me not to be very optimistic given the administration's history. I had no illusions about potential outcomes, but explained to my colleagues that I was obligated by my research stance to attempt to improve the system.
Following our meeting, I drove to the high school where I happened to see a former teacher who had become an administrator through his appointment as the district’s technology supervisor. I shared my proposal with him, as well as some of my analysis of the district’s political system. He proceeded to tell me, from his now administrative perspective, what the administration’s political structure looked like. He believed that his position lacked influence due to the direct intervention of the coordinator of curriculum/staff development who is also responsible for some aspects of technology. Because she controlled much of his work and the assistant superintendent supported her doing so, the technology supervisor described himself as a “puppet.” His views confirmed the results of my analysis about the role of both the coordinator and the assistant superintendent and gave me insight into how to present my proposal.

June 14, 1999

My meeting with the assistant superintendent was scheduled for 9:00 a.m., but it was after 9:30 before I was shown into the assistant superintendent’s office. Somehow, she had not received the message that I was waiting and had wondered where I was.

I have known the assistant superintendent for almost fifteen years, having worked with her in a previous district when she was an assistant principal. We have had a very congenial working relationship, and I believe we have mutual respect for each other.

I began the meeting with a discussion of my research findings concerning the professional development system in the district. I had previously provided her with selected transcripts of both the May 10 and May 26 LPDC meetings so that she would know in advance the issues that the committee had discussed.

As our conversation continued, the topic switched to the conflict between the coordinator and the teachers on the committee. The assistant superintendent spoke on behalf of the coordinator based on discussion that they had had. She informed me that the
coordinator had felt as though we were criticizing the quality of professional development, and she pointed to the transcripts as verifying that. I asked her to read more carefully since the criticism about quality was related to being able to adequately assess needs. She did agree that there were areas of improvement to be explored.

At that point, I presented her with a copy of my proposal and described each component and the needs I saw from which I fashioned the position. The assistant superintendent agreed that such a position was needed, and in fact told me that she had proposed a similar position for the high school several years ago. She agreed also that I would be the most qualified person for the position. However, she explained that the priority of the board of education was reduction in class size and that the creation of any new positions would not occur in the near future. She did say that in two or three years, the board may be more open to a proposal and that she would support it.

We ended our meeting with a discussion about the coordinator and her lack of commitment to the LPDC as evidenced by her poor attendance and her request to be replaced. The assistant superintendent informed me that she would remain on the committee by the superintendent’s wishes, but they both had spoken to her about her participation. We also discussed how to work more effectively with the coordinator, in terms of interpersonal skills.

Prior to my leaving, the assistant superintendent assured me that she would share my proposal with the superintendent and expressed her regret that the district was unable to support it at this time. I assured her that I realized the constraints in the system, and although I knew it would likely be turned down, my research stance and its imperative obligated me to make the attempt.

June 21-22, 1999

The meeting that was supposed to begin with a vote, did not. When the LPDC’s role in the district came up on the agenda, the brief discussion that ensued was quite 212
different from the last meeting's. As the teachers presented their beliefs about the mission of the LPDC, the coordinator kept repeating, “I agree.” When we reached the point of creating a specific statement about the LPDC’s role, we were able to do so by consensus. The teacher members were all surprised by the turn-around on the part of the coordinator.

Once the LPDC moved beyond their conflict, the committee decided to redefine the roles of its members and established a teacher as the chair for the upcoming year in an effort to maintain consistency which was lacking through the rotating chair position. I suggested that we also needed a secretary to keep minutes, and the coordinator volunteered.

For the rest of the meeting time, the committee, with all members present, was able to process all the remaining certificate renewals, revise all of its forms and letters, and create a new form, based on their newly defined responsibilities, for approving and evaluating district professional development providers. At the end of the meeting, which actually ended early because of our productiveness, I congratulated the committee on its work, and commented that even though we thought we were not in agreement in our beliefs about our mission, it appeared through the last two days that we were. As we smiled around the table at each other, the personnel director leaned back behind the coordinator, looked directly at me, and silently mouthed, “we weren’t.”

A New Direction

District One’s LPDC is on its way to redefining professional development for its educators. My research imperative compelled me to pursue change by addressing issues head on within the committee and in the administrative hierarchy. I have no delusions that our committee has turned into one big happy family, but by creating a space for discussions, particularly of “undiscussibles,” the committee may be well on its way to more authentic collaboration. The introduction of new LPDC members is sure to impact the committee dynamics, but I believe that the work we have done in the past few weeks
has redefined the direction of the committee, and may well have put into motion a more subtle change in the district’s political system.

**Implications and Themes for Discussion**

The three LPDCs studied provided a variety of organizational contexts through which to examine the way the committees carried out their work and how they were influenced by the larger system in which they had been placed. From the variety of contexts, three conditions impacting the success of LPDCs emerged across districts. Collaboration among committee members varied, but its role in the LPDC’s work is crucial, given the structure of the committee. Political structures that exist influence both the work of the LPDC and the role the LPDC plays in a district, and can have both facilitating and inhibiting elements. Perhaps most important, though, is the district’s existing professional development system and the LPDC’s ability to integrate a new structure into an established system.

