

DISTRIBUTED LEADERSHIP IN OHIO: THE OHIO IMPROVEMENT PROCESS

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The Degree  
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Distributed Leadership in Ohio: The Ohio Improvement Process  
By  
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## Abstract

### Distributed Leadership in Ohio: The Ohio Improvement Process

By

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A distributed leadership model is aimed at creating leadership at multiple levels of an organization through the use of teams. The Ohio Department of Education has operationalized a distributed leadership model in the Ohio Improvement Process (OIP). The OIP is part of the overall improvement plan for school districts in Ohio failing to meet the targets of the No Child Left Behind Act, 2001. The purpose of this study was to gain greater understanding of the impact of the OIP on teachers' commitment and empowerment levels to the school district where they are employed. A posttest research study was designed with the OIP as the independent variable and commitment and empowerment used as the dependent variables. The results of the research suggest that when a recognized and organized team approach, such as the OIP is implemented to assist in school decision-making there are greater feelings of empowerment and higher levels of commitment among teachers. The overall effectiveness of a distributed leadership model was also found to be enhanced when the implementation was supported by adequate professional development for the staff.

*Keywords:* Ohio improvement process, distributed leadership, commitment, empowerment

## Dedication

This work is dedicated to the memory of my mother Ellen Price and to my wife Theresa Price. My mother was always supportive of all my hopes and dreams and wanted to see me through this experience as well but was called home to be with the LORD prior to my completing this degree. To my wife Theresa, I have had the privilege of having a great partner and wonderful soul-mate. Thank you for sacrificing so much in your life to help me to realize my goals. I would not be where I am today without your loving support.

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## CHAPTER I

This was a quantitative research study to compare the attitudes of teachers in school districts that had implemented the Ohio Improvement Process (OIP) to those in similar districts that had not yet implemented the OIP. This study evaluated data gathered from school personnel using a survey instrument to determine the impact of the OIP on the feelings of empowerment and the overall commitment of the staff to the organization.

The results of this research will be shared with the participating school districts and the Ohio Department of Education to help each better understand the impact of implementing a distributed leadership model among school organizations in the State of Ohio, using the OIP. The first chapter introduces the study, identifies the problem of the study, outlines the contributions of the study to the field and profession, provides an overview of the methodology, and defines the terms commonly used in this research study.

### **Introduction**

The development of people within the school organization is an important aspect of leadership. However, this facet of leadership is often overlooked. This is due mainly because the traditional view of a single leader meeting all of the building and district needs continues to dominate most school organizations (Gronn, 2008, Hulpia & Devos, 2009). This research explored the importance of developing teachers as a human resource to be used to solve complex problems in today's school organizations. Specifically, teachers' perceptions were explored to see if there was a relationship

between their perceived empowerment and the implementation of a distributed leadership structure of governance in working toward the improvement of the school as an organization.

To sustain growth and make needed improvements leaders of organizations need to see their employees as a means to solving both internal and external problems facing modern school districts. This belief in the development of humans as a resource can be traced back to experimental work conducted by Elton Mayo in the 1930s. Since Mayo's work, many others have made contributions to the field, leading to a greater understanding of the complexities of motivating the human mind in such a way as to increase the commitment of employees both to their profession and to the organization (Harris, 2005).

In the early 1990s the study of creating an organization where people are viewed as a resource and the commitment of employees was sought by management through worker empowerment was reintroduced by Peter Senge in his book, *The Fifth Discipline*. Within this work Senge (1990) suggested that there can no longer be one leader of any successful organization who can develop all of the strategies necessary to sustain a high level of outcomes. Senge continued by advising that the leaders of future organizations have to be facilitators who can "discover how to tap people's commitment and capacity to learn at all levels of the organization" (p. 4). In this distributed leadership model, which Senge referred to as a learning organization, the employee is viewed as a resource to be utilized to build a strong foundation for the organization.

Senge (1990) went on to propose that the successful modern learning organizations need to have certain levels of knowledge or understanding of key

principles. These include that individuals in the organization be committed to learning all they can about their own profession. This acquisition of knowledge and personal professional development will help them to maintain positive mental images of what they, as well as the organization, can become. Finally, for Senge, these principles contain the development of a shared vision in a team oriented approach to learning where solutions to organizational problems are gained through dialogue within the team structure. In speaking of teams Senge says “team learning is vital because teams, not individuals, are the fundamental learning unit in the modern organization” (p. 10). The dialogue that takes place within this team structure is not aimed at winning or losing an argument or having things all one way or the other, but is aimed at coming to solutions that could not be reached by any single individual acting alone.

The most important aspect of this distributed approach to leadership is that the first four principles, commitment, positive mental image, shared vision, and team learning, are all viewed as interconnected to the success of the organization. Each has to be carefully implemented and nurtured for the organization to learn, grow, and maintain its success. It is within this type of organizational structure that individuals in the organization find purpose and meaning. They see that their talents are utilized and their insights and ideas are implemented giving them a sense of ownership increasing the productivity of the organization (Senge, 1990). It is ownership of the finished product that leads to the production of greater commitment among employees to their profession as well as to the organization. Work becomes a meaningful expression of who they are both personally and professionally.

For those in education, a human resource development approach means a change in the traditional hierarchical design of a school district's organizational chart. It means moving away from a single leader or small group of administrators who set the educational goals for districts, buildings, and even classrooms to demonstrate improvement (Hulpia, Devos, & Rosseel, 2009). In education these same leaders often times not only outline the objectives but also dictate the means for overcoming obstacles and offering solutions to problems in order to meet the district, building, or classroom targets. In place of the traditional model, teachers and other staff members take on more leadership responsibilities which allows more flexibility and responsiveness to changes experienced in the modern school setting (Harris, 2005).

Mayrowetz, Murphy, Louis, and Smylie (2007) point out that in the distributed leadership model the development of people allows for decision-making power to be distributed to the all areas of the organization. Employee input is sought especially in the establishment of a vision. Once a vision is created goals are developed to support it using a process that requires each person in the school district to participate in providing solutions to possible barriers that could threaten organizational success. In this distributed model, other leadership tasks are also expected to be shared between traditional management positions and teachers. Examples of identified tasks include such things as providing encouragement and recognition to outstanding staff, gaining and allocating resources, implementing teaching standards, setting daily procedures, and monitoring the improvement effort within the school.

These leadership tasks are accomplished through a team approach in which teacher teams impact the direction of the district through representation on both building

and district level teams. It is through these teams that the district goals are established. A consensus of opinions for direction is sought in outlining both district and building level goals. It then becomes the responsibility of lower level teams at the building and teacher levels to implement the district plans with the district team providing oversight to ensure proper execution. Over time this style of leadership is expected to become embedded in the operations of the school district and thus is established as part of the overall school culture (McNulty & Besser, 2011).

This does not mean that the district leadership simply turns over all power and authority for improvement to each building or department. Such site based management approaches have been tried and proven not to be an effective means to bring about sustained school improvement (Fullan, 2003; Marzano & Waters, 2009). McNulty and Besser (2011) suggested that effective school leadership means involvement of the administrative staff in the instructional improvement of the teaching staff, and the teaching staff involved in traditional administrative tasks. The development of a team approach to resolve curricular and other school related problems goes beyond the current accepted practice of district leadership. Instead of simply calling for high expectations for the district, school leaders are more interested in gathering input and developing leadership at all levels of the district.

The distributed leadership approach impacts the way employees in the organization view their own leadership abilities and the perspective they have of the school organization. The school organization will be enhanced by giving employees a voice in the direction of the school and by providing all people in the organization the perception that they can make a difference. This change in perception is accomplished

when employees are given the opportunity to provide input and develop district goals through the use of teams. It is through the perception of a voice that employees improve the outlook they have of the school, leading to greater levels of commitment. The staff feels empowered, which then leads to increased productivity and ultimately enhances the likelihood of the staff taking ownership for student outcomes.

### **Statement of the Problem**

According to Fullan (2003), a major obstacle in the quest for improvement in most school districts today is an inability of the present system to develop people's skill set for leading within the district. He believes that there has been a disregard for a human resource approach to school improvement and too many change initiatives that originated from the top, be that the state legislature or the central office. Fullan continues by suggesting that most improvement plans have not been properly supported with the result being a lack the enthusiasm to ensure that changes are permanent. Specific teaching skills or increased knowledge level of pedagogy may have occurred but these changes do not have the desired outcomes because there is no vision for implementation.

Gronn (2008) pointed out that the traditional improvement model for school leadership was the image of the single leader approach where power or leadership was centralized in one location. Using this model, the task and responsibility for school improvement fell to the heroic leader figure at the top of a hierarchical system of leadership. There remains a mindset among school leaders that teachers and administrators need to be controlled through all sorts of regulations and laws with mostly punitive measures attached to them when objectives are not met.



Hargreaves (2008) suggested that a centralized power structure within the school system has not been successful in bringing about changes needed for widespread school improvement. Further, it has become apparent that top down leadership in the way of legislation by lawmakers and regulations by school leaders has had the effect of limiting the motivation of teachers within the educational system. Instead, it is people within organizations that have brought about lasting changes and improvements, not policies. For Hargreaves organizational leaders that want to institute lasting change need to distribute power and celebrate the diversity of ideas developed by local stakeholders rather than make centralized mandates prescribed through national standards.

The OIP offers a model for implementing comprehensive and lasting change as described in the preceding paragraph. It has been recognized as Ohio's model for improvement that depends upon the establishment of leadership at multiple levels of the organization through a team approach (OLAC, 2008). This model was developed by stakeholders that included teachers, unions, principals and their association representatives, superintendents and their association leadership, the Ohio Department of Education (ODE), and Ohio school board members. The overarching goal for the creation of this group of people, who represented different interests within Ohio's education system, was a need for a large scale school improvement initiative (OLAC, 2008).

As previously stated, an increased participation by all members of the organization (sometimes referred to as a learning community) is thought to increase productivity due to higher commitment levels by employees (Senge, 1990). Important aspects of this commitment are demonstrated in collective and individual goal setting,

team learning and personal professional development, and each member of the organization holding others accountable for results. All of these characteristics are part of a systems approach and are recognized as essential pieces of the improvement process for schools (McNulty & Besser, 2011).

The research in this study measured the effects of the OIP on attitudes of four school district teaching staff's feelings of empowerment and commitment levels to their school organization. By gathering and analyzing quantitative data it was hoped that a better grasp of the impact of the OIP on these attitudes was gained. Further, this study examined whether or not the OIP was an effective means to operationalizing a distribution of decision making power throughout the organization.

The study used the OIP as a distributed leadership model focusing on comparing school districts that have implemented the OIP to those that have not implemented the OIP model. In doing so, this study sought to understand whether or not a school district that chose to implement the OIP gets greater commitment from their teachers to the school district goals than districts that maintained the existing traditional governing structure.

To accomplish this task this research sought to measure the perceptions of teachers in regards to the empowerment they were given by those in traditional positions of authority. Additionally, teachers' commitment levels were measured. Once this was accomplished, a comparison was made between teachers' commitment levels of those who have engaged in the OIP and those who have not engaged in this process. The research sought to gather data related to the development of teams in each district involved in this study. It focused primarily on whether or not teachers felt a connection

between their work on teacher teams and the work conducted by the building and district leadership level teams (Hulpia et al., 2009).

### **Contributions and Purpose of the Study**

The research conducted in this study furthered the understanding of how the OIP fits into the future of school leadership designs. It was designed to help school leaders, superintendents and school boards in Ohio better understand the potential positive and negative aspects of implementing the OIP in relation to the empowerment of teachers and gaining subordinate commitment to accomplishing district goals and initiatives. Also, it was meant to help in better understanding the interaction of school leadership with subordinates. Finally, it sought to provide future policy makers with some research as to whether or not the OIP approach to school improvement is effective in replacing the traditional top-down style in setting district goals and vision.

A review of the literature provides many examples of distributed leadership in a variety of organizational settings which originated in the business world (Somech, 2010). The ideas that support this shared form of leadership have recently spread into the fields of health care and social work and across the education world both in the United States and abroad. The change to a more participative form of leadership among social science institutions has been prompted by poor performance in schools (Duke, 2006; Vernon-Dotson, 2008), steered by government policies in both schools and in healthcare (Scott & Caress, 2005), and attempted in healthcare facilities due to the economic pressure of efficiency (Steinart, Goebel, & Rieger, 2006).

Although there have been many research studies on the practice of participative or distributed leadership in organizations, there are relatively few that address specific

school improvement initiatives and none that this author was aware of that specifically evaluate the OIP. Vernon-Dotson (2008) suggested that more research was needed to be conducted on the impact of this type of governance approach as a reform movement in education. Somech (2010) recommended additional research needed to be done on shared leadership to lend a better understanding into the specific managerial practices needed to facilitate effective participative decision-making on the part of school employees.

Because the OIP is still a relatively new process for Ohio school districts there is little understanding of its implementation into the school setting. This research provides a better understanding of this process to schools who may be contemplating whether or not to engage in this process. Additionally this research may stimulate ideas from school district leadership teams on ways to improve their district governing structure to increase team and district performance in creating a school culture conducive to greater commitment by the staff. These districts can use the results contained here to help them use the OIP in a more efficient way, thus providing more effective leadership in school improvement initiatives and in helping to make their districts more effective organizations.

This research was aimed at understanding the perspectives that teachers possess about their district leadership through the use of surveys in a quantitative research design. The survey instrument was given to school districts that are participating in the OIP and those that have chosen not to participate. A comparison was made regarding the perspectives of teachers about their level of participation in the district organization and

the impact this had on their commitment to their profession and to accomplishing district goals.

The results of this research will be shared with the district leadership teams from schools that participated to help them understand the perspectives of their teaching staff. Although the outcomes may be generalizable to only a very select group of school districts (Fraas, 2008), the study may lend some important suggestions to other school districts that have similarly engaged in the OIP or to those that are thinking about adopting it as a leadership model for school improvement. Therefore, this research has the dual purpose of being a guide to other school leaders thinking about using the OIP and an aid to those districts already employing the OIP or similar model.

### **Overview of the Methodology**

I made use of a post-test, quantitative research design to conduct this study of multiple school districts that have implemented the OIP as well as districts not participating in this reform measure. The quasi-experimental ex post facto design was employed due to the independent variable or treatment having already been applied in the form of the OIP for some of the school districts involved in the study (Fraas, 2008). I was fortunate in that the ODE had not mandated all districts to implement the OIP. Instead, only those school districts that had not met annual yearly progress (AYP) rates for school improvement under the No Child Left Behind Act (2001) have been mandated to use the OIP. This situation allowed a comparison to be made between staff members' attitudes and perceptions that had been exposed to the OIP with those teaching staffs that had not been exposed to the treatment.

In order to collect data on the use of teams, the levels of empowerment, and the commitment of the teaching staff, a survey instrument was constructed. This survey was created by selecting questions from three separate survey instruments. I included questions from Short and Rinehart *School Participant Empowerment Scale* (SPES) to measure the level of staff empowerment in the school setting (Short & Rinehart, 1992). Mowday's et al. (1982) *Organizational Commitment Questionnaire* (OCQ) was used to measure the commitment levels of teachers in the study. Finally, some questions were used from Hulpia et al., (2009) to measure the perceptions of teachers in regards to the leadership team's effectiveness in carrying out the teacher-based team's vision for the district.