Through the study, additional themes emerged for the three districts studied that also have relevance in other districts throughout Ohio which have struggled to create LPDCs within various organizational structures. These themes provide insights into some of the underlying assumptions that may have an affect on the success of LPDCs. They also serve as provocations for other LPDCs to begin discussing what may well be “undiscussibles” that could, if not addressed, stand as invisible barriers that keep LPDCs from moving beyond simple compliance with the law toward their transformative potential.

**Proactive vs. Reactive Districts**

District Two and District Three had been pilot districts which had applied to the Ohio Department of Education for a grant to fund an LPDC pilot program that began in the
1997-98 school year. The grant application required these districts to conceptualize what an LPDC could look like in their particular district and to assess needs, set goals, create time lines, and establish an evaluation plan to critique their design and implementation. In addition, the pilot districts had on-going support from the Ohio Department of Education, the other pilot districts with which they met regularly, and an outside evaluator who critiqued their work during their pilot year. Both pilot groups also had the time in their first year to define and understand their LPDC's role in the district. This provided them with a foundation on which to build their LPDC models.

Excerpt from District Three LPDC facilitator interview, 2/8/99:

The LPDC itself had a lot of process training. In fact we got to a point where some of the members on the LPDC, and this I think is political, were why are we continuing to take all our time to do all this stuff? Let's just get on with it. We weathered some of that, and in hind sight most of those people now can see that it was better that we did do it that way, but we did do a lot of work in team-building and vision-building and working on beliefs and at a certain point there was a, some feeling of some certain perspectives at the table, that this is not necessary, we could just get on with it. But now when we're into it two years, when we run into a little problem, etc., we go back to where, to what we said we believe, and that really helps us to kind of shape the decision instead of going at it all over again.

District One was a non-pilot district whose experiences in establishing an LPDC mirrored those of most school districts in the state. Although some information about the pilot districts had been disseminated to local districts, the majority of information came only to district superintendents. As the Ohio Department of Education found out later, much of that LPDC information never left the superintendents' offices. Teachers in those districts were usually made aware of the new committee and its responsibilities through OEA representatives, publications, and locally sponsored forums.

In contrast to pilot districts who had a year's worth of work behind them, non-pilot districts were under legislative pressure to establish a functioning LPDC by September 1998. The legislation mandated collaboration between teachers and administrators,
imposing a collaborative structure in what was usually a hierarchical system (Johnston, 1997). In many Ohio districts, the administrator-teacher collaboration of the LPDC represented a new format for committee work, and neither time nor opportunity was available to work on team-building or understanding the LPDC’s mission. Due to a number of factors including lack of information, many of them were late to organize. There was still no established network of communication directly to LPDCs, and non-pilot districts lacked outside support that the pilots enjoyed.

As a result, many non-pilot districts saw their only task as certificate renewal and plunged into that work which, in some districts, was overwhelming. Without an adequate knowledge base to build on, many districts resorted to creating LPDC materials with bits and pieces of documents from pilot districts. Because many of them failed to have discussions facilitating understanding about their mission or their goals, new LPDCs moved directly into renewal processing without understanding their larger role in professional development.

Without taking the time to discuss and understand the mission of LPDCs, districts run the risk of creating LPDCs that do not fulfill the professional development needs of their educators. If the professional development component of LPDCs is not addressed, then their work is little more than processing the paperwork involved in renewing certificates. In order to take a proactive stance, new LPDCs need to initiate discussions that will allow them to both create an LPDC that aligns with their district needs and deepen the professional development work of the committee.

Because of their opportunity to plan and mold an LPDC to fit their district needs, District’s Two and Three saw themselves as proactive districts. Both districts have a history of reform initiatives to their credit and have experience working collaboratively on a variety of levels. Because they were part of the pilot program, they also had the advantage of a support network and a variety of opportunities to work with other pilot districts while
they created their own LPDC models. Their choice to participate created ownership for the project as well as accountability for its success.

On the other hand, District One, and most other districts throughout the state, found themselves choiceless under the mandate of the state legislature and its implementation deadline. With little working knowledge of LPDCs and little support from pilot models and documentation, District One took a reactive stance to its LPDC. One member summed up the district's attitude about the LPDC as "a necessary evil." District One lacked time and support to evaluate district's needs or how the LPDC could fit into what was already in place. As a result, District One spent six months trying to piece together policy and operating procedures from bits of pilot information, and members felt both frustrated and pressured. Only now, a year and half later, is District One's LPDC having discussions about its mission and its role in professional development, discussions that should have grounded their earlier work. Now, they are faced with revising their original policies to reflect their new understandings.

Legislative mandates have often resulted in districts complying at a minimal level because of inadequate resources and lack of ownership. In the case of LPDCs, some districts could have the same sense of being forced to institute a program for which they don't see a need. Viewing the LPDC process as a necessary evil invites minimal participation on the part of school districts. For LPDCs to be successful, their districts must own them and support them, regardless of their past experiences with state mandates.

Vision, Systems, and Leadership

District One had neither a consistent professional development system in place nor a leader with knowledge of LPDCs to move the process forward. Although professional development activities took place in District One, they were a series of separate efforts instead of a system. Access to professional development information and resources was
limited to a few key administrators. The connection between professional development in the district and the LPDC's role was unclear from the beginning and became an area of conflict at one point on the committee.

Without a systemic perspective and a visionary leader to interpret for them, LPDC members may have difficulty conceptualizing their committee’s role in a district. The individuals selected to serve on the LPDC need knowledge of the system in which they operate in order to understand how the LPDC can become an integral part of that system, and a leader with vision can facilitate that process.

District Two and District Three each had a leader who was transformational and able to create inspirational relationships with school personnel which facilitated the implementation of their LPDC programs (Thurston, Clift, & Schacht, 1993). Each of these leaders emerged from the teaching ranks, although District Two’s visionary has since become an administrator, and they are respected for both their knowledge base and their success in implementing various initiatives. Each of these leaders had experience introducing reform programs into the district and was linked professionally to a larger information network that allowed them access to resources around the state and beyond.

These leaders had considerable knowledge of LPDCs, but more importantly, had an analytical understanding of their respective professional development systems. Combining these frameworks gave them a holistic systems perspective which informed their vision of how the LPDC could be integrated into the existing structure.

Excerpt from District Three LPDC facilitator interview, 2/8/99:

(T)he LPDC for us actually fit into our system very nicely. It was like an idea whose time had come as opposed to another thing that we don’t know what to do with it, just like...I knew what to do with it. Even though no one knew what it was. I pretty much what to do with it, what I thought I wanted to do with it anyway.
Excerpt from District Two administrator LPDC member interview, 4/26/99:

(The LPDC) was kind of my idea to start with. As a teacher, working with professional development and wanting to know why it is I have to do something if it’s not meaningful to me. Why is it that I have to do it that way? And I think that’s a question that a lot of people were asking; why is it we have to do it this way?

Role Reconstruction

One question guiding this study was how the collaborative structure of the LPDC affected power relationships in its district, particularly with respect to the existing organizational structure. District One and District Three are organized by the traditional hierarchy that characterizes most education organizations. Implicit within that hierarchical structure is a division of power, and in both of these districts, the most significant division exists between the teacher and administrator levels. LPDCs bring teachers and administrators together in a theoretically democratic arena, but the political structure of the organization and the roles of its members do affect the committee’s work.

LPDC members are accorded equal places around LPDC tables by law despite the roles they have outside the committee. The teacher majority mandated in the legislation also helps to negate any perceptions about administrative control over committee processes. Teacher and administrator roles outside the committee represent not only political positioning, but also the frames of reference with which they approach committee work in the organization. In many cases, new roles are being shaped with old assumptions, allowing traditional school culture and its underlying assumptions about administrator and teacher roles to overpower any type of shared decision making that LPDCs could implement (Lashway, 1996).
Recommendations

For each of the districts, this study provided insights into ways that their LPDCs could function more effectively in order to improve the quality of professional development. Because each LPDC model is different, and because the organizational structure of each district is different, these insights are specific in nature. However, the recommendations transcend each district because they could represent issues that affect other LPDCs at some level.

The recommendations for the state, including higher education, have emerged from data from all three study districts as well as information gathered from regional and state LPDC groups. They are offered here to represent a more holistic frame for future LPDC work throughout the state.

District One

Professional Development Vision

District One began their work with a goal of processing certificate renewals without any discussion about the mission of the LPDC or the role it would play in professional development in the district. After setting up their operating procedures, they immediately moved into informing staff about their responsibilities, notifying individuals about renewal requirements, and processing paperwork received from staff members whose certificates expired in 1999. District One’s LPDC must have a unified vision of its mission and role if it is going to move beyond processing paperwork to improving professional development in the district.

After agreeing tentatively to take a greater role in the district, the LPDC is currently working on setting standards for professional development providers as well as creating a
procedure for approving provider applications. They are also beginning to critique the district’s current professional development structure, taking their first steps toward defining their role in the district.

Excerpt from District One meeting transcript, 5/10/99:

I don’t think we have a real good way yet of assessing (professional development) needs, so this is the beginning of a discussion about where professional development is going in this district and what standards do we have for professional development, and maybe what we’ve been doing isn’t necessarily the best way to go about it.

Meeting Professional Development Needs

One particular area of weakness that committee members noted in District One was the assessment of professional development needs. The majority of the committee agreed that the survey instrument used by the coordinator of staff development, built around predetermined choices, was not a valid way to determine staff needs. District One should create a better system for assessing the needs of both teachers and administrators in the district, opening more lines of communication for teacher input.