The finalized survey was distributed to teachers from two school districts that had implemented the OIP as well as to two separate schools that had not yet implemented the OIP. Once approval was granted from two non-OIP districts a comparison list for each was generated using an ODE database (see Appendix A). Each targeted non-OIP district was put into the database and a comparison list of schools with similar characteristics was generated from across the State of Ohio. From this generated list of similar districts that had implemented the OIP two school districts were randomly selected for comparison with the two non-participating OIP districts, pending their agreement to participate.

### **Limitations**

I recognize that every research study has limitations. The following is a brief overview of the advantages and limitations within this research study. I have attempted in this section to help the reader more fully understand the possible biases existing in the collection of the data associated with this research. It is suggested to provide the

limitations to the reader to allow a fuller interpretation of the outcomes (Locke, Spirduso, & Silverman, 2007).

An ex post facto quantitative research design was used in this study to gather data. This type of quantitative design has some limitations and so the results need to be interpreted with the usual caution. The central concern was the possible inability to isolate the treatment as the cause for differences among schools. To mitigate the chances for this error the researcher attempted to compare as many characteristics that each school district in the study have in common. Also, it is important to reiterate that the districts in the study were divided into two lists, one list of school districts that had implemented the OIP and a second list for those districts that had yet to implement this treatment for school improvement. The characteristics of like schools for both lists were generated through the database from the ODE (See Appendix A).

As for the reliability and validity of the data, I understand that this study was a snapshot of attitudes in one particular place in time as related to the exposure to a treatment (OIP) and the use of teams for decision-making. The posttest experimental design controls for most of the external validity concerns; there remained some fears with this study when the results were considered. Chief among these concerns was participant interaction and selection bias. Participant interaction was a concern only because teachers talk across districts and at professional conferences. Some participants not having formal exposure to the OIP may have had preconceptions about its use and effectiveness, both positively and negatively. To control for this I did not use the term Ohio Improvement Process or OIP on the survey. An attempt was made to control for selection bias by asking pertinent demographic type of questions on the survey and

making use of the database from ODE of like districts as described in the above paragraph (Fraas, 2008).

The results of this research study are generalizable to the populations that it represents. It was conducted using random assignment of participants for both the experimental (having exposure to the OIP) group and the control (not having formal exposure to the OIP) group. The major worry with generalizing the results is linked to the number of participants returning surveys. The relatively low respondent rate may jeopardize the ability to make generalization to certain groups difficult or very weak.

### **Definition of Terms**

Like all fields in the social sciences the education field has terms to describe programs and plans. The school improvement topic is no different and the reader will need to have an understanding of the terminology below as a guide through this study. The terms included are:

1. *Distributed Leadership*. Leadership functions are distributed or dispersed throughout the organization among many people working at all levels (Hulpia, Devos, & Rosseel, 2009). These leaders work at each level of the school district in a form of concerted action which locates the additional dynamic that occurs when people work together essentially building the internal capacity of the school organization to solve problems (Harris, 2005).
2. *Ohio Improvement Process (OIP)*. This is a shared governance model for continuous school district improvement based upon the work of the Ohio Leadership Advisory Council (OLAC). It is a four stage process that includes identifying educational needs of the district, developing a plan based upon data



and multiple levels of input, implementation of a coherent plan, and the evaluation of the plan and the improvement process. The OIP relies on teacher based teams (TBTs), building leadership teams (BLTs) and a district leadership team (DLT) to complete the four stage process (OLAC, 2008).

3. *District Leadership Team (DLT)*. This team is comprised of representatives from the central office and each of a school district's buildings that include teachers, support staff, administrators, and parents. The DLT group gathers and reviews data, looking at them from the district level perspective to set district goals for improvement. These goals are supported by strategies and action steps with tasks assigned to specific personnel for completion at a targeted date.
4. *Building Leadership Team (BLT)*. This team is comprised of representatives from the specific building including teachers, support staff, administrators, and parents. The BLT gathers and reviews data, looking at them from the building level perspective to set building level goals for improvement. These goals are aligned with district goals and are also supported by strategies and action steps with tasks assigned to specific personnel for completion at a targeted date.
5. *Teacher Based Team (TBT)*. These teams are comprised of representatives at a particular grade level or levels or could be split out by subject departments at the middle school or high school levels. TBTs are the primary implementers of the action steps put in place by the BLT. They also gather and monitor grade level or subject matter data on the implementation of building and district action plans that support the stated goals. Data are to be gathered at weekly meetings and reported out to the BLT at monthly meetings.

6. *Ohio Leadership Advisory Council (OLAC)*. An ad hoc council of leaders from across the State of Ohio facilitated by the ODE and the Buckeye Association of School Administrators (BASA). The outcome of this council was the creation of a framework for school improvement through a distributed leadership model of shared governance among all school district stakeholders.
7. *Organizational Commitment*. This is a measurement of the amount of effort an employee demonstrates in assisting the organization to accomplish its goals (Somech & Bogler, 2002).
8. *Empowerment*. People within a school organization actively participate in the decision making processes either as an individual or part of a community of team members to set a school vision (Short & Rinehart, 1992).

### **Summary**

In conducting this research I attempted to fill the void in the literature as well as the research on the implementation of a distributed leadership approach. The distributed model has been discussed in the education realm by many authors with most of the application for distributed leadership being used as a lens, a way in which to view or gage the leadership of school organizations (Harris, 2005). More recently many schools have developed committees and teams in the name of district reform and departments have been used for many years throughout school districts. But there have been very few real attempts to move decision making power to all levels of the school organization. The OIP has potential to be operationalized as such a model.

To date the effectiveness and impact of the OIP on school organizations has yet to be tested as a model for making and sustaining significant school improvement. I sought

to evaluate this model against the research, isolating the level of empowerment of the teaching staff and linking that to both professional and organizational commitment.

More committed teachers are more effective teachers and give the educational community a chance for sustained growth over time.

## CHAPTER II

### **Introduction**

Within the past two decades there has been a growing belief among education leaders that a flatter governing structure will help them to meet the ever increasing demands put upon education (Leithwood & Mascall, 2008). There are many names given to this structural change including democratic leadership, shared leadership, collective leadership, distributed leadership, participative leadership, creative leadership, and even professional learning communities to name the most prominent models presented to this point.

The use of any one of the above terms conjures up a variety of ideas about the organizational design of a school. Researchers, authors, and leaders also use several terms interchangeably which increases the difficulty of understanding what is meant by a distributed approach to leadership. Thus the identification of a name that best represents a model for the responsible distribution of leadership continues to be among the problems school districts face in implementing a model (Poff & Parks, 2010).

Poff and Parks (2010) identified this difficulty in defining the distribution of leadership in a research study. These authors used a panel of 16 professionals that included writers, teachers, superintendents, and principals who had engaged in, or had conducted research on, a distributed leadership model. The researchers identified fundamental ideas from five domains (collaboration, common focus, shared responsibility, supportive culture, and widespread communication) as being descriptors of a shared leadership (distributed) model based upon three different rounds of discussions with the group. Within the five domains there were 5 elements identified by the panelists as being part of a distributed model

of leadership. There were 67 additional items that were agreed upon by 80% of the group as being indicative of a distributed model. Even for these distinguished and learned panelists the concept of a distributed design for school leadership was difficult to define and explain.

Even though the task of sorting through the plethora of names and the supporting ideas was daunting, it was important to choose one term that would most closely describe the Ohio Improvement Process (OIP). I chose to use the terms *distributed leadership* or *distributed leadership model* to describe the phenomenon of flattening the school governing structure as adopted by the Ohio Department of Education (ODE). The reason for the choice was that these terms were found the most consistently in the literature published by the Ohio Leadership Advisory Council (OLAC) and included in the ODE documents. Both of these groups played a major role in the development of the OIP.

OLAC was created in 2007 as a group of educational leaders who represented the interests of superintendents of public schools, representatives of the Ohio Education Association (OEA), and the core leadership of educational advocacy groups from both the Ohio School Boards Association (OSBA) and the Buckeye Association of School Administrators (BASA). This group created the OIP standards for districts and an evaluation system to measure leadership progress for superintendents in the State of Ohio. All of these tools have since been adopted by the Ohio State Board of Education. Both the standards and the evaluation instrument present a perspective of leadership that uses aspects of the OIP to create a new structure for school governance that includes increased teacher participation in the formulation of district goals along with increased responsibility in the implementation and monitoring of these goals (OLAC, 2008).

Although not specifically stated in its literature, the work of OLAC (2008) was an attempt to operationalize a statewide distributed leadership model. This new governing structure was implemented, along with the OIP, as a large scale reform effort for Ohio's public schools. The aim of this new leadership structure in Ohio was to allow teachers to take on more responsibility for the results of students on achievement assessments, both negatively and positively (Lloyd, McNulty, & Telfer, 2009).

In this review of the literature, I focused on the research supporting the outcomes OLAC (2008) intended for school governance in Ohio school districts. Several Ohio School districts already use the OIP for their school improvement plan. It was these districts that were used as examples of the intended organizational design and outcomes. Within this review of the literature I explored the evidence that ties increased participation in school governance to higher levels of commitment of teachers to their school district and higher levels of empowerment by the staff. Some attention was given to suggestions from the literature on ways school leaders can use the tools of the OIP to create effective use of teams and teacher collaboration in leading district and building improvement initiatives. This included the roles and responsibilities of district superintendents, principals, teachers, and other stakeholders. Finally, the potential impact a distributed leadership model such as instituted by the OIP and the OLAC governing structure may have on student achievement was explored.

### **Conceptual Framework**

The conceptual framework for this study was the distributed leadership model. Participation in the work place has been demonstrated, in both qualitative and quantitative studies, to be effective in producing employees who are more committed to the organization

(Somech & Bogler, 2002). In addition, Firestone and Pennell (1993) found that those who participated on a regular basis in decisions had a change in their psychological state, feeling more of a responsibility to the organization (commitment) and attaching meaning to their work (empowerment).

It is further believed that this distributed leadership approach will aid in the development of teachers as a source of leadership for the school system. Ultimately, this leadership model will lead to greater commitment from teachers to the school organization and stronger feelings of empowerment (Dee, Henkin, & Singleton, 2006; Hulpia, Devos, & Rosseel, 2009; Somech & Bogler, 2002). The OIP, created by OLAC, could be the distributed leadership model needed in public schools to lead a large scale school improvement project across the State of Ohio.

Hulpia et al. (2009) recommended that additional research on the relationship between commitment and empowerment needs to be completed. This research should be focused on creating a better understanding of a school district's effective use of teams. They suggested this can be accomplished by measuring variables such as the setting of a school district vision and the development of people as a resource within the school organization. For Hulpia et al. it is not so much the way a district is structured as the way that it operates in its decision making that is an important gauge of the commitment the district has to the distribution of leadership.

Additional research indicated that the implementation of a distributed leadership model in school districts does create a new structure of leadership allowing teachers and other stakeholders the opportunity to have conversations (Lloyd et al., 2009). Further, this

leadership model may be the best opportunity to make changes to school organizations that are both effective and have an ongoing, and lasting impact (Firestone & Pennell, 1993).

The organizational design of the public school system in the United States has historically given the teachers a good deal of freedom to make choices in their classrooms (Firestone & Pennell, 1993). However, the globalization of economic systems and the ability of foreigners to compete internationally for jobs have called into question this type of design of the traditional schools system. Politicians have responded to the public and private sectors' desires for more accountability of the educational system and greater alignment of curriculum to meet ever increasing standards for student learning outcomes. Even with these increasingly tightened controls on professional educators, the teacher in the classroom continues to be the central figure for delivery of high quality instruction that can meet these demands. Therefore, it is more important in the present system to have teachers who are committed to district, regional, state, and national goals for education (Firestone & Pennell, 1993).

### **Teacher Participation and Its Relationship to Commitment and Empowerment**

Somech and Bogler (2002) defined participation “as joint decision making or at least shared influence” from those in positions of authority in making decisions that would have an impact on the school district (p. 558). The staff needs to believe that their skills and knowledge are having an impact on the organization they are working for in order to improve it in a significant way (Bogler & Somech, 2004). Konczak, Stelly, and Trusty (2000) attributed several aspects to participation which include accountability for outcomes, independent decision making, self-directed problem solving, information sharing, and skill development on the part of the employee. Further, Short and Rinehart (1992) discussed



control over schedules, competency, and opportunities for teachers to be involved in professional development as aspects of empowerment or participation for teaching staff.

Within these definitions some authors made a useful distinction between two types of participation in the decision making process. The first type they referred to as technical or occupational and the second type were labeled as either managerial or organizational (Firestone & Pennell, 1993; Pugh & Zhou, 2003; Somech & Bogler, 2002). For the purposes of this review I used the terms technical and managerial as defined below.

### **Technical Participation**

Technical participation was more commonly found in the educational setting. It relates to decisions made by teachers that primarily impact the curriculum and instruction used in each classroom and comprised of material selection, disciplinary actions, and daily lesson plans (Somech & Bogler, 2002).

As noted previously, teachers have traditionally held this type of decision making power on their own until recently, as states have adopted curriculum with an emphasis on student educational outcomes and more standardized instructional methodology. Today, this technical decision making, participation, and empowerment is no longer given to each individual teacher. Instead, each teacher has become part of a collective effort to standardize grade level and subject area student outcomes through teams. Teachers on these teams collectively make choices on textbooks, instructional practices, and revisions to curriculum that have a direct impact on the learning outcomes for students in their classrooms (Dee et al., 2006).

**Managerial Participation.**

This included some administrative level decisions about the implementation of instructional practices but to qualify as managerial participation there had be more emphasis on long term goals and vision (Dee et al., 2006; Somech & Bogler, 2002). Participants in managerial decisions are also asked for input in the hiring of staff, the formulation of budgets that allocate resources to programs, and in the evaluation of teachers (Somech & Bogler).

Both technical and managerial participation have been linked to teacher commitment (Firestone & Pennell, 1993; Hulpia, et al., 2009; Somech & Bogler, 2002). Additionally, Short and Rinehart (1992) found that teachers who have control over decision making processes with an opportunity to experience professional growth through increased participation in organizational decisions reported higher feelings of empowerment. However, for feelings of empowerment to make changes in teacher behavior, the level of involvement in leadership practices must be viewed as meaningful to the staff. This is the process in which teachers experience greater levels of commitment (Firestone & Pennell).

Firestone and Pennell (1993) identified the link between participation and commitment. These authors demonstrated that higher levels of participation enhanced communication among staff members. Further, they found that when information was shared throughout the school district the trust of subordinates was increased, and teachers were more committed to decisions which they have input in formulating. A study of the empirical evidence suggested that actions on the part of people in positions of leadership had an impact positively or negatively on subordinates' perceptions about the profession of teaching and upon the school district where they work (Bogler, 2005; Hulpia & Devos, 2009; Hulpia, Devos, & Rosseel, 2009; Pugh & Zhoa, 2003; Somech & Bogler, 2002).

## **Commitment**

There are many reasons that leaders may want to increase the levels of participation in district decisions (Harris, 2005). This study was concerned with gaining a greater understanding of a possible link between increased managerial participation through the OIP and its link to increased commitment and empowerment levels of teachers. It is important to note that two types of commitment are found in the literature, both come as a result of increased involvement in decision making. One is organizational commitment and the second is professional commitment (Firestone & Pennell, 1993; Somech & Bogler, 2002). Equally important to keep in mind is that commitment has many variables and most times these two types of commitment cannot be easily sorted out.