Recent discussion has centered around the creation of building-level professional development committees who would ascertain the needs of building staff with one representative who would report back to a district committee. A district committee could prove effective in assessing needs as well as identifying resources for providing professional development among staff members.
Coordination of a System

Currently, different aspects of professional development are administered at various levels of the district, and there is not method of coordinating these in order to have a accurate accounting of activities that are taking place throughout the district. The Critical Friends Group model has been introduced into the high school, but is not currently being supported or publicized. District One needs to coordinate its professional development sections in some way to create a true integrated system throughout the district.

In my role as research as change agent, I also approached the assistant superintendent and discussed the creation of a district level position for a teacher on special assignment who would coordinate all of the professional development strands in the district that are currently administered under a variety of individuals. The assistant superintendent was very receptive, but deferred to the board of education’s current focus which is the reduction of class size, a promise they made after the last levy passed. The position may be created in the next few years if funding is available and the board’s priorities change.

District Two

District Articulation

District Two’s site-based structure has created strong building identities at the expense of a district identity. It has also created competition throughout the district, pitting building staffs against each other. As a result, buildings are very territorial and do not communicate among themselves, creating building isolation for the district’s educators.

District Two’s staff, both administrators and teachers, see this as a significant concern, but have not begun to address ways to rebuild a sense of district unity. Bridges need to be built at the elementary level so that grade level teachers from all buildings can
come together and share issues and strategies, creating a much richer professional network throughout the district. Communication needs to be established between elementary and middle, middle and junior high, and junior high and high school in order that staff can share their expectations for students as well as their curriculums. These links would not only benefit the educators, but primarily the students because the scope and sequence of curriculum could be refined so that transitions are smoother and students are better prepared for the next level.

**Bringing Schools on Board**

District Two has had real success with its Critical Friends Group model in the buildings that have operational groups. The work that educators are doing in CFGs is meaningful, relevant, and allows them to grow professionally, in many cases far beyond their initial expectations. However, the middle school and the junior high have both had problems establishing and supporting CFGs in their buildings. Because the entire district has adopted this model, these schools need to be brought on board, and they need district support in order to do that. There are trained coaches in both buildings, but their administrators do not have the background to be able to support CFGs. These administrators need to be trained and made part of the process of establishing CFGs in their buildings. There also needs to be support for the building staffs from the Council of Coaches who can educate them about the CFG process and its benefits.

**District Three**

**Discussing Undiscussibles**

District Three has a potentially destructive issue brewing beneath the surface of the LPDC with the elimination of teacher leadership positions. Officers of the teachers'
association have met with the superintendent to discuss the issue, but the meeting did not satisfy the association’s concerns. The underlying power struggle between the association and administration has been brought to the surface through this issue, and teachers have also expressed their concern about undertones of both racism and sexism in the administration’s actions.

The administrative coordinator for staff development position is the greatest concern at this point. The teacher who has occupied that role and has overseen staff development for over a decade is well-respected statewide. Several potential applicants for the administrative position have contacted him to determine the nature of the situation in the district. For several months while the search process was underway, the teacher coordinator was not invited to participate in the selection of the administrator. When the candidates were narrowed down to three, a central office administrator contacted him for his input in the final selection, and he expressed his anger at having been left out of the process for so long. One of the candidates was a former district administrator who had previously worked with the teacher coordinator. He has since been hired to fill the position, and it is the hope of the teacher coordinator that the amicable working relationship they had enjoyed in the past will continue. Only time will tell.

District Three’s teacher and administrative representatives need to sit together and discuss the underlying issue without the mystification of the administrative job shuffling. They should address the role definitions that the new administration has established and how they have changed since the last superintendent, including the perceptions of the part of both teachers and administrators concerning their own roles and the relationship that they will have to each other in the future. The purpose of the discussion should be to identify the real issues and create a plan for addressing them.
Collaboration at Risk

District Three’s collaborative structures in its LPDC and Staff Development Coordination Committee are at risk depending on the role that the new administrator takes. The teachers' association is concerned that this position could possible hinder the work of both committees.

Excerpt from District Three teachers' association president interview, 5/3/99:

I don’t know yet, this wouldn’t fall into the category of a policy necessarily, it could be procedural...depending on what happens with this proposed new administrative position of staff development coordinator, director, what ever they want to call it, that’s part one. Part two depends on, assuming they put this in place, the person that is in the position could have a great impact, I think, on LPDC because if there’s a sense that you have somebody there who’s not part of that committee thinking that they have some kind of jurisdiction over it, that will be a problem. Just putting it bluntly. I could see a real issue there. Now, we’ll see. I don’t want to read too much into something like that. It’s speculation on my part, but my caution flag is up with respect to that whole subject.

District Three’s collaborative structures are a source of the district’s strength, and the relationships that have been built over a number of years should be maintained. The administration’s actions are being seen by teachers as a tactic to gain control, and this undermines the collaborative foundation that has been constructed. District Three’s teacher and administrative representatives need to examine this as well, and determine how important those collaborative structures are, and if losing them would ultimately have a negative impact for the entire district.
State Issues

Fiscal Support

The Ohio State Legislature set up the professional development block grants and the guidelines for their distribution. In the original August 1997 memo sent to superintendents from the Ohio Department of Education, the language of the legislation was quoted, saying the grants were to be used for "locally developed teacher training and professional development and for the establishment of local professional development committees" (original italics, Ohio Department of Education, 1997). The text of the memo further urged superintendents to use a portion of this grant to establish an LPDC in their districts.

Unfortunately, the vague language of the legislation did not specify an amount to be set aside specifically for LPDCs, so it was up to superintendents and their administrative representatives to allocate money to the LPDCs. In many districts, LPDCs were not even aware that there was grant money earmarked for their establishment. In effect, although the legislature funded LPDCs, the weak language did not compel superintendents to fund LPDCs. Lack of funding translates into lack of status in many districts.

Excerpt from District One teachers' association president interview, 2/25/99:

Generally I think the state department needs to give more credibility to the LPDCs on the district level by changing the allocation of the block grants and specifically designating money to the LPDCs from those block grants.

In order for funds to be specified, the legislation now must be changed. It is probable that the legislature is unaware that LPDCs are having difficulty accessing the block grant, and the first step would be to communicate this concern to the legislature. The Ohio Department of Education is aware of the issue, as is the the LPDC State Advisory Council. Between these two groups, a plan for addressing the legislature about the LPDC
funding issue can be created. In addition, the state department can also reiterate to superintendents in writing that the grant money needs to be used to fund LPDCs.

Standards and Consistency

An area of concern that has arisen in all three study districts as well as at the state level is the current lack of standards for professional development in the state. Although several groups such as the National Staff Development Council and other professional education organizations have published standards, LPDCs by law are free to set their own standards for assigning professional development credit. The assumption is that LPDCs will promote professionalism and raise the standards of professional development. In practice, however, that is not always the case, and various districts have issued professional development credit for activities such as cafeteria duty or travel abroad. The lack of consistent standards contributes to the problem, but the local nature of LPDC governance precludes state-wide standardization. The problem is finding a balance and establishing standards without standardization.

Without consistent standards, another issue arises. When teachers move from one district to another, expectations may be very different, and the goals and plan created in one district may be totally inappropriate in another.

Excerpt from District Three teacher LPDC member interview, 4/22/99:

I’m real concerned about the lack of consistency across the state. I mean I’m really concerned. If some people are going to expect nothing and others are expecting a lot, and I’m real concerned about how they’re going to continue have time and numbers. When you see very small districts, I don’t know how they’re going to do without going into collaborative groups, and I think it would be very hard to find other school districts that are consistent with your philosophies. In the bigger districts you could probably pull it off, but then you’re going to have an overload.
Excerpt from District Three teachers' association president interview, 5/3/99:

A real problem that I know is being reviewed and won't be resolved easily is the transfer from one school district to another. And we haven't even talked about that much here locally, but sooner or later we're going to have to get back into it because we're going to be dealing with it. You know, if you have X number of credits from one school district and you come over to say [our district] or vice versa, how do they count, how does all that transfer work. If you have an IPDP over there and you come over here, how does that transfer? All of that needs to be worked through, and I don't think much has been done with it, yet. That could be a weakness of the system. I suppose the long term, if many school districts in the state of Ohio just didn't hold the standards to a certain level and turned this into some kind of shallow exercise, then it would really have backfired on all of us I think.

Currently, the LPDC State Advisory Council, whose members represent a wide variety of professional education organizations, is drafting a document that will be distributed to all LPDCs throughout the state. The document promotes the Council’s beliefs and parameters for determining quality professional development and encourages all LPDCs to discuss and establish quality standards for professional development activities. The Council also hopes to create a network among LPDCs and provide a forum for sharing best practices in professional development based on quality standards.

Student Achievement

The legislature and district educators have cited student achievement again and again as the impetus for the changes in professional development for educators across the state. Now more than any other time in our past, we are accountable for the successful progress of our students through thirteen years of primary and secondary education. Everyone who participated in this study shared the belief that quality professional development translates into improved student achievement. A reality that has become clear
through this study, however, is that achievement is defined in these districts by a single standard—proficiency test scores.

Each district has had to come to terms with the reality of proficiency tests over the past decade, and have adopted proficiency standards and modified curriculums in order to align themselves with the state’s adopted assessment tool.

Excerpt from District Two administrator LPDC member interview, 4/26/99:

We’re not in the, oh that test is bad, that test is horrible any more. It doesn’t do us any good. And I think that we’ve done, administratively and throughout the teaching staff, we’ve done a good job of evolving through that. Everybody gets mad at first, especially when you don’t do so well. But, it doesn’t change that the test is not going away,...