Organizational commitment has been linked in the literature to concepts such as accepting the values of the organization and the exertion of effort toward the organization with particular focus on the company rather than the profession (Mowday, Steers, & Porter, 1982). There were others who relate it to turnover in membership and absenteeism from the job and even job performance (Dee et al., 2006).

Participation in school decision making as well as the opportunities to grow professionally within the district's organization have also been found to be tied to an increased sense of responsibility to the organization, also known as commitment (Firestone & Pennell, 1993). When ownership for organizational processes was fostered among staff members they felt more empowered and willing to introduce ideas and assist in the implementation of plans which help the organization to grow and reach intended outcomes (Bogler & Somech, 2004).

Mathieu (1991) found that commitment to the organization was reciprocally related to job satisfaction. The two variables are tied inseparably and a change in one would impact the other. Rappaport (1987) found that in a religious setting, commitment to the organization was connected to both satisfaction and empowerment. He hypothesized that the same would be true in other organizations and aspects of life where people exert energy and invest time, that members who were empowered would become committed to the goals of the institution they serve. In the development of their School Participant Empowerment Scale (SPES) Short and Rinehart (1992) suggested that a relationship may exist between empowerment and job satisfaction to organizational commitment, calling for future research in this important area.

Bogler's (2005) research findings also link together job satisfaction and organizational commitment. He cited that the above mentioned outcomes in teacher feelings about the organization had an impact on their motivation and job performance. Bogler also suggested that a teaching staff's perception about the importance of the work was directly related to their commitment to the organization. This perception of commitment was also related to teacher involvement in meaningful decisions and collaboration.

Finally, organizational commitment was associated with members of the organization being engaged in team activities. Teams help to build stronger relationships among staff members and, in this way, can be used as a vehicle to build commitment. Teams also made better decisions about instructional practices and establishment of goals and objectives which led to a greater feeling of empowerment and accomplishment. All of these contribute to greater commitment to, and identification with, a school district (Dee et al., 2006).

A balanced approach was found to be needed between organizational and professional commitment levels in order for the distributed leadership model to be

successful. As seen from the literature, teaching staff who felt empowered were more likely to be committed to the organizations. Both types of commitment were important in order to implement and carry out school district goals and plans.

### **Distributed Leadership Applied to the Education Governing Structure**

As noted above, the primary tool for creating a distributed leadership model was making effective use of a team structure in the organization. The idea of using teams to create strategic goals, share organizational decision making, and solve problems comes from the world of business (Scribner, Sawyer, Watson, & Myers, 2007). This concept has also been used for years in other academic areas like sociology and political science by researchers and analysts to explain the use of power (Gronn, 2008).

Today, distributed leadership is becoming increasingly popular in the educational realm and for good reasons (Zepke, 2007). Chief among these reasons are that this approach may be (a) a possible solution to the complexity of the role of school leadership, (b) a means to meet the multifaceted aspects of teaching in the 21<sup>st</sup> century (Stoll & Temperley, 2009; Zepke, 2007), and (c) a way of getting the staff of a school district to help formulate strategies and goals and thus be more committed to their professional success and the success of the district (Bogler & Somech, 2004; Dee et al., 2006; Leithwood & Mascall 2008; Ross & Gray, 2006).

### **School Leadership Needs to Embrace the Team Approach**

According to Elmore (2004) even with the growing evidence of the successful use of teams to provide district leadership, this concept remains foreign to most school institutions. The main reason for this is because school leaders still do not seem to fully understand how to use a distributed model. The concept goes against the nature of the hierarchical structure

traditionally employed by school leaders. For many superintendents there seems to be a contradiction in the use of teams and in providing district leadership. These school superintendents and boards of education continue to visualize the use of centralized authority as the best means for providing school direction.

Some of the uneasiness about the governing structure could be laid to rest with additional efforts to educate those in positions of leadership in Ohio's schools. The distribution of leadership does not mean the central authority should relinquish all directive power. Rather, in the distributed model directive and shared approaches are not polar opposites but both central direction and teacher participation should be exhibited in the organizational structure. The school structure and teacher attitudes and beliefs would dictate the use of a directive or participative leadership approach (Somech & Wenderow, 2006).

Regardless of their lack of understanding on the efficient use of teams, school leaders and teachers are being mandated to use the distributed leadership model of school governance. This mandate began in 2001 from the national level through the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act as state departments of education were forced to develop large scale reform model for school improvement (Leithwood & Mascall, 2008).

At its core the distributed leadership model is about organizational power and decision making being shared among staff members for the creation and implementation of a vision and organizational goals and the development of people as leaders within the organization (Hulpia et al., 2009). The main vehicle for accomplishing this mission is through the use of multiple levels of teams. In a distributed leadership model these teams are the primary instruments used by those in formal positions of authority for making decisions related to all aspects of the organization. Multiple level teams are used to create district

goals, implement strategies and action plans, and even help to evaluate the effectiveness and performance levels of teachers within the team structure (Hiller, Day, & Vance, 2006).

These multiple level teams must include teachers, principals, and other staff members who work together in collaboration and that they are purposefully formed.

Although not the basis of the OIP model of distributing authority, the spontaneous generation of leadership from the bottom is advocated by some (Frost, 2008). Although this sort of leadership from teachers or others within any organization can and does exist and can have a significant impact (Zepke, 2007), the focus in this study was on the intentional building of leadership throughout an organization through teams as a means to improvement (Senge, 1990).

Once this distributed leadership model is in place, more informal teams will spontaneously appear or, ad-hoc committees can be created to solve individual organizational problems. The results of these temporary teams will have a greater impact because of the leadership training and skills received from the distribution of leadership along with members of such teams or committees having a larger vision of the organization (Zepke, 2007).

### **Leadership Styles and the Distributed Leadership Model**

According to Spillane, Camburn, and Pareja (2007) most schools implementing a distributed model fall on a continuum between central control and a democratic, almost laissez-faire process. On the central control end of this spectrum districts, continue to use a traditional leadership approach with decisions and initiatives coming from the top down. There may be a use of formal teams, but these teams are controlled by a central authority which distributes traditional central office authority and functions such as textbook selection,

the daily curriculum, and some instructional strategies and in return demands accountability. On the other end of this spectrum school leaders may choose a completely democratic approach. This style emphasizes a bottom up approach with the formation of both formal and informal teams which guide the decision making process for the school. Essentially, in this style leaders place little or no demands for accountability on the team performance, abdicating their place of authority (Zepke, 2007).

Although it is often difficult to distinguish leadership styles, Dee et al. (2006) stated that an effective distributed leadership model was neither controlling nor was it entirely democratic, and it certainly should not be a laissez faire approach to leading a school district. Instead, an effective model allowed for input from members of the staff through teams at multiple levels, while also relying on a certain amount of pressure from above in the way of guidance more than accountability. However, just asking professional teachers for their input in improving the school organization sends the message that the leadership cares about individual professional growth and development. For Dee et al. this team approach created more involvement for teachers in the organization, which linked them to the school by creating feelings of attachment because they were making a difference or had an impact.

This team approach to leadership helps to create a caring environment which improves the educational climate and leads to more input and growth. The use of distributed leadership rather than command and control, competition, and forced compliance has been shown to improve the commitment level of teachers (Dee et al., 2006) and the motivation among students and teachers, both of which improves learning outcomes. If the school is a good place to go to work for teachers it is likely it will also be a good place to learn (Poff & Parks, 2010).



In the modern school environment both teachers and administrators have more responsibilities and greater demands in the workplace. For administrators there is increased concern over sanctions associated with school legislation from the state and national levels. Likewise, teachers must maintain a working knowledge of their content standards that are tied to state assessments used for measuring school performance and student academic growth. These standards are consistently changing, being updated in attempts to increase student outcomes (Stoll & Temperley, 2009; Zepke, 2007). The use of a distributed model of organizational leadership can relieve some of the stress related to such demands. This can be accomplished by sharing the workload for teachers and sharing of responsibility for results between administrators the teaching staff (Harris, 2005).

### **Human Resource Development**

The use of a distributed approach can help develop leaders at various levels of the district by working with people throughout the organization (Stoll & Temperley, 2009) even though many will never hold a formal leadership position. A distributed governing model allows the school district to take advantage of the skills and knowledge of those in subordinate roles (Zepke, 2007). It also helps the people in the organization broaden their own personal and professional perspectives.

This new collaborative work environment becomes a cycle of both individual and professional growth. Further, it leads to greater input by teachers and administrators in the way work is accomplished which fosters greater commitment to the organization with the obvious result being improvement in output levels. In this way it is easy to see that a distributed model is an investment in the development of teachers as a human resource and is a vital part in the process of building a professional learning organization (Scribner et al.,

2007). This type of organization is not one that can be mandated effectively because it is more about building relationships among staff and between staff and management. In this structure, power takes on new meaning; it is no longer about rewards and punishment but it is about allowing those involved in the workplace community to set the direction for the organization (Zepke, 2007). It is about the teachers and staff taking ownership of the school district, including the processes as well as the outcomes.

Finally, distributed leadership can help the school district make decisions that fit its organizational needs, because the leadership is making use of the collective intelligence of the entire staff. At the same time this system helps teachers to understand the impact their individual professional decisions have on the organization and the impact they have on others in the district, effectively creating a sense of interdependence (Leithwood & Mascall, 2008).

### **The Distributed Leadership Model and the Ohio Improvement Process**

Organizations commonly use two types of teams. The first is a task-oriented team that concentrates on a particular aspect of the district needing improvement or preparing to meet challenges or problems facing the school. The second type focuses on the development of work teams as being a part of the school organization's structural design. The latter type of team is pertinent to the discussion here as it becomes part of the organizational culture (Bollman & Deal, 2008).

The task team is used in many school organizations. This team often deals with a problem or district crisis such as reductions in staffing due to a short fall in revenue. This team has limited training and experience and due to this deficiency the members may need more guidance from a facilitator to act as an effective team (Bolman & Deal, 2008). Short-lived, this team operates only as long as the problem persists but then is disbanded when the

crisis is averted or has passed. Although these teams do share characteristics of distributed leadership, they are not functioning as a team in the sense of having the goal of continuous organizational improvement which is the aim of the OIP.

Another difference is that the focus of this short-term committee is more on the task than on the processes of developing cooperation, collaboration, and other team dynamics leading to a culture of distributing decision-making and governance. Therefore the effective use of task-oriented committees or teams is likely more of a product of a distributed leadership culture than a means to establish this culture as outlined in the literature supporting OLAC and the OIP (OLAC, 2008).

By contrast, the OIP is based upon the idea of work teams having an impact on the organizational structure in a school district. In addition to completing certain duties such as task-oriented teams, the organization's leadership team pays increased attention to the team building process to ensure that every person in the school district feels a connection to the process and virtually all teachers perceive they have a voice in governing the strategic direction for the district.

### **The Governing Structure of the OIP**

For a distributed leadership model to work it is imperative that teams have structured leadership that organizes and then facilitates the process of leading an organization. The OIP is based upon this premise and has a defined structure as outlined in this section. In addition to completing defined tasks, the organization's leadership team pays close attention to the team building process to ensure that every person in the school district has a voice in governing the strategic direction for the district.

The OIP organizational structure includes a District Level Team (DLT), Building Level Teams (BLTs) for each individual building within the district, and Teacher Based Teams (TBTs). The DLT is comprised of members from the central office (including the superintendent), all building administrators, teachers from each building or school (representatives of the BLT), classified staff members, board members, and representation from the community which also includes parents. The BLTs are ideally made up of at least one representative from each TBT but also include parents and classified staff. The TBTs consist of teaching teams of 4-6 staff members at individual grade or subject area department levels (OLAC, 2008).

The teams mentioned above are used to gather district data on student performance, district demographics, and policies and procedures (OLAC, 2008). They are guided through this process using a web-based instrument called the decision framework. This database contains such school and district data as standardized test results, discipline and attendance reports, district resources, and teacher qualifications. This information is analyzed to help the DLT and BLTs set directions for the district and buildings (OLAC).

In addition to setting a vision, the OIP can be used as a tool for developing the teaching staff in the district. In this way the process of the OIP can be as important as the outcomes by providing a forum for discussion and helping to develop people as leaders. In order for the proper school climate to be established for this leadership development it is important that the DLT set the example for staff. They can accomplish this by calling for high academic and behavioral expectations for all students. At the same time, the DLT also needs to listen to the representatives from the BLTs and the TBTs, encouraging each of these levels of team to provide input to the district team for meaningful change. The input is the

used to set the course and focus for the school district in future years of planning (OLAC, 2008). This structure will also increase communication among the various buildings and departments within the district. Improved communication has been found to lessen the number of conflicts among members of the staff, reduce role ambiguity and role strain, and increase job satisfaction for teachers and administrators in a school setting (Pugh & Zhao, 2003). Taken together, these improvements will strengthen the commitment level of the teaching staff to the school district (Somech & Bogler, 2002).

The use of the quality improvement tools is vitally important to the work of the OIP and to the effective use of teams in a distributed leadership model. Such tools include analyzing data, collaborating as a team to recognize and solve problems, and developing and implementing goals supported by action plans for school improvement. When used effectively, these tools not only help the school improvement process but also involve key components of the staff in the decision making (Simmons, 2006). Once the staff sees the benefits, they continue to expand the application of the team process, and over time the use of district and building leadership teams to recognize and solve school problems becomes part of the way the district operates on a daily basis. Due to staff members' increased involvement in setting the district or building agenda, the cooperation and responsibility levels for making sure that the plan are carried is dispersed throughout the organization.

In order for both the planning and then implementation of the OIP to happen, it is best for the DLT and BLTs to meet regularly, at least on a monthly basis. It is suggested that these two teams be made up of 10 – 15 members all of whom need to have a stake in this building or in the district, depending upon the team on which they are serving. The members of both the DLT and the BLTs should include those in formal leadership positions, teachers,

support staff, parents, and community members. These teams are instructed to put together a plan aimed at improving the academic and cultural aspects of the district or building (OLAC, 2008). Essentially, this means creating a community of learners who have enough respect for one another to listen intently to each other in order to gain a better understanding of various perspectives from the staff.

After the original district plan is created by the DLT and the individual building plans by the BLTs, the primary task for of these teams shift from goal setting to reviewing the data related to student achievement. It is up to each of these teams to continuously evaluate the progress of the district and buildings based upon data collected from students' performance and reflect on district action plans and goals. In this role the DLT and BLTs carry the responsibility of ensuring that district and building plans are being adhered to and that teacher and building level decisions are not being made in isolation (Dolan, 1994). From this monitoring and data collection process, the DLT also needs to develop a plan to communicate district direction to the staff, using the BLTs and TBTs to model the distributed leadership approach. This communication plan should include the actions plans for individual team work, the name or names of people responsible for oversight, and a timeline for implementation (Simmons, 2006).

### **Changing the Traditional Roles for Superintendents, Principals, and Teachers.**

As mentioned in the introduction, the organizational structure represented in the OIP is a change in the way school districts operate from a decision making and accountability perspective. School districts adopting this leadership approach no longer adhere to the top-down hierarchical structure with the superintendent and other administrators or the board of education solely responsible for the strategic decisions and setting the course for the district.