There is an assumption that improved practice through quality professional development results in increased student achievement that is measurable through proficiency testing. Whether or not this will be the case remains to be seen. However, through the accountability and intervention standards established through Senate Bill 55, there is no doubt that this is a high stakes undertaking.

Excerpt from District Three superintendent interview, 5/11/99:

But the accountability issue is the bottom line. Teachers don’t lose their jobs over academic accountability. Principals and superintendents do. If our test scores plummet, I won’t be here long. And it doesn’t matter how many issues you pass and how many new buildings you build, it’s academic achievement and we’ve got to see that line going up. That’s the bottom line....

Districts and the public at large need to realize that the changes in student achievement that are the result of improved professional development will emerge over time, and that proficiency tests are not the only measure of student achievement. Data
collection becomes an integral part of this process, and districts need to collect data beyond proficiency results in order to track student achievement.

Excerpt from District Two superintendent interview, 4/20/99:

Whether that is successful or not remains to be seen. I'm very hopeful and I feel pretty good about the professional development processes we developed here, and so I'm looking forward to seeing what happens. Now, in the short term, it's unreasonable to expect that there would be an impact so soon, 'cause really, we need to look at two or three years.

The Role of Higher Education

As educators look more closely at their profession and reorganize their professional development activities around the needs of their district, building, and students, they are also redefining the model of professional development in the state. For many educators, university classes have previously been the means to obtain additional certification areas or accumulate recertification credit, although not necessarily the best way to deepen their practice. In order to meet the requirements of new licensure standards, educators must become active participants in their own growth by identifying goals, determining strategies, and measuring outcomes. Teachers and administrators now have new professional development needs that universities and colleges will need to address.

For many educators who have chosen higher education as the method to accumulate renewal credits, there is a perception that colleges and universities have narrowly prescribed the parameters of professional development work.

[Colleges of education] continue to define themselves essentially as service institutions which are generally mandated to provide the requisite technical expertise to carry out whatever pedagogical functions are deemed necessary by the various
school communities in which students undertake their practicum experiences. In order to escape this political posture, teacher education programs need to reorient their focus to the critical transformation of public schools rather than to the simple reproduction of existing institutions and ideologies. (Giroux, 1988a, p. 184)

College courses have had a standard format in many education departments, and for practicing educators, availability and not need has been the determining factor in choosing classes. Evening and weekend selections are limited, and many courses are tied into prerequisites built into certification or graduate degree programs. As educators set goals based on needs, these classes may not be sufficient for them to achieve those goals.

Excerpt from District One superintendent interview, 3/5/99:

[Colleges and universities] need to be more attentive to this type of staff development as they structure their role. You don’t have to be in a five-hour class with comprehensive examinations to be involved in staff development.

Educators need professional development that will assist them in the processes that lead to growth such as assessing needs, collecting and analyzing school-based data, and evaluating outcomes. Professional development based on current research in teaching and learning is necessary for teachers to design inquiry projects, analyze new initiatives, and reflect on various aspects of their practice. Educators need course work that addresses all these areas in general, and they also need courses specific to their content areas and student age groups.

Universities and colleges can provide both the time and space for educators to come together and have reflective conversations about their work. Colleges and universities can also be one forum where administrators and teachers meet on equal ground to critically examine the systems that they work in and the ways to effect change in those systems.
Currently, the PDS model of self-defined long-term collaboration creates this forum for educators who have the opportunity to participate, but PDSs alone cannot address the needs of all educators. The potential for higher education to play a significant role in transforming professional development in the state is great, not only at the preservice level, but also through providing meaningful course work to educators in the field.

Conclusion

Ohio's Local Professional Development Committees are key to the future professional growth of educators in Ohio. They have the potential to transform our former "seat time" model of professional development into a process that is job-embedded, meaningful, and ultimately results in increased student achievement. Whether or not LPDCs achieve their potential will be determined district by district, educator by educator. Much of the responsibility for the success of the LPDC depends upon the role of its teachers and their ability to empower themselves and take on new positions of leadership in their districts. The LPDC process represents an opportunity for all teachers to take control over many aspects of their professional work by turning over to them the responsibility for engaging in reflection about their daily work and designing activities for their own growth and the increased achievement of their students.

Unless teachers have both the authority and the power to organize and shape the conditions of their work so that they can teach collectively, produce alternative curricula, and engage in a form of emancipatory politics, any talk of developing and implementing progressive pedagogy ignores the reality of what goes on in the daily lives of teachers and is nonsensical. (Giroux, 1997, p. 107)

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The professional development component of the LPDC’s work is both important and challenging. Through their discussions, decisions, and policies, LPDCs have the potential to systemically change the structure of a district’s professional development system, and in doing so, become part of the statewide LPDC network that could change the entire professional development model in Ohio. The teachers and administrators who serve together on LPDCs have the opportunity to examine and expose assumptions dividing their roles, negotiate new relationships, and construct new understandings about their work together as educators, “our” work.