This does not mean districts are no longer in need of these administrative positions. On the contrary, they are as vital as ever in the success of districts, it is just that their role changes from oversight to facilitation (Marzano, 2003).

However, most school leaders do not understand this new role and are in need of additional training to understand their new work. Part of this change means moving school leaders away from their seemingly daily focus of being a manager which includes filling out paperwork and keeping the building running smoothly, to that of being a leader. The latter role is a person who is consistently engaged with the people who work in their building, orchestrating a culture of collaboration. This orchestration includes constant contact and ongoing conversations as well as organized meetings with staff about the carrying out team goals, strategies, and action plans. (Bolman & Deal, 2008)

Bollman and Deal (2008) continued by stating that the establishment of teams and the creation of this new role for school leaders will not guarantee organizational success for a school district. However, without the guidance and facilitation from effective leaders a distributed model cannot be successful either. This type of leader must understand that developing teams happens through the establishment of professional relationships with teachers. For Bollman and Deal a few key aspects of this relationship are that the principal or superintendent allows teachers the opportunity to have input on significant school issues, they promote cooperation among staff, and they do not seek to dominate the conversation about overall school or building direction. Instead, the modern school leaders are there to ask questions, be a resource for professional discussions, and challenge the status quo.

**Central Office Leadership.** Implementing a team approach requires uncompromising support from a school district's traditional school leadership. This includes both the district board of education and the superintendent. However, it falls to the superintendent to ensure the distributed leadership model is successfully put into practice. As previously noted by Marzano (2003), moving the decision making for the school district to a lower structural level will take a fundamental change in school governance. Evans (2008) reminds us that an understanding of the change process is important instituting any new initiative, including the implementation of a distributed leadership model. The literature suggests the following as possible supports central office administrators can use to implement the distributed leadership model.

One way to support the administrative and teaching staffs is to provide both team training and team building activities. These will help to strengthen specific skills for accomplishing assigned tasks and to provide the cohesiveness of the members working together on the team (Klein, DiazGranados, Salas, Burke, & Lyons 2009; Rentsch, Delise, Salas, & Letsky, 2010; Scribner et al, 2007). Team cohesiveness is recognized to be an important factor in job satisfaction and commitment among workers (Mathieu, 1991). This is also true among leaders in the school as Hulpia and Devos (2009) found that school leaders who perceived there was group cohesion among the leadership in the district had higher levels of job satisfaction. Another supportive measure from leadership is to allow shared planning of district goals, to communicate targets often, to ensure real collaboration among staff members takes place, and for leaders to model shared leadership in order to build trust by including all stakeholders in decision making (Poff & Parks, 2010).



All of these supports are needed in order to make the fundamental changes necessary to establish this new leadership model. The changes include the implementation of a culture of shared planning to create institutional goals, an increase in both internal and external communications and transparency, staff collaboration and mutual respect between management and workers, and allowance of more input from professional staff in regards to the distribution of district resources.

Much of the literature supports these assertions for successful implementation of a distributed model, however, it is important here to elaborate on the following characteristics. First, trust needs to be established in order to engage the teaching staff in a meaningful shared planning model. Part of the trust building is the dialogue that takes place around team activities like setting goals. Although goals are used for district improvement in a distributed leadership model and may even be used as a part of a staff evaluation system, accountability is not the primary objective for school improvement in this model. In fact, the current culture of accountability that includes teacher and school sanctions cannot coexist with a distributed leadership approach (Zepke, 2007). Instead, the school leadership needs to nurture a system where staff talents are allowed to develop and people in the organization are viewed as a resource. In this governance system central office personnel, building principals, teachers, and students are all expected to learn and improve by understanding why they were successful or unsuccessful through tracking of data used to measure established goals.

The second characteristic is closely associated with trust building and that is the ability to establish relationship among and between stakeholders in the organization. This is primarily the responsibility of those working in the central office. First, building strong ties with principals is essential and from there develop relationships among staff to establish

networks for continually communicating district goals effectively (Jones, 2009). These relationships will help provide the motivation for the staff to take on additional responsibility envisioned in a distributed leadership model. Further, Hargreaves' (2008) research indicated that strong relationships will make a working climate that is more conducive for district growth due to increased cohesiveness within the entire staff. Hiller et al. (2006) also points out that the trusting relationships among employees is the precursor needed to shift staff focus away from putting district goals ahead of individual performance to concentrating on grade level or department level goals. Again, this is a change away from individual accountability toward mutual responsibility leading to improvement of the district.

Additionally, these networks, when established throughout the district, allow for the exchange of information, informal influence among membership, and input and negotiation. This helps make everyone in the organization feel a part of the process, as though they have access to the leadership (Somech & Wenderow, 2006). Networks, teams, and relationships established at the district level also allow the leadership to communicate what they want building and teacher teams to accomplish which is an important aspect of successful use of teams. (Gates & Robinson, 2009; Scribner et al, 2007).

Third, the district leadership needs to ensure authentic collaboration takes place in the district. From a district leadership perspective, superintendents and boards of education may be tempted to look at the short-term impact of such investments as being very expensive. Collaboration is an investment in human capital to build the capacity of the entire organization (Gigante & Firestone, 2008). This investment may or may not yield immediate results. Getting teachers to collaborate is about the allocation of time as a resource. Building time into the teacher work schedules to allow them to construct and maintain these

relationships and discuss professional issues is an important aspect of distributing leadership (Gates & Robinson, 2009).

This investment in teams and collaboration however helps to break down the culture of autonomy prevalent in most schools today and in its place creates a culture more favorable to the distributed model. Collaboration in a team atmosphere gives teachers an avenue for questioning the status quo and teaching practices for themselves and colleagues, and helps them to view leadership activities as simply a normal part of the daily work (Murphy, Smylie, Mayrowetz, & Louis 2009). The larger the team that is created, the more time and structure needed for them to be successful in accomplishing identified objectives. This increased investment is offset by the opportunity to make use of a greater collective expertise involved in larger teams (Jones, 2009).

Communication and collaboration must also work in vertical directions on the hierarchical organizational chart. School leaders have to go beyond espousing distribution of power by allowing teachers to have a voice in the district direction and planning of long and short term goals. This is essential in instituting a distributed model (Gronn, 2008). Leaders who listen to staff ideas and recognize the skills that teachers bring to the district will build into the school organization the mutual respect necessary to establish and enhance a collaborative setting (Bogler & Somech, 2004). Increased communication will help to develop a new and more trusting relationship among the members of both management and teachers, which is conducive for personnel to be comfortable to take calculated risks required for organizational improvement (Stoll & Temperley, 2009). The use of teams was also found to provide a means of finding creative solutions to district problems if they were allowed to operate in the appropriate environment (Scribner et al., 2007).

In terms of building trust and modeling a distributed approach, the school superintendents should keep in mind that teachers working in high achieving schools that have a distributed leadership model give greater amounts of credit to the district and building leadership for the success of the district (Leithwood & Mascall 2008). This research finding may seem like an oxymoron, however, it reinforces the importance of school leader's modeling distributed principles of leadership daily in order to trust in a collaborative work environment (Jones, 2009).

Finally, greater autonomy and more control over the financial resources of the school district must be given to the individual buildings as a resource to carry out both building and district goals. This includes truly operating in a site-based management system with principals being held accountable for their individual budget that includes virtually all aspects of school governance (Bogler & Somech, 2004).

**Role of Building Principals.** The building principal is often cast in the role of being the middle manager, attempting to appease the top leadership while meeting the needs of the teaching staff. In this role they are in a unique but key position to changing the current top down management system to a distributed model (Murphy et al. 2009).

The problem is that principals are often chosen because of their ability to sustain order in the classroom. They are accustomed to making decisions in a vacuum and not equipped to meet the challenges of implementing a collaborative model (Lindahl, 2008). Therefore, they need to have additional training to gain new insights and learning so they can support the teaching staff (Slater, 2008). To be successful these principals require new skills. In addition to collaboration techniques, they need to learn to be change agents, which include becoming facilitators of conversations and recognizing the importance of diversity. They

must also learn to foster an environment where the teaching staff is free to experiment. This involves a reversal of roles where they are not quick to give answers but instead ask questions of staff, giving parameters as guidance rather directives (Fullan, 1997). Finally, the principal must have a commitment to increase staff participation in meaningful areas of policies and school governing structure (Marzano, 2003). All of these together can help the principal to lead the school to a new environment, one that is focused on new ideas for improving the school or district and coincide with increased staff participation.

According to Spillane et al. (2007) there is a wide variation among administrators in the amount and types of situations that allows teachers to be involved in the decision making and leadership process. The majority of principals share their leadership most often in making decisions about professional development opportunities or about decisions involving instruction and curriculum. Principals tend to hold on to leadership in the traditional administrative tasks such as hiring and assigning staff.

A solution offered for helping administrators to install a distributed model is to make use of teacher leadership positions, types of teacher coaches. Teacher-leader roles are filled with specially trained teachers whose task is to aide in the training of colleagues on the work of collaboration and teamwork. These positions can be helpful to building principals, allowing them to continue to focus on daily administrative tasks of running the building, while the teacher-leaders concentrates on implementing a distributed model with its new, varied, and complex tasks. There is research to suggest that this structure can work as long as the district and building leadership offers their full support in time and follow through (Gigante & Firestone, 2008). However, the responsibilities for change ultimately lie with the building administrator for making the necessary adjustments for long-term change.

In addition to the skills needed to bring about change, principals also need to recognize their responsibilities to staff in the development of teams within the building. One of the responsibilities principals have is to understand teachers' need to learn new skills in order to function in the distributed leadership work environment (Murphy et al., 2009). It is up to the principal to provide support in the way of knowledge, time, and resources to develop teacher capacity in order to participate.

A second responsibility for the principals is to communicate to their teams the types of problems the school faces. To accomplish this, the principal need not only have a working knowledge of the problems but also has to understand the types of solutions they will need. This understanding of the problem and solution will dictate the task they are asking teachers and teacher teams to accomplish. Some school problems have solutions that can readily be known like the creation of a master schedule. Other problems such as increasing student achievement on standardized assessments or ways to get more parental involvement in the school may need new and creative solutions. The latter is the focus of the distributed leadership model and typically the solution sought requires more autonomy be given when using the team approach (Gates & Robinson, 2009). The principal has to demonstrate expertise in aligning mission and autonomy to allow the team to function optimally while providing additional support in order for the team to identify creative solutions (Scribner et al., 2007).

The third responsibility is the establishment of relationships necessary for proper a team culture to develop within the school (Hiller et al., 2006). Establishing more trusting relationships among staff at the building level is helpful in creating a team approach to leadership. Building relationships breaks down traditional barriers like age, experience,

position, and even subject areas in developing teams. Solid relationship among teaching colleagues and between teachers and building administrators helps the whole organization to gain knowledge and the ability to learn from each other. This increased interaction in the workplace creates an atmosphere where teachers have a greater appreciation for the skills colleagues bring to the entire organization (Stoll & Temperley, 2009).

Further, support for the distributed model can be grown exponentially when principals develop a high level of quality relationships among staff. When staff members have a positive view of the building principals there also exist increased expectations from those teachers of greater participation in leadership activities. Unfortunately, the opposite is also true as a low level quality of relationship between principals and staff members leads to teachers' perceptions of leadership as being directive (Somech & Wenderow, 2006).

Finally, the fourth responsibility of the building principal is to gain a greater understanding of the financial resources of the school district, and to have increased site based management and control of resources at the building level. Principals should not have total and absolute control over all aspects of the budgets, but rather should share this responsibility with teacher leaders who are given the opportunity to provide input through the BLTs and TBTs. Through this process the principal models the distribution of leadership and the building gains autonomy from the central office to make decisions that best meet the needs of students (Ouchi, 2004).

**Role of teachers.** In the distributed leadership model of school governance, teachers are being asked to be part of the decision making process by sharing the responsibility of exercising authority with administrators and other teachers (Gigante & Firestone, 2008). For most teachers this form of leadership represents a new approach, a stepping away from the

traditional top down management and leadership styles used in the past. (Stoll & Temperley, 2009)

The distributed leadership model is being employed by school districts primarily through the use teams to help make district decisions (Gigante & Firestone, 2008). There certainly is growing support for empowering teachers to develop greater individual capacity and to work collectively as part of a team (Stoll & Temperley, 2009). Increased development of the teaching staff is in reaction to perceptions that top down leadership has failed to meet the needs of students, combined with a conviction that there is untapped potential for organizational growth in developing teachers and other subordinates, making use of their collective talents using teams (Hargreaves & Fink, 2008).

To accomplish the tasks being asked of them, teachers need to understand the importance of leadership and its impact on student learning (Stoll & Temperley, 2009). There is more to the educational process than what goes on inside the classroom. To successfully implement a distributed leadership approach teachers need to broaden their overall perspectives. They need to see leadership activities as part of their everyday work. Just like having solid knowledge of content and pedagogy taking on leadership roles, whether that means being an active part of a team or in an individual role, is just good teaching (Murphy et al., 2009).

In response to this need for a greater understanding of the complexities of leadership, and in order to be a functioning part of the staff, it becomes the responsibility of each teacher to be engaged in team leadership training. Training needs to focus on enhancing both the personal and professional growth of the teaching staff (Scribner et al., 2007). Research suggests that professional development is critical for schools to improve, even when the



district in which the teacher is assigned ascribes to the traditional hierarchical model of leadership. If teachers are committed to building their capacity as educators, they can still have an impact on any system that makes use of teams. They should not discount the power of the team, and in this sense they can have a positive impact on the culture of the district (Hargreaves & Fink, 2008).

The problem is that teachers have not been trained to work in a collaborative way. As a result, this change in governance will tend to move them out of their comfort zone. Indeed, the teachers' inability to accept authority and adapt to the team structure of decision making is one of the identified barriers to the successful implementation of a distributed leadership plan. Teachers often are not being able to give up individual control in their classroom in order to gain a consensus on issues from discipline to curriculum to scheduling. Related to this barrier is the feeling among veteran staff that views non-instructional time as being wasteful and off the task of teaching. The solution to this dilemma would take an additional literature review, but suffice it to say that a possible answer showing promise is for leadership to focus on students and what is best for them rather than what the teachers' needs may be (Simmons, 2006).

We have seen that the present system of expecting sustained school improvement with initiatives coming from the top has not worked to improve schools. Although school improvement is recognized as a long and difficult process, the development of the capacity of teachers, principals, and others in the school system in a team leadership approach may hold the key to organizational growth. Developing capacity is best accomplished through collaboration, asking for teacher input, and sharing of the decision making in the district as a means for true commitment and sustained feelings of empowerment from these employees.

Principals and teachers generally need and want a greater amount of professional input. This input may be more important than money in motivating them to accomplish the task of continuous school improvement. They want to be empowered to provide the type of educational experience they know will work. As for implementing the change process, it is easy to visualize that greater teacher and principal input in the leadership process will naturally lead to greater ownership of the results (Aitken & Aitken, 2008).

### **Impact on Student Achievement**

A growing amount of empirical evidence is emerging on the impact of leadership on student growth and achievement. These data have helped both researchers and practicing leaders to better understand the important role leadership plays in school improvement initiatives (Heck & Hallinger, 2009). In the midst of this understanding there is increasing evidence that supports the distributed leadership model over the traditional hierarchical model for instituting school reforms (Scribner et al., 2007; Hargreaves, 2008).

Heck & Hallinger (2009) has shown that a distributed leadership model in the school can be directly and positively related to the change in academic capacity of the staff. In addition, distributed leadership has been significantly related to growth rates in student achievement scores. Finally, teachers who have been empowered in the workplace also feel better about their abilities, leading to additional indirect increases on capacity and growth in student achievement.

Leithwood and Mascall (2008) found that leadership practices involving teams had a statistically significant impact on teacher variables that would likely have an indirect impact on student achievement: (a) workplace environment, a moderate to large impact; (b) teacher capacity; and (c) teacher motivation having moderate effect sizes. Leithwood and Mascall

concluded that higher motivational levels were indicated by those employees who worked in teams, and that higher performing schools were more likely to distribute leadership among stakeholders like parents, students, and staff through the use of building or district teams. These relationships have also shown to have a positive impact on student achievement.

Somech and Wenderow (2006) concluded that an organizational model that allowed for increased participation had a positive relationship on the performance of teachers and the students they served. Somech and Wenderow's research focused on schools that endorsed greater input and decision making by teaching staff in the areas of instruction, the disciplining of students, and providing a favorable educational environment for students with identified learning problems. This organizational design, which gave more responsibility for decisions to the teaching staff, was shown to have a positive relationship with student achievement.

For Simmons (2006), the development of this capacity among staff gave them the ability to work smarter through the collective work of teams. The teacher-based data team became the key agency that led to school improvement. The professional lives of employees improved through the creation of a culture where decisions were made in the trenches by those implementing the policies, and through needed professional development and training to support a process of continuous improvement for all staff. In addition, team structures enabled the organization to create leadership at all levels. Leaders had a greater concept of the positive impact that shared decision making had on their organizations, especially when high performing and well trained teams were established and combined with an accountability system for benchmarking school improvement.

## Summary

Team building and the development of leadership at all levels of the school organization offer a real chance at reforming the modern educational system. The OIP, authored and developed by the members of OLAC, has made use of principles of the distributed leadership model. This structure could offer the State of Ohio a real opportunity for school reform and sustained growth.

Distributed leadership can directly and indirectly impacted school districts. If implemented properly, the greatest area of impact may be in the form of enhancing the commitment and empowerment levels of both teachers and administrators. The research in this review indicated that a distributed leadership model increased the feelings of empowerment in teaching staff leading to higher levels of commitment of the professional staff. The higher levels of commitment and greater feelings of empowerment can lead to teachers taking charge of their own professional growth and may even improve student achievement in the classrooms. The research also suggested that commitment levels of staff to their school districts and buildings, being a team player, and working toward accomplishing organizational goals, may also be increased.

Traditional professional development has been aimed at compliance from teachers. (Elmore, 2004) These programs have neither asked for teacher input nor expected them to be a part of the learning process. Such use of this traditional model of school improvement has led to professional development for educators that was well meaning and well thought out, even well researched, but has failed time after time. Initiatives that have been implemented from the top management down to the teachers with expectations for institutionalizing them without asking for teacher involvement cannot succeed (Fullan, 1997).

It is clear from the literature that these managerial mandates and reforms may induce some short-term changes and even small amounts of growth. However, in order for the school organization to sustain results over time, the power cannot be centralized. The development of a shared vision, the encouragement of collaboration, and the provision of relevant data to make informed decisions among all staff in a culture that allows for experimentation are the most promising aspects of the distributed leadership model operationalized in the OIP.

Research was needed to determine if the OIP as outlined by OLAC was an effective distributed leadership approach. There was a need to better understand if decision making was actually distributed to the point where teachers feel empowered. Also, based upon teachers' perceptions, a better understanding was also needed in regards to any relationship that existed between perceived empowerment and the level of commitment teachers had for the school district.

Specifically, this research study was aimed at testing whether or not the OIP empowers the staff. Further, the research also tested whether or not the OIP increases commitment of the staff to school district improvement goals in situations where teachers were provided an increased level of participation in the decision making process through the use of district teams. The questions guiding this research were as follows:

1. What is the impact of the OIP on commitment levels for staff engaged in the process?

2. Is the OIP associated with increased feelings of empowerment for the teaching staff?
3. Do educators in the OIP districts perceive that there are effective teams in their school districts?

## CHAPTER III

### **Introduction**

The purpose of this study was to examine aspects of the Ohio Improvement Process (OIP) to determine if this model of distributed leadership is effective in the empowerment of the staff leading to greater levels of commitment to the district. A comparison was made between teaching staffs from school districts that have engaged in the OIP and those school districts that have not implemented this process. Both teacher and administrator responses to a survey were sought to determine their feelings of empowerment and the levels of commitment to their school district.

Data were collected in the Spring of 2013. A compilation of questions were used from three different survey instruments to measure the level of decision making and empowerment and the level of organizational commitment on the part of teachers and administrators in the study. Additionally, among those districts having implemented the OIP I used the survey instrument to measure the effectiveness of work teams among teachers engaged in this process. The collection of questions into a single survey instrument can be found in Appendix B. I used this survey to obtain quantitative data from participants. Demographic data were also collected to identify possible differences among various groups within the school populations surveyed. The survey instrument contains the demographic information that was collected from participants.

Surveys are a time tested way of gathering pertinent information regarding feelings, attitudes, and behaviors of people (Dillman, Smyth, & Christian, 2009). Both a printed paper survey and an electronic version were made available via the internet for distribution to the

survey sample. The decision to use one version or the other within a school district was made in consultation with the central office of the participating school districts.

According to Dillman et al. (2009) giving different modes of the same survey can increase response rates. Where paper survey responses were gathered from a participating school, the responses were entered into an electronic format by hand. For reliability, all data entries were double-checked for accuracy, and the data were analyzed using SPSS.

### **Population**

The population of this study was both primary and secondary teachers and administrators in medium and small sized school districts in the State of Ohio. The survey was administered within the schools in the sample of districts chosen to participate in the research study.

### **Sample**

The first priority was to identify the school districts that had yet to implement the OIP. These school districts were targeted first because there were fewer schools that had not implemented the improvement process than those that had instituted the OIP. One small school and one medium size school that had not participated in the OIP were chosen randomly from among the lists of districts using information provided from the Ohio Department of Education (ODE). School size was determined using data generated by the Ohio High School Athletic Association (OHSAA). This association has routinely ranked schools according to size for decades and currently has rankings based upon size.

Once a small and a medium size district were selected, school leaders were contacted to discuss possible participation in the survey. After permission was secured from a targeted,



non-OIP participating district, I entered the name of this district into a data base that was already established by the ODE. The ODE has analyzed various characteristics of schools through the collection of demographic data using state mandated data collection instruments such as the Education Management Information System (EMIS) and the Student Information System (SIS). Through the use of a complicated mathematical calculation (see Appendix A) involving such district characteristics as size, percentage of economically disadvantaged students, population density, race and ethnicity, and non-agricultural and non-residential tax capacity, the department can list up to ten similar school districts for any single district entered into the database (ODE, Methodology of Similar Districts). Rudestam and Newton (2007) cited two reasons for using such secondary databases via the internet in dissertation research. One is that in many cases the data is of higher quality than could be generated by most graduate students and secondly, the use of such data can save valuable time and money.

By accessing this database I was able to generate lists of school districts that were similar to the two non-OIP participating school districts, one small and one medium size. From that list of similar districts I cross-checked data gathered from districts that have completed the OIP. A comparison was made between districts that had and districts that had not implemented the OIP.

It is recognized that the more the treatment (OIP) is isolated, meaning that the participants share common characteristics and had a similar experience in the implementation of the process in the study, the higher the validity (Fraas, 2008). One approach to control for implementation of the treatment was to obtain verification from the district's superintendent that key components of the OIP were used by the school districts' implementation of the OIP. To accomplish this, I provided the superintendents an affidavit to sign indicating their

knowledge that their district had met the criteria established by OLAC for successful OIP implementation (see Appendix C). The common characteristics identified include the creation of a collaborative structure using district, building, and teacher-based teams. These teams use data from the implementation, management, and monitoring (IMM) tool which contains the decision framework (DF) to help make instructional decisions. From these data the district creates one board-approved plan with allocated resources and support that guides all district instructional practices with focused goals. In addition, the teacher-based teams monitor progress toward the desired outcomes with reports provided back to the building and district leadership on a quarterly basis (Ohio Department of Education, 2008).

The superintendent of each targeted non-OIP participating district was contacted to make arrangements for discussion about participation in this research study. Dillman et al. (2009) suggested that personalization of the survey can greatly increase response rates and thereby decrease measurement error. Within these relatively small populations of teachers in participating districts, an attempt was made to survey all staff rather than conduct a random sample survey (Dillman et al.).

### **Instrumentation**

A combination of three different instruments were used to measure teacher perception of empowerment, commitment of teachers to their school organization, and the perception teachers have about their leadership teams.

First, the School Participation Empower Scale (SPES) developed by Short and Rinehart (1992) was used to assess teacher perception of their empowerment within the organization. The internal reliability for the SPES was measured by a split half reliability test using the Spearman-Brown formula. This test of reliability yielded coefficients of .89

for decision making, .83 for professional growth, .81 for autonomy, and .82 for impact. The validity for the SPES was established by administration of the test in three separate studies totaling 486 educators. Additional comparisons were made between responses from two separate reporting schools; one having participated in a project (similar to the OIP) designed to increase empowerment and another school that had no treatment or intervention.

Second, Mowday, Porter, and Steers' (1982) Organizational Commitment Questionnaire (OCQ) was used to measure the commitment levels of the teacher to the school district. The internal reliability of the OCQ was measured by Cronbach's Alpha; the rating using this scale for public employees was established at ( $\alpha = .90$ ). The validity of this instrument was originally established by testing 2563 employees of which 569 were public employees. Further investigation was completed to test responses to earlier instruments that measured aspects of job-related attitudes. Satisfactory levels of discriminant validity were attained using these methodologies.

The third instrument that was used was the Distributed Leadership Inventory (DLI) developed recently by Hulpia, Devos, and Rosseel (2009). This instrument was used to measure the perceptions of teachers regarding the performance of building level and district level teams. The reliability of this instrument was measured by using Cronbach's Alpha, the coefficient rating using this scale had a range of ( $\alpha = .79$ ) to ( $\alpha = .93$ ) for questions concerning support and coherent leadership team. The validity of the DLI was established by testing it in Flemish schools, giving the instrument to 1522 participants that included administrators, teacher-leaders, and teachers.

### Survey Construction

The instrument used for collecting data in this study was compiled from the utilization of three separate surveys. Each of the three instruments used deal with specific aspects of the research study. These include empowerment, commitment, and team dynamics for those districts that have implemented the OIP. The questions used were tested on teachers from various small and medium sized schools throughout the Northwest and West Central Ohio region for understanding related to empowerment, commitment, and team dynamics. From these data language was added for clarification which is in *italics* in each of the questions from survey shown in Appendix B.

To measure empowerment the Short and Rinehart's (1992) School Participant Empowerment Scale (SPES) was used. The SPES is a 38 item instrument that is broken down into six subscales of empowerment. For this research study, I chose to focus on only two of the areas, using questions from the decision making and impact sections of the survey. Questions within these sections were chosen to measure the attitudes of respondents about what Somech and Bogler (2002) would describe as traditional managerial decisions and the perceived impact teachers have on these decisions.

To measure the commitment levels teachers have toward the district, questions were selected from Mowday, Porter, and Steers' (1982) instrument named the Organizational Commitment Questionnaire (OCQ). This instrument was selected because the primary focus is the measuring the organizational commitment levels of employees to their prospective employers.

The Distributed Leadership Inventory (DLI) (Hulpia et al., 2009) was also chosen to help me understand the internal working of teams within districts that had instituted a

distributed leadership model using teams. These data were intended to help me understand the effectiveness of the distributed model as operationalized by the OIP and draw additional conclusions about the possible link between empowerment and organizational commitment for teachers.

The last section of the survey contained questions related to the personal demographic characteristics of the respondents. These data was compiled in order to summarize the aggregate characteristics for the sample population. This data set was important for making statistical comparisons comparing empowerment and organizational commitment levels and the personal characteristics of tenure in the district, overall teacher tenure, age, and education.

Permission was obtained for the use of the SPES, the DLI, and the OCQ instruments. All permissions were received via email (see Appendix D for permission communication).

### **Data Collection**

Quantitative data were collected using methods prescribed by Dillman, et al. (2009) for electronic survey instrument design and distribution to the targeted population. These methods were used in order to increase response rates and decrease the chances of measurement error common when dealing with small populations like the four schools in this study.

A quasi-experimental post-test design was used to distinguish differences among teachers' perceptions. Demographic data were also gathered to further analyze experience levels, age, and gender as factors impacting the perceptions of teachers on the school's team performance, teachers' commitment level, and their perception of empowerment within the school organization.

Teachers in four separate school districts were given surveys in one of two formats. I preferred to distribute the instruments at a teachers' meeting either myself or by the building administrator. Surveys were collected at the same meeting following a period of reasonable time for all to complete the survey. Using this method, a member of the teaching staff was asked to collect the surveys in a central location where they put the completed survey forms into an envelope and sealed for review at a later time. A second method was employed when the preferred method was not available. In this method the surveys were distributed in an electronic format using a district wide distribution list and sent from the desk of the superintendent. A second survey was distributed using a building distribution list originating from the principal's office computer. This personalized method of distribution utilizing administration within the district was aimed at increasing response rates (Dillman et al., 2009).

Instructions for filling out the survey instrument and a confidentiality statement were distributed with the paper copies when using the primary method of data collection. In addition both written and verbal statements were provided indicating that participation in this survey was strictly voluntary. When the secondary email delivery system was used, instructions for filling out the survey were included along with a confidentiality statement and directions that instructed the recipient that participation in the survey was voluntary. This information was provided in the email sent to all teachers in participating districts.

The survey instrument measured teacher perception of their empowerment, the commitment levels of these same teachers to their school districts, and perceptions of teachers on the performance of their own teams as well as the overall performance of school leadership teams.

### Data Analysis

I used questions from three separate instruments to conduct the survey (See Appendix B). The questions in the survey originated from the School Participation Empower Scale (SPES) used to assess teacher perception of their empowerment within the organization in questions 1 – 3 and 6. The Organizational Commitment Questionnaire (OCQ) was utilized to measure the commitment levels of teachers in questions 4 and 5. The Distributed Leadership Inventory (DLI) was also used to measure the perceptions of teachers regarding the performance of building level and district level teams in questions 9 and 10.

The dependent variables for the study were commitment levels and feelings of empowerment of the teaching staffs. The OIP was the independent variable. Two medium and two small schools were used (see Table 3.1); one district in each category (small and medium school district) had implemented the OIP.