Excerpt from District Three teachers’ association president interview, 5/3/99:

The fact that you have teachers and administrators sitting down at a table and talking about “our” work, and I’ve said it that way a few times, because so often I think that both teachers and administrators have thought there’s this great divide between what you as an administrator do and what I as a teacher do. It’s like I don’t understand your work, you don’t understand mine, although I certainly acknowledge that administrators having been classroom teachers do understand classroom teaching. I don’t mean to imply they don’t, but I think there is this sense that we’re in kind of different worlds. And when you actually sit down and start talking about some of these licensure issues and renewal issues, I think it diminishes some of that. I think people start learning a little bit more about where they are in each other’s minds with respect to their training, with respect to their own expectations of what they do and where they’re going. I think that’s kind of a side benefit.

A current of optimism is running through the state, and some LPDCs are beginning to see the potential that they have as part of a larger initiative to create professional credibility for educators by taking responsibility for the education profession. “Our” work has only begun, and the process will take time and energy from every educator in the state, particularly its teachers. We must first break down barriers and redefine our roles, actions that, in fact, change paradigms as well. “[Teachers] must take a
responsible role in shaping the purposes and conditions of schooling” (Aronowitz & Giroux, 1985, p. 31).

If school districts invest time and resources into the process, and the state and higher education address the needs that arise from the work of LPDCs, some change will likely happen. However, for LPDCs to truly fulfill their transformative potential, several conditions must exist. First, LPDCs need support from top administration, regardless of the organizational structure of the district. Without that support, the organizational barriers that inhibit the work of LPDCs remain in place and invisible, perpetuating business as usual and preventing any real organizational change from taking place. The three districts in this study had various levels of administrative support which correlated with their ability to carry out their work efficiently and effectively.

LPDC members also need training in order to collaborate at a level that facilitates conversations based not on simple agreement, but on reflection and analysis of issues which reveal layers of complexity. Part of this training should involve team-building activities so LPDC members can create trust among themselves and construct a shared history. Another part of this training should focus on the skills involved in collaborative discourse as well as conflict resolution, particularly with regard to discussing undiscussibles. Two districts in this study had team-building and training in collaboration, but the district without it found it difficult to surmount obstacles within the committee. LPDCs which operate under the assumption that their members somehow already have these skills could find themselves stonewalled over apparently minor issues because they don’t have the relationships or the processes which would allow them to work through conflicts.

Finally and perhaps most importantly, LPDC members must redirect the majority of their efforts into transforming the professional development system in their districts to reflect quality standards and improvement in practice linked to student achievement. If LPDCs limit themselves to processing the paperwork involved with certificate or license
renewal, the public perceptions of educator incompetence that were the impetus for the initial legislation creating LPDCs are validated. Processing renewals is a clerical task in a very real sense, and by divesting themselves of their professional development responsibilities, LPDCs are also negating whatever transformational potential they might achieve.

Ohio educators currently occupy a position that has never before been available to them. By law, they now have the power to shape their own professional development by working in conjunction with Local Professional Development Committees. These committees could potentially change the nature of the education profession in Ohio, but only if they take an active role in bringing about that change. To that end, LPDCs in districts throughout the state must continue their struggle to reveal and critique the ideological conceptions of power and politics that prevent change in education organizations if they are ever to fulfill their charge to transform professional development in Ohio.
APPENDIX A

Interview Guide
Interview Guide

Name____________________District______________________ Date________

Briefly describe your personal background including any background information or other details you believe to be significant to share with the researcher.

Describe your professional background including the schools you have attended, degrees you have earned, and positions you have held throughout your career.

Discuss your current position (outside the LPDC) and the major daily responsibilities of that role.

Describe your perception of the relationship of teachers and administrators in the district.

Explain how you became involved with the LPDC. (How did you become a member of the LPDC?)

Discuss your role with/on the LPDC.

What is your previous relationship to other LPDC members?

What is your definition of collaboration?

What is your previous experience working collaboratively within the district?

Would you say that the LPDC works collaboratively?

What do you believe to be the purpose(s) of the LPDC?

How are members of the LPDC compensated?

How is work distributed among members of the LPDC?

How are decisions made within the LPDC? Is this typically a productive process? Why or why not?

When and where are meetings held?

How and where is information stored?

Who has access to the LPDC information on a daily basis?

How does the LPDC communicate with members of the district/disseminate information?

How are clerical tasks carried out?
What do you believe are the major accomplishments of the LPDC within the district?
What do you believe are the major problems associated with the LPDC in the district?
What district policies exist that you believe facilitate the operation of the LPDC?
What district policies exist that you believe hinder the operation of the LPDC?
How do you see the LPDC positioned within the operation of the district?
What role does the LPDC have in district decision making?
How is the Professional Development Block Grant administered?
Describe how The Ohio Department of Education has been involved in the operation of this LPDC.
What do you believe are the strengths of LPDCs?
What do you believe are areas of LPDCs that could be improved?
How does the LPDC relate to student achievement?
Summer Professional Development Survey

We are currently exploring the possibilities for summer workshops and classes. Your opinion is very important! The responses to this survey will be used in planning summer professional development offerings. Please take a minute to complete the survey. Return to Central Office by April 9.