Table 3.1

#### *School District Size*

School District	OIP/Non-OIP	Population of Students Grades 9-11	
Designation			
District 1	Non- OIP	216	Small
District 2	OIP	216	Small
District 3	Non-OIP	442	Medium
District 4	OIP	539	Medium

Note. Students in grades 9-11 based upon October, 2010 count (<http://ohsaa.org/members>)

A five category Likert scale was developed and used to record responses from participants. The categories used were; strongly agree, agree, disagree, strongly disagree, and no opinion/no observation. Comparison between variables was made by using a Chi-Square. Pallant (2010, p. 217) pointed out that the minimum response criterion for Chi-Square tests is that 80% of the cells have a frequency of responses of at least five. In order to reach this minimum level using relatively small sample sizes Pallant suggested collapsing like responses to increase cell frequency. I chose to combine positive (strongly agree and agree) and negative responses (strongly disagree and disagree) to achieve the needed frequency levels.

To select my sample, I used the Ohio Department of Education (ODE) similar district lists in an attempt to hold constant such variables among the school districts as size, percentage of economically disadvantaged students, population density, race and ethnicity, and non-agricultural and non-residential tax capacity. Appendix A demonstrates the mathematical formula used from data entries of all public schools in Ohio. With this formula ODE can produce lists of ten similar school districts for any one district. (ODE, Methodology of Similar Districts) I found a small and a medium district (District 2 and District 4, Table 1) and put each into the ODE database and found non-OIP participating districts. From these lists I found one small and one medium district (District 1 and District 3, table 1) that had not implemented the OIP willing to participate in this study.

A posttest, quasi-experimental research design was used to collect data measuring the impact of the OIP on teachers in similar school districts. The Chi-Square test for independence was used to make comparisons between the OIP (the independent variable) and teachers' commitment levels and feelings of empowerment (the dependent variables).



### **Summary of Methodology**

This chapter explained the quantitative methods employed to measure the commitment and empowerment levels of teachers and administrators. A posttest design was used to compare medium and small school districts in the State of Ohio that had implemented the OIP to districts that had not implemented the OIP. A survey was given to teachers and administrators in each district. The Chi-Square test for independence was used to analyze the data gathered from the questions in order to make the comparisons.

## CHAPTER IV

### **Introduction**

The purpose of this study was to examine the impact of implementing a distributed leadership model, operationalized in the Ohio Improvement Process (OIP), on the perceptions of school district teachers. A survey was used to measure teacher commitment levels to the district where they work and to determine if a relationship exists between the use of the OIP and teaching staffs' feelings of empowerment in the decision-making process. The study was conducted in two small and two medium sized school districts in rural Ohio. The questions used to guide this study were as follows:

1. What is the impact of the OIP on commitment levels for staff engaged in the process?
2. Is the OIP associated with increased feelings of empowerment for the teaching staff?
3. Do educators in the OIP districts perceive that there are effective teams in their school districts?

The OIP was developed by the Ohio Leadership Advisory Council (OLAC) as a means of improving school systems by creating multiple levels of leadership (OLAC, 2008). This improvement model has since been adopted by the Ohio Department of Education (ODE) under the title of the Ohio Improvement Process (OIP) as part of their supplemental education services provided to low performing districts in the state. It remains an important component for districts and schools that have not met the standards of the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act under the differentiated accountability proposal the Ohio Department of Education provided to the United States Department of Education ([www.ode.gov](http://www.ode.gov)).

## Results

I used a posttest, quasi-experimental research design to measure the impact of the OIP on teachers in similar school districts. I distributed surveys to collect data from teachers in both small and medium districts. The response rate was 166 out of 312, or 53.2%. Responses to each question by school district are presented in Appendix E. I compared relationships between the independent variable, the implementation of the OIP in school districts, and the dependent variables, teachers' commitment levels and feelings of empowerment. I used the Chi-Square test for independence to make the comparisons between these variables.

Pallant (2010, p. 220) suggested that the phi coefficient value be employed to measure effect size using Cohen's criteria for determining overall relationship with a small effect being .10, a medium effect size being .30, and a large effect size being .50. An alpha level of .05 was also used to determine the statistical significance of the relationship between variables. Answers to each of the research questions presented in the study were arrived at using data collected with the aid of the quantitative analysis tool, Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) 20.0. The research questions and answers follow

1. What is the impact of the OIP on commitment levels for staff engaged in the process?

Data were collected on teacher commitment levels from survey questions numbered 4 and 5 which were administered in both OIP and non-OIP districts. The data were analyzed using Chi-Square test for independence. The results are demonstrated in Table 4.1 showing no statistically significant difference ( $\alpha$  of .05) in the commitment levels among staff members between the OIP and non-OIP districts.

Table 4.1

Crosstabulation of Staff Commitment and OIP and Non-OIP School Districts

Questions	OIP and Non-OIP School District:		$\chi^2$	p-value	phi
	% agree or strongly agree, OIP districts	% agree or strongly agree, NON- OIP districts			
Q4. I am willing to put in a great deal of effort beyond that normally expected in order to help this organization to be successful.	93.70%	94.40%	0.31	0.86	0.04
Q5. This organization really inspires the very best in me in the way of job performance.	58.90%	66.20%	1.07	0.59	0.08

\*p ≤ .05

In all schools tested, the teaching staff believed they were willing to put a great deal of effort into the teaching process, which was question 4. There were 164 participants who responded to the statement presented with 156 or 95.1% of the respondents in agreement or strongly in agreement. However, when asked in question 5 if the organization inspires them to do their best only 103 of 163 or 63.2% of participants answering question 5 said that they agreed or strongly agreed with that statement (see Appendix E, tables E4 and E5).

Interestingly, many non-OIP district teachers responded in question 7 that their district had an organized team to lead in one or more areas (see Appendix E, table E7). I analyzed all responses regardless of OIP status of the district by exploring the association between the establishment of teams to lead the district (question 7) and commitment levels of teachers to the district (question 5). I found that teachers who perceived there were district

team structures had statistically significantly higher levels of commitment; see Table 4.2 below. In other words, they felt more inspired to do their best for the school district when a team structure was in place in their school to allow them to help lead. The relationship was statistically significant at the .05 level, and the phi of .25 was close to what would be considered a medium effect size.

Table 4.2

Crosstabulation of Staff Commitment in Districts with and without Organized Team Structure

Questions	District Team Structure		$\chi^2$	p-value	phi
	% answering Q7 Yes, District has Team Structure	% answering Q7 District has NO Team Structure			
Q4. I am willing to put in a great deal of effort beyond that normally expected in order to help this organization to be successful.	92.9%	100%	1.90	0.39	0.11
Q5. This organization really inspires the very best in me in the way of job performance.	66.4%	40.0%	10.41	0.006*	0.25

\*p ≤ .05

The data show that teachers generally feel that they are committed to their school organization (see Appendix E, Table E4). However, teachers who perceive that their districts have a team structure in place for leading the district feel a greater sense of inspiration to work in that district. In this correlational study, the data suggest that it is not the OIP that makes a difference in getting teachers more committed to their schools but it may be the team structure for leading that makes them more committed.

2. Is the OIP associated with increased feelings of empowerment for the teaching staff?

Four questions on the survey presented to educators had statements related to measuring their feelings of empowerment, questions 1 – 3 and question 6. I collected and analyzed data for OIP and non-OIP districts. A Chi-Square test for independence was used in the analysis with the results indicating that only question 1 showed a statistically significant difference between OIP and non-OIP districts. Ironically, it was the non-OIP educators who were more likely to feel empowered. The statistical results for all four questions on empowerment are shown in Table 4.3 below.

Table 4.3

Crosstabulation of Staff Empowerment in OIP and Non-OIP School Districts

Questions	OIP and Non-OIP School District:		$\chi^2$	p-value	phi
	% agree or strongly agree, OIP districts	% agree or strongly agree, NON- OIP districts			
Q1. I perceive that I have the opportunity to influence others.	89.5%	94.4%	6.12	.047*	0.19
Q2. I am a decision maker.	89.5%	87.3%	5.92	0.052	0.19
Q3. Principals, other teachers, and school personnel solicit my advice.	65.3%	81.7%	5.52	0.06	0.18
Q6. It is clear where members of the teaching staff are authorized to help implement a vision.	56.8%	50.7%	2.08	0.35	0.11

\*p ≤ .05

Additional tests to find association among the statements were conducted. I found, as in commitment levels, that there was a relationship between the implementation of teams and some aspects of the staff's feeling of empowerment. The responses from both OIP and non-OIP participants from the statement in question 7 that they had an *organized team structure* in their school district were cross tabulated with the questions in the survey related to measuring empowerment (Questions 1 – 3 and 6). The results demonstrated a statistically significant relationship existed between the perception of the education staff that the district had an organized team structure and the aspect of empowerment that authorized teachers to implement the district's vision as shown in Table 5 below. Phi of .22 indicates a small to medium effect size.

Table 4.4

Crosstabulation of Staff Empowerment in Districts with and without Organized Team Structure

Questions	District Team Structure		$\chi^2$	p-value	phi
	% answering Q7 Yes, District has Team Structure	% answering Q7 District has NO Team Structure			
Q1. I perceive that I have the opportunity to influence others.	92.1%	92.0%	0.44	0.8	0.05
Q2. I am a decision maker.	87.9%	92.0%	1.18	0.55	0.09
Q3. Principals, other teachers, and school personnel solicit my advice.	75.0%	60.0%	2.42	0.3	0.12
Q6. It is clear where members of the teaching staff are authorized to help implement a vision.	58.6%	32.0%	8.07	.02*	0.22

\* $p \leq .05$

The data for the second research question are very similar to the data for the first. Most educators from both OIP and non-OIP districts in this study had feelings of empowerment in their positions (see Appendix E, Tables E1, E2, E3, and E6). The results of an analysis of the data indicated that the OIP did not have a significant association with these perceptions. However, the results suggest that the staff in districts that had a team structure in place were more likely to feel empowered in implementing a school vision than staff that did not recognize there was a team structure for leading the district.



3. Do educators in the OIP districts perceive that there are effective teams in their school districts?

This is a complicated question to answer. On the surface, the results of this study have shown there is not a significant difference between OIP and non-OIP educators in the commitment and empowerment levels. In addition, the perception of the educators surveyed did not show a statistically significant difference between participants from OIP versus non-OIP districts in their responses to question 9 about well-functioning teams, as demonstrated in table 4.5.

Table 4.5

Staff Recognition of a Well-Functioning Team Structure – OIP and non-OIP

Question	OIP District	Non-OIP District	$\chi^2$	p-value	phi
Q9. There are well-functioning <i>district, building, and teacher</i> leadership teams in our school.	70.8%	72.5%	.28	.87	.04

\*p  $\leq$  .05

If I were to stop there, then the answer to the research question would be negative, that the OIP does not make for a more effective team structure in districts where it has been implemented. However, the following paragraphs explain a more in-depth look at this question.

I did not expect that some of the non-OIP educators responded to the statements that their school districts had a team structure in question 7. Obviously, they thought they had some type of team structure in their respective schools even though they had not participated in the OIP. Of the 71 non-OIP participants 51 stated they had an organized team structure

operating in their district. These data suggest that there had been attempts by administrators to institute aspects of a distributed leadership model involving teams. In OIP districts, 89 of the 94 educators indicated that their district had a team structure. I conducted a cross tabulation of responses to statement 7 in the survey with OIP and non-OIP districts. The results of the Chi-Square test for independence revealed a statistically significant difference between participants in OIP and non-OIP districts, with a medium effect size of  $\phi = .32$ , summarized in Table 4.6. More educators recognized that there was a team structure in OIP districts than in non-OIP districts.

Table 4.6

## Staff Recognition of an Organized Team Structure – OIP and non-OIP

Question	OIP District	Non-OIP District	$\chi^2$	p	phi
Q7. The school in which I work has an organized team structure for leading the district in one or more areas.	Yes – 89 No – 5 Pct. – 94.7%	Yes – 51 No – 20 Pct. – 71.8%	16.43	.000*	.32

\* $p \leq .05$

I conducted further analysis by cross tabulating question 9 to all the statements in questions 1 – 6 dealing with empowerment and commitment. Question 9 asked participants if there were *well-functioning* team structures in the district where they were working. Participants that answered no to question 7 (Appendix E, Table E7) did not have access to question 9 (Table 4.6) in the survey, so their responses were not calculated. This allowed me to analyze the association between the perception of educators in both OIP and non-OIP districts that there was a well-functioning team structure in place in the district with levels of

commitment and empowerment. I found that there was a statistically significant association between question 9 and questions 3, 5, and 6. The results are summarized in Tables 4.7 and 4.8 below, showing levels of commitment among educators with perceived well-functioning teams in Table 4.7, and demonstrating levels of staff empowerment in teachers that have the perception of a well-functioning team within their districts in Table 4.8.

Table 4.7

Crosstabulation of Staff Commitment in Districts having Well-Functioning Leadership Teams

Questions	% answering Q9 Yes, District has well-functioning Teams	% answering Q9 District has NO well-functioning Teams	$\chi^2$	p-value	phi
Q4. I am willing to put in a great deal of effort beyond that normally expected in order to help this organization be successful.	91.0%	97.0%	2.75	.60	.14
Q5. This organization really inspires the very best in me in the way of job performance. (Agree or Strongly Agree)	79.0%	39.4%	48.07	.00*	.59
Number of Respondents	100	33			

\* $p \leq .05$

Table 4.8

## Crosstabulation of Staff Empowerment in Districts having Well-Functioning Leadership Teams

Questions	% answering Q9 Yes, District has well-functioning Teams	% answering Q9 School has NO well-functioning Teams	$\chi^2$	p-value	phi
Q1. I perceive that I have the opportunity to influence others.	93.0%	87.9%	3.35	.50	.16
Q2. I am a decision maker.	91.0%	78.9%	3.94	.41	.17
Q3. Principals, other teachers, and school personnel solicit my advice.	80%	63.6%	16.46	.002*	.34
Q6. It is clear where members of the teaching staff are authorized to help implement a vision.	73.0%	21.2%	48.77	.000*	.59
Number of Respondents	100	33			

\*p ≤ .05

The data suggest that the OIP may increase the communication levels as seen in the results from cross tabulation of questions 3 and 9. Better communication may lead to a clearer understanding of roles within the district among teachers and between teachers and administrators in a team approach. The data also suggest that where an organized and identified team structure was used by the school district, teachers had increased feelings of inspiration for achieving their very best results.

The perception of a district's teaching staff that their district has a *well-functioning* team structure may be impacted by other factors within the control of decision-makers in a school district. One such factor was analyzed in the data by cross tabulating question 9 with question 10. The outcome of this analysis was that the perception of *well-functioning* teams was strongly associated with the teams supporting district goals at a statistically significant level in question 10. The effect size of the cross tabulation between questions 9 and 10 was very high at .72.

Table 4.9

Well-Functioning Teams and district goals.

Question	% answering Q9 Yes, District has well- functioning Teams	% answering Q9 School has NO well- functioning Teams	$\chi^2$	p-value	phi
Q10. The leadership, district, building, and teacher teams support the goals we like to attain.	90.8%	33.3%	71.66	.000*	.72

\*p ≤ .05

A cross tabulation was conducted between OIP and non-OIP districts and the amount of professional development that staff reported receiving in regards to the implementation of teams. Neither the OIP nor the non-OIP district teachers reported high rates of receiving at least three days of professional development. Among the staff in OIP districts 46.4% of the teachers reported receiving at three days of training but this was high compared to the 21.3% of non-OIP teachers. When I ran a chi-square test (see Table 11) on the data, it showed a

statistically significant correlation between districts that had implemented the OIP and a higher rate of offering staff at least three days of training.