1. What type of summer offerings would most interest you?
   a. One or ½ day workshops for CEU credit
   b. 3-5 day courses for graduate credit

2. What month would you most like to attend summer offerings?
   a. June
   b. August
   c. I do not plan to attend workshops/courses this summer

3. In support of the Language Arts Course of Study, I would like classes/workshops offered on the following topics: (Check all that apply)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Balanced Literacy</th>
<th>Running Records</th>
<th>The Writing Process</th>
<th>The Spelling Process</th>
<th>Middle School Language Arts</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
   Other: (Please explain)
   __ I am not interested in participating in Language Arts courses/workshops this summer

4. Technology related workshops that I would like offered this summer include: (check all that apply)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Productivity (Word, Excel, Access)</th>
<th>Networking (Email, list serves, video conferencing)</th>
<th>Hypermedia (Power Point, video)</th>
<th>Information Tools (World Wide Web, Search Engines)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
   Other: (Please explain)
   __ I am not interested in participating in technology courses/workshops this summer

5. I am interested in participating in courses/workshops designed to support the new mathematics course of study:
   ___ YES ___ NO

6. Other suggestions for summer Professional Development Offerings:

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1999 Summer Survey Results Summary

TOTAL SURVEYS RECEIVED 151

1. What type of summer offerings most interest you?
   1/2 Day Graduate Classes
   52 86

2. What month would you like to attend summer offerings?
   June August Not Participating
   74 62 15

3. Language Arts Support?
   Balanced Literacy Running Records Writing Process Spelling Process Middle School None
   39 12 33 27 6 40

4. Technology support
   Productivity Networking Hypermedia Information None
   59 42 67 44 31

5. Mathematics Support?
   Yes No
   61 68
APPENDIX C

Job Proposal
To: [Assistant Superintendent]
From: Michele Winship
Date: 6/14/99
Re: Creation of position

Through the course of my research this year, I have been able to take a much broader view of District One within the context of its professional development system and through comparison with other districts throughout the state. Through both formal and informal analysis and my work on the LPDC, I have found several areas which could be improved in order to help District One's professional staff comply with state law and further their own professional development.

Recognizing the right of the Board of Education to create positions and based on the Teacher Leader positions of the past, I am requesting that the district consider the creation of a one-year, temporary position for a teacher on special assignment to work under the Assistant Superintendent for Instructional Services and in conjunction with the Coordinator of Curriculum/Staff Development and other central office and building staff to address the needs that have become apparent through my research. Following hiring procedures, I recognize that this job must be posted.

POSITION: Teacher on Special Assignment--Professional Development

JOB DESCRIPTION:

The Teacher on Special Assignment for Professional Development is a one-year renewable position created to address specific needs within the district arising from new state requirements for professional development. The purpose of this position is to coordinate professional development activities within the district which currently are housed in different areas, and to address new areas of professional development that have entered the district. The responsibilities of this position are as follows:

- LPDC Facilitator
  - Serve as a non-voting member of the LPDC
  - Organize LPDC work
    - Prepare LPDC agendas
    - Maintain and distribute LPDC information
    - Work with district technology staff to create usable database
    - Arrange for LPDC clerical tasks to be carried out
  - Facilitate LPDC meetings

- Coordinator of district professional development committee
  - Organize and maintain district professional development committee (representation from each building in the district, administration, and classified staff)
  - Meet monthly with staff development committee
  - Perform needs assessment for each building, administration, and classified staff
  - Research and compile district resources for professional development
  - Create (with committee) recommendations and evaluation tools for professional development activities in the district
• Coordinator of mentor program
  • Oversee Pathwise training
  • Meet regularly with mentors and mentees
  • Provide opportunities for mentors to observe mentees
  • Evaluate mentor program and make recommendations for improvement

• Critical Friends resource person
  • Undergo Critical Friends coaches' training
  • Work with Critical Friends Groups already established at high school
  • Promote Critical Friends model throughout the district
  • Coordinate with central Ohio Critical Friends resources and Annenberg Institute
  • Provide Critical Friends training within the district

• Summer Academy
  • Work with district professional development committee. Coordinator of Curriculum/Staff Development, and other Coordinators to create a professional development summer academy
  • Participate as a trainer in the summer academy
  • Evaluate summer academy offerings

• Network
  • Serve as liaison to CORPDC
  • Serve as liaison to ODE
  • Serve as liaison to colleges and universities to:
    - be informed of professional development opportunities
    - recruit student teacher placement
    - evaluate district research opportunities

• Grants
  • Coordinate with grant writer and other staff members to seek out and write grants for professional development funding
BIBLIOGRAPHY


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