Table 4.10

## Staff Professional Development – OIP and non-OIP

Question	OIP District	Non-OIP District	$\chi^2$	p-value	phi
Q11. How much professional development was provided to district employees related to utilizing district, building, and teacher teams in the school district?	3 or more days – 39 2 days or less – 45 Pct. – 46.4%	3 or more days – 10 2 days or less – 37 Pct. – 21.3%	8.143	.004*	.25
Number of Respondents	84	47			

\*p ≤ .05

A cross tabulation was completed exploring the relationship between question 9 and question 11. It was discovered that there was a statistically significantly higher association between teachers perception for well-functioning teams among staff who experienced a minimum of 3 days of professional development. Table 4.11 shows the results below.

Table 4.11

## Staff Professional Development – Well Functioning Teams

Question	% answering Q9 Yes, District has well- functioning Teams	% answering Q9 School has NO well- functioning Teams	$\chi^2$	p-value	phi
Q11. How much professional development was provided to district employees related to utilizing district, building, and teacher teams in the school district?	3 or more days – 42 2 days or less – 7 Pct. – 85.7%	3 or more days – 52 2 days or less – 30 Pct. – 63.4%	7.53	.006*	.24
Number of Respondents	49	82			

\*p ≤ .05

The data regarding level of experience in the profession and in the school district showed no statistically significant impact on any aspects of commitment, empowerment, or the perceived functioning of the teams in the districts. Also, there were no statistically significant associations found between commitment, empowerment, and team functioning and the level of education level completed.

### Summary

This study investigated the impact of implementing a distributed leadership model as operationalized in the OIP on school districts. I used questions from three separate instruments that were combined into one survey. This survey was used to gather data from educators in four school districts in West Central Ohio. There were a total of 166 educators

who participated in this study. The data were analyzed using the Chi-Square test for independence. Data were loaded into the SPSS 20.0 program to run cross tabulations of responses to questions posed in the survey instrument.

The first research asked the question, what is the impact of the OIP on commitment levels for staff engaged in process in districts where it is implemented? The results of the analysis suggested the OIP itself does not have a direct impact on the commitment levels of school districts. However, there is reason to believe from further analysis that the use of a team structure does inspire educators to do their best for the district. Thus there is empirical evidence to show that using the OIP team structure has an indirect impact on commitment levels of employees in school districts where it is implemented.

The second research question asked if the OIP was associated with increased feelings of empowerment for educators. The data indicated a similar result as was found from the first research question. That is, the OIP does not directly increase feelings of empowerment but there was evidence that suggested the use of an organized team structure in school districts is associated with the feelings of empowerment among educators.

Finally, the third research question investigated whether or not educators in OIP districts perceive that they have effective teams. The results of the data analysis did not indicate there was a direct association between well-functioning teams and OIP implementation in the school districts participating in the study. However, districts implementing the OIP appear to provide higher levels of training leading to a more positive perception of teams among teaching staff. Also the data suggested that there was a statistically significantly higher level of communication among teaching staff and between



teachers and administrators in districts that have instituted the OIP. This may also increase the effectiveness of the teams in the districts using the OIP.

There were no statistically significant differences found among OIP and non-OIP districts between the education level attained by staff and their perception on the effectiveness of teams, the staff commitment levels, and feelings of empowerment. The same can be said about the relationship between years of service and these three factors; empowerment, commitment, and the perception of team effectiveness in both OIP and non-OIP districts.

## CHAPTER V

### **Introduction**

The existing top down hierarchical approach to school leadership has not increased the effectiveness and output for school systems. Yet it seems that many of our present school systems continue to be steeped in this archaic approach (Hulpia & Devos, 2009). In the increasingly competitive world market a more advanced system of leadership is needed for schools. A style of leadership that can build leaders at multiple levels of the organization has shown great potential for sustained improvement, not just short term growth. This type of leadership looks to tap into the collective resources of the talent pool within the school organization in order to move the district forward. The distributed leadership model offers this form of leadership.

This study was designed to test whether or not the Ohio Improvement Process (OIP) has two important components of a distributed leadership model; the teaching staff feeling empowered by leadership to make decisions and a higher level of teacher commitment to the school district. A third variable was also tested to see if there was a perception of *well-functioning* teams operating in the district.

### **Review of Methodology**

Data were collected using questions from three different survey instruments. The surveys consisted of the School Participation Empower Scale (SPES) developed by Short and Rinehart (1992), Mowday, Porter, and Steers' (1982) Organizational Commitment Questionnaire (OCQ), and the third was the Distributed Leadership Inventory (DLI) developed by Hulpia, Devos, and Rosseel (2009). The SPES measures teacher perception of their empowerment within the organization. The OCQ was used to measure the commitment

levels of the teaching staff to the school district. Questions from the DLI were employed to measure the perceptions of teachers regarding the performance of district teams. Pertinent questions were selected from each of the three instruments and combined into one survey. This survey was distributed to four different schools, two having implemented the OIP and two that had not implemented the OIP. The survey consisted of 16 questions; four questions tested empowerment, two questions tested for commitment, four questions dealt with teams, one question was on the amount of training, and the final five questions asked for demographic information.

Dillman et al. (2009) pointed out that attitudes, behaviors, and feelings can be measured using survey instruments. These authors have made suggestions to increase the participation rates in gathering data. Two of these suggestions were used in the data collection process. One suggestion employed was that the surveys need to be both in electronic and paper format, and second was to get someone to personalize the survey. In all districts the superintendent not only endorsed the surveys but also distributed them to staff directly, by email to all staff, or through building principals who then distributed them to staff.

The sample size for this study was 166 educators in four separate school districts all located in Western Ohio. There were 2 small districts and 2 medium sized districts represented in the study. All data collected were analyzed with the aid of the quantitative analysis tool, Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) 20.0.

## **Conclusions**

### **Statement of the problem**

A major obstacle or problem existing in education today is the leadership structure. The leadership continues to follow the top-down organizational chart with the school board of education at the top, followed by the superintendent, then the various levels of middle level administration, and finally the teachers.

To further complicate and exasperate this problem it seems most of the changes in education are coming from even higher up, in the state legislatures and at the state departments of education. Many of these changes have not been supported properly with the resources needed, leading to disillusionment at the teacher and local administrative levels (Fullan, 2003). Hargreaves (2008) was convinced that there is a lack of motivation among teachers today due to the increased control of the decision-making process by the state legislature and others in positions of power. He pointed out that both teachers and middle level administrators have decreased control over areas such as content, lesson plans, testing, and evaluation of performance.

This top-down leadership structure misses a great opportunity to fully develop the professional teaching staffs in schools across this country (Fullan, 2003). Teachers are used and seem to be viewed by those at the top more as interchangeable parts. This assembly line approach views teachers as workers who are taught a skill commonly dubbed as the science of teaching, without regard to the development of the total person in a human resource approach. Teacher opinions are rarely sought as communication seems to have a one-way flow from the top. This happens in spite of research that points out that communication among staff and between staff and administration enhance the trust in the organization,

leading to more efficient work and a greater sense of commitment to the district and its mission (Firestone & Pennell, 1993).

Without the development of leadership at all levels of the school organization there cannot be sustained growth and development. Senge (1990) recognized the importance of the development of people within the organization in the world of business. The building of leadership, gathering of ideas in teams, and providing opportunities for professional growth are all part of what it means to be a professional learning community. Although Senge was talking primarily to the business world those same principles are equally important for sustaining growth in the educational realm.

The OIP was developed by multiple stakeholders in the education community in an organization calling itself the Ohio Leadership Advisory Council (OLAC). The OIP was created by this organization to be proactive in meeting the need for large scale educational change in the State of Ohio. Among its multiple aims was to formulate a set of tools for school districts to implement a more distributed model of leadership. The product of this work became the OIP. The OIP model was adopted by the Ohio Department of Education (ODE) to be Ohio's model for meeting the school improvement mandates from the federal legislation No Child Left Behind (NCLB) (OLAC, 2008). The overriding question is, do the OIP and other OLAC tools operationalize a distributed leadership model, offering districts a template for implementing comprehensive and lasting change? This research study attempted to shed light upon two aspects of a distributed leadership model, commitment and empowerment of staff to help educational leaders assess the answer to that question.

**Research Question One**

What is the impact of the OIP on commitment levels for staff engaged in process in districts where it is implemented?

Data were collected from the surveys that were distributed to each of the four participating schools. The results were tested using a Chi-Square test for independence that measures the association of two or more variables. The data showed there were high levels of commitment among most of the educators in the districts participating in this study. This was especially true of their willingness to put forth effort. There was no statistically significant difference in the levels of commitment among educators working in OIP districts when compared to non-OIP districts.

However, when the data were analyzed in regards to commitment levels between districts where there were organized team structures in place, there were statistically significant higher levels of commitment among educators. This finding that commitment was associated with educators engaging in team activities supports the research conducted by Dee et al. (2006). They found that teams build relationships among members of the school organization and thus leads to increased commitment. Dee et al also found that teams which are provided multiple areas of responsibilities tend to make better decisions, helping districts reach targeted goals and leading to greater feelings of satisfaction and commitment.

**Research Question Two.**

Does the OIP increase feelings of empowerment for the teaching staff within school districts where it is implemented?

Data were collected using the same survey instrument. Four questions on the survey instrument dealt with empowerment of the educators. The findings were tested using a Chi-

Square test for independence. An analysis of the data was conducted and the conclusions were that most of the teachers in the districts felt that they are empowered in some way. There was no statistical significant difference between educators from OIP and non-OIP districts. The OIP does not lead to greater feelings of empowerment for educators. However, the data did demonstrate a statistically significant association between an organized team structure in the district and greater feelings of empowerment of educators.

### **Research Question Three**

Does the use of the OIP produce effective teams in school districts in which it is implemented?

A significant number of educators in non-OIP districts responded that they had an organized team structure for leading the district. However, a statistically significant higher number of educators from OIP schools responded that they had a well-organized team approach in their districts. When organized team structures were cross tabulated with empowerment, educators reported a statistically significantly higher level of empowerment, specifically in the area of communication with administrators and other teachers. This suggests that the OIP itself is not an indicator of increased productivity of teams. However, the research does suggest there that the implementation of a team structure such as the OIP does increase the amount of communication and thus creates an environment conducive to more effective use of teams.

These findings are consistent with much of the research. For instance, Pugh and Zhao (2003) discussed the importance of a team structure, stating that it will increase communication among buildings and departments within the district. This improved communication reduces the number of conflicts among staff members leading to increased

job satisfaction and job satisfaction is highly associated with both empowerment and commitment (Firestone & Pennell, 1993). In addition, Gronn (2008) advocated strongly for greater vertical communication (which this study demonstrated was increased when a team structure is employed) in schools and identified this as being an integral part of instituting a distributed model.

Also, of importance to decision-makers in districts wanting to implement the OIP is that staff need support in the way of professional development. In this study those teachers that had three or more days of training using the team structure had significantly higher perceptions of the district, building, and teacher team effectiveness.

### **Implications of the Results**

The OIP continues to be one of the main interventions for districts that are in school improvement status because they have not met the requirements of the NCLB legislation for student performance on standardized tests. This research sought to shed light on whether or not this investment led to an improved sense of empowerment and greater commitment levels on the part of the educators serving school districts.

As previously stated, one of the major aspects of sustained school improvement identified by both OLAC and the ODE is empowerment of the teaching staff which creates a working environment that promotes an increase in commitment levels. This assumption is supported is supported by the research within OLAC as well as within this paper (Dee et al, 2006; Hulpia, Devos, & Rosseel, 2009; Lloyd, McNulty, & Telfer, 2009; Somech & Bogler, 2002).

Although there was no direct link found between the OIP and increased feelings of empowerment, there was an important link found between the use of teams and feelings



leading to increased communication levels between teachers and principals. In this sense the OIP is a recognized and accepted way of implementing a team-based, distributed leadership structure. Further, it can be used by the teaching staff as a means of voicing opinions and influencing decision-making within the district.

### **Recommendations for Future Research**

This research study focused primarily on teacher commitment and feelings of empowerment as indicators of an effective distributed leadership model operationalized in the OIP. The OIP was chosen because it is an integral part of the improvement process for the State of Ohio's Department of Education. Future research should focus on the use of qualitative study techniques to better understand how the OIP is implemented in school districts. Another area deserving more study would be to research additional variables that may have impacted the outcome of the current study. Finally, a repeat of this same study, measuring the levels of commitment and empowerment of staff over time could further our understanding of the OIP.

A qualitative study in which interviews were conducted with various levels of school district staff could help to identify the how and why for OIP implementation. It would reveal the attitudes and motives of leadership as the OIP was rolled out to staff. Research questions could focus on such things as, was it implemented to meet the minimum standards of the OIP? Was the OIP embraced as a means of instituting real change or seen as another mandate from the State Department of Education? In short, a qualitative research study may help to better understand the level of support provided by district leadership in maximizing the efforts for truly distributing leadership as well as developing leaders at all levels of the organization.

Additional variables could have had an impact on the outcome of this study. After this study was initiated and during the time of data collection there were major legislative changes introduced and ratified. There was an attempt in Senate Bill 5, passed by the Ohio legislature, to curtail collective bargaining law among all public entities, including schools. The legislation also introduced a new evaluation system for teachers and greatly expanded the power of school administrators. Although this law was later repealed, many parts of the bill have since been enacted by the Ohio legislature and implemented by the department of education. One such measure was the Ohio Teacher Evaluation System (OTES) with its increased accountability measures that has significant dependence upon student academic growth. Also of note would be the introduction and employment of the core curriculum, the third grade reading guarantee, a new form of the district and building report card, and the expansion of the voucher system, which diverts resources from public schools to public charter districts and private schools. Future research could include the perceptions of educators to these changes and their impact on feelings of empowerment and commitment levels.

Lastly, further research could be conducted on the OIP as a distributed leadership model. As is true in any change to the fundamental governing structure, the OIP may need additional time to build trust and commitment among members of teams and between teams and organizational leadership. Replicating this study in the future would give the researcher access to longitudinal data which could also measure if the leadership model had become institutionalized, as part of the organizational culture.

### **Summary**

The purpose of this study was to better understand the impact of the OIP as a model of distributed leadership. Within the course of this study I explored the possible relationships between the OIP and teachers' feelings of commitment and empowerment in districts where it was implemented. There was nothing in the research findings to suggest that the OIP made a difference in teacher attitudes. However, the conclusions from the research did suggest that a recognized and organized team approach to school decision making does lead to greater feelings of empowerment and higher levels of commitment among teachers. In addition, the perceived effectiveness of the OIP implementation into a district was enhanced among educators when it was supported by at least three full days of professional development for the staff.

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APPENDIX A

OHIO DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION FORMULA FOR SIMILAR DISTRICTS

ODE formula for similar districts.

<b>Dimension</b>	<b>Measure(s)</b>	<b>Description</b>
District Size	ADM (Average Daily Membership) – Data transformed by taking log (ADM)	The number of students served by a district describes the size of the education enterprise.
Poverty	EMIS percentage of economically disadvantaged students	This is the poverty rate of a district as represented on the LRC. (See 4, below)
Socioeconomic Status (Composite)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Median income</li> <li>• % of population with a college degree or more (C)</li> <li>• % of population in administrative/professional occupations (C)</li> </ul>	The three variables used for this composite measure the “typical” income level of the community, its overall level of college education and its employment characteristics.
Rural/Urban Continuum (Composite)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Population density (C)</li> <li>• % of agricultural property</li> <li>• Population (C)</li> <li>• Incorporation of a city larger than 40,000 (C)</li> </ul>	This composite uses four variables to create a continuous measure that distinguishes school districts that have urban characteristics from those that have more rural characteristics.
Race/Ethnicity	% of students enrolled reported as African-American, Hispanic, Native-American, or Multiracial. Data transformed by taking log (base 10). If % is less than 1%, log is set at “0”.	This is a measure of the racial/ethnic diversity of the student population in the district.
Non-Agricultural and Non-Residential Tax Capacity	Per-pupil amount of commercial, industrial, mining, tangible, and public utility property	This is a measure of community's ability to generate revenue for schools-separate from its residential (or agricultural) tax base.

### **How the data are analyzed**

Each district is compared to 608 other districts by performing a comparison across all dimensions <sup>(2)</sup>. The result is a “distance” between each pair of districts. The smaller the “distance,” the more similar the two districts are. For each district, the 20 “closest” districts are selected as its group of similar districts. In some cases, the distance between a district and its closest neighbors is very large. In these cases, there can be fewer than 20 “similar districts” reflecting the unique features of the referent district.

### **Limitations**

Developing similar district comparison groupings is a process that enables individual districts to conduct meaningful comparative analysis. Despite the benefits to this approach, there are

limitations to the use of the methodology. The concerns that impact these limitations are outlined below.

1. The method does not include a **geographical dimension**. Many districts tend to compare themselves with surrounding districts. The similar district method does not necessarily include geographically close districts in the given district's *performance* comparison grouping because neighboring districts might not truly be the most similar districts in the state. On the other hand, expenditure patterns (expenditures per pupil, salary information, etc.) tend to reflect regional conditions. Thus, a better way to compare **financial data** is to select districts that are *geographically* close.
2. The method deliberately selects the “nearest” 20 districts as the standard for comparison. But some districts are more “unique” than others. In some cases (typically very large cities), “distances” to other districts are so large that a cut-off point needs to be established in the distance metric, which limits the comparison group to fewer than 20. An arbitrary *minimum* number of similar districts for any district is six.

It is also true that some districts tend to look like many other districts, so the cutoff of 20 similar districts captures those districts that are extremely similar according to the chosen dimensions. In this case, districts can closely resemble many other districts beyond the cutoff of 20. Small, rural districts often fall into this category. Generating unique comparison groupings **can produce seemingly counter-intuitive results if inter-grouping comparisons are made.**

#### Similar District Formula

- (1) Tests for relationships between data elements were conducted with each variable prior to the analysis of dimensions. Data representing each dimension were normalized prior to the analysis, with means equal to zero and standard deviations of 1. This process standardized the metric used for comparative purposes so that each district can be fairly compared with any other district.
- (2) The formula for each district-to-district comparison is as follows. Where A, B, C, D, E, and F represent dimension values; i represents the district of interest; and j represents the district being compared to that district, then the distance “O” between two districts is calculated as:

$$O = ((A_i - A_j)^2 + (B_i - B_j)^2 + (C_i - C_j)^2 + (D_i - D_j)^2 + (E_i - E_j)^2 + (F_i - F_j)^2)^{1/2}$$

Source: [http://webapp2.ode.state.oh.us/similar\\_districts/sources2010.asp](http://webapp2.ode.state.oh.us/similar_districts/sources2010.asp)

APPENDIX B  
SURVEY INSTRUMENT

Directions: The following statements are related to your experience in the school district in which you work. For each of the statements below please indicate your level of agreement or disagreement by checking the appropriate boxes.

1. I perceive that I have the opportunity to influence others.

Strongly Agree

Agree

Disagree

Strongly Disagree

No Opinion/No Observation

2. I am a decision maker.

Strongly Agree

Agree

Disagree

Strongly Disagree

No Opinion/No Observation

3. Principals, other teachers, and school personnel solicit my advice.

Strongly Agree

Agree

Disagree

Strongly Disagree

No Opinion/No Observation



4. I am willing to put in a great deal of effort beyond that normally expected in order to help this organization be successful.

Strongly Agree

Agree

Disagree

Strongly Disagree

No Opinion/No Observation

5. This organization really inspires the very best in me in the way of job performance.

Strongly Agree

Agree

Disagree

Strongly Disagree

No Opinion/No Observation

6. It is clear where members of the *teaching staff* are authorized to help implement a vision.

Strongly Agree

Agree

Disagree

Strongly Disagree

No Opinion/No Observation

7. The school in which I work has organized a team structure for leading the district in one or more areas.

Yes

No

If answered "Yes" to question number 7 above please go to next question. If answered "No" to question number 7 above go to question number 12 below.

8. Please indicate which level or levels of teams you have directly participated as a member.

District Leadership Team (DLT)

Building Leadership Team (BLT)

Teacher-Based Teams or Grade Level Teams

I have not participated as a member of a team in the school district

9. There are well-functioning *district, building, and teacher* leadership teams in our school.

Strongly Agree

Agree

Disagree

Strongly Disagree

No Opinion/No Observation

10. The leadership *district, building, and teacher* teams support the goals we like to attain with our school.

Strongly Agree

Agree

Disagree

Strongly Disagree

No Opinion/No Observation

11. How much professional development was provided to district employees related to utilizing district, building, and teacher teams in the school district.

More than 5 days of training

3 – 4 days of training

1 – 2 days of training

less than 1 day of training

No training was provided

12. Please indicate which of the following describes your length of service with the current school district.

0 – 5 years

5 – 15 years

15 – 25 years

over 25 years

13. Please indicate which of the following describes your total service years in education.

0 – 5 years

5 – 15 years

15 – 25 years

over 25 year

14. Please indicate which level of education you have most recently completed.

Bachelor Degree

Masters Degree

Post Masters Licensure

Doctorate Degree

15. Please indicate the grade level below that best describes your current work

assignment. Please check all boxes that may apply.

K – 3 teacher       4 – 6 teacher       7 – 8 teacher       9 – 12 teacher

elementary guidance       secondary guidance       central office

elementary principal or assistant principal

middle school principal or assistant principal

high school principal or assistant principal

APPENDIX C

SUPERINTENDENT QUESTIONNAIRE AND PERMISSION FORM

Ohio Improvement Process Implementation Questionnaire. This survey will also be given to the district superintendent with the additional statement provided for their approval for district participation.

1. The district has established a collaborative structure using District (DLT), building (BLT), and teacher (TBTs) teams within the district.

Yes       No

2. The district has used the Implementation, Management, and Monitoring (IMM) tool and the Decision Framework (DF) to help formulate district goals.

Yes       No

3. TBTs monitor district progress and report back to BLT and DLT at least annually.

Yes       No

4. As superintendent of the \_\_\_\_\_ school district I verify that all of the criteria for the implementation of the OIP has been met and give my authorization for participation of this district in the research study conducted by Jeff Price as a partial fulfillment of his doctoral dissertation in association with Ashland University.

---

Signature

APPENDIX D

PERMISSION TO USE SURVEY INSTRUMENTS

The following are emails correspondence regarding the use of survey questions used to gather data in this study.

1. Use of School Participation Empowerment Scale

Ashland University Jeff Price

Dear Dr. Short,

I am a doctoral candidate at Ashland University in Ashland, OH. I am working on my dissertation and wanted permission to use the School Participant Empowerment Scale (SPES) to help me assess whether or not the Ohio Improvement Process (OIP) is an effective tool for empowering school teachers. I am exploring further the relationship between empowerment and commitment in a Distributed Leadership Model as operationalized in the OIP. Thanks for your help!

Jeff

Reply Paula Short

Jeff:

You have permission to use the SPES in your dissertation research. Let me know if I can help further.

Best regards,

Paula Myrick Short



## 2. Use of the Distributed Leadership Inventory

Ashland University Jeff Price

Dr. Hulpia,

I am a doctoral candidate at Ashland University (in Ohio, USA) and would like to your permission to use the quantitative tool you developed in the research you conducted on distributive leadership. Any help or direction you can give me on this project would be greatly appreciated as well. I am conducting research on a distributive research model the Ohio Department of Education is using to meet the requirement of the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act passed by the Bush administration. This distributive leadership model is called the Ohio Improvement Process (OIP) and is mandated for all schools that have missed the benchmarks set by the NCLB. Thanks for your consideration and help.

Jeff

Reply Hester Hulpia

Dear,

You can use the research instruments I used.

All information is on my academia-page: <http://ugent.academia.edu/HesterHulpia>

If you have any questions or remarks, please contact me.

Good luck.

Sincerely,

Hester Hulpia

Vakgroep Onderwijskunde

Faculteit Psychologie en Pedagogische Wetenschappen

Henri Dunantlaan 2 - 9000 Gent

tel: +32 (0)9 264 86 70

VOR/VFO prijs voor het beste proefschrift 2009

### 3. Use of the OCQ

Ashland University Jeff Price

Dear Mr Price

We hereby grant you permission to reprint the material below\* at no charge in your thesis subject to the following conditions:

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\* Mowday, Porter, & Steers (OCQ):

1. I am willing to put in a great deal of effort beyond that normally expected in order to help this organization be successful.

2. This organization really inspires the very best in me in the way of job performance.

Mowday, R.T., Porter, L.W., & Steers, R.M. (1982). Employee organization linkages, San Diego, CA: Academic Press.

Yours sincerely,

Emma

APPENDIX E

DATA FROM RESPONSES ATTAINED BY INDIVIDUAL SCHOOL DISTRICTS

Table E1. Responses to Question 1: I perceive that I have the opportunity to influence others.

	District 1 Non-OIP Small	District 2 OIP Small	District 3 Non-OIP Medium	District 4 OIP Medium	All District Total
Strongly Agree N (% of District)	18 (43.9%)	12 (35.3%)	10 (33.3%)	18 (29.5%)	58
Agree N (% of District)	21 (51.2%)	18 (52.9%)	18 (60%)	37 (60.7%)	94
Disagree N (% of District)	0 (0%)	4 (11.8%)	1 (3.3%)	6 (9.8%)	11
Strongly Disagree N (% of District)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	1 (3.3%)	0 (0%)	1
No opinion/No observation N (% of District)	2 (4.9%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	2
Total N of responses from District	41	34	30	61	166

Table E2. Responses to Question 2: I am a decision maker.

	District 1 Non-OIP Small	District 2 OIP Small	District 3 Non-OIP Medium	District 4 OIP Medium	All District Total
Strongly Agree N (% of District)	10 (25.0%)	6 (17.6%)	6 (20.0%)	17 (27.9%)	39
Agree N (% of District)	26 (65.0%)	25 (73.5%)	20 (66.7%)	37 (60.7%)	108
Disagree N (% of District)	2 (5.0%)	1 (2.9%)	1 (3.3%)	7 (11.5%)	11
Strongly Disagree N (% of District)	1 (2.5%)	2 (5.9%)	1 (3.3%)	0 (0.0%)	4
No opinion/No observation N (% of District)	1 (2.5%)	0 (0.0%)	2 (6.7%)	0 (0.0%)	3
Total N of responses from District	40	34	30	61	165

Table E3. Responses to Question 3: Principals, other teachers, and school personnel solicit my advice.

	District 1 Non-OIP Small	District 2 OIP Small	District 3 Non-OIP Medium	District 4 OIP Medium	All District Total
Strongly Agree N (% of District)	3 (7.3%)	4 (11.8%)	2 (6.7%)	3 (5.1%)	12
Agree N (% of District)	32 (78.0%)	22 (64.7%)	21 (70.0%)	33 (55.9%)	108
Disagree N (% of District)	2 (4.9%)	6 (17.6%)	6 (20.0%)	12 (20.3%)	26
Strongly Disagree N (% of District)	1 (2.4%)	1 (2.9%)	0 (0.0%)	5 (8.5%)	7
No opinion/No observation N (% of District)	3 (7.3%)	1 (2.9%)	1 (3.3%)	6 (10.2%)	11
Total N of responses from District	41	34	30	59	164

Table E4. Responses to Question 4: I am willing to put in a great deal of effort beyond that normally expected in order to help this organization be successful.

	District 1 Non-OIP Small	District 2 OIP Small	District 3 Non-OIP Medium	District 4 OIP Medium	All District Total
Strongly Agree N (% of District)	20 (48.8%)	19 (55.9%)	14 (46.7%)	23 (39.0%)	76
Agree N (% of District)	18 (43.9%)	14 (41.2%)	15 (50.0%)	33 (55.9%)	80
Disagree N (% of District)	2 (4.9%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	2 (3.4%)	4
Strongly Disagree N (% of District)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	0
No opinion/No observation N (% of District)	1 (2.4%)	1 (2.9%)	1 (3.3%)	1 (1.7%)	4
Total N of responses from District	41	34	30	59	164

Table E5. Responses to Question 5: This organization really inspires the very best in me in the way of job performance.

	District 1 Non-OIP Small	District 2 OIP Small	District 3 Non-OIP Medium	District 4 OIP Medium	All District Total
Strongly Agree N (% of District)	3 (7.3%)	6 (17.6%)	2 (6.7%)	5 (8.6%)	16
Agree N (% of District)	25 (61.0%)	19 (55.9%)	17 (56.7%)	26 (44.8%)	87
Disagree N (% of District)	6 (14.6%)	8 (23.5%)	8 (26.7%)	20 (34.5%)	42
Strongly Disagree N (% of District)	2 (4.9%)	1 (2.9%)	2 (6.7%)	2 (3.4%)	7
No opinion/No observation N (% of District)	5 (12.2%)	0 (0.0%)	1 (3.3%)	5 (8.6%)	11
Total N of responses from District	41	34	30	58	163

Table E6. Responses to Question 6: It is clear where members of the teaching staff are authorized to help implement a vision.

	District 1 Non-OIP Small	District 2 OIP Small	District 3 Non-OIP Medium	District 4 OIP Medium	All District Total
Strongly Agree N (% of District)	2 (4.9%)	4 (11.8%)	5 (16.7%)	2 (3.3%)	13
Agree N (% of District)	20 (48.8%)	13 (38.2%)	9 (30.0%)	35 (57.4%)	77
Disagree N (% of District)	11 (26.8%)	13 (38.2%)	13 (43.3%)	18 (29.5%)	55
Strongly Disagree N (% of District)	0 (0.0%)	1 (2.9%)	1 (3.3%)	2 (3.3%)	4
No opinion/No observation N (% of District)	8 (19.5%)	3 (8.8%)	2 (6.7%)	4 (6.6%)	17
Total N of responses from District	41	34	30	61	166

Table E7. Responses to Question 7: The school in which I work has organized a team structure for leading the district in one or more areas.

	District 1 Non-OIP Small	District 2 OIP Small	District 3 Non-OIP Medium	District 4 OIP Medium	All District Total
Yes N (% of District)	38 -92.70%	33 -100%	13 -43.30%	56 -91.80%	140
No N (% of District)	3 -7.30%	0 0.00%	17 -56.70%	5 -8.20%	25
Total N of responses from District	41	33	30	61	165



Table E8. Responses to Question 8: Please indicate which level or levels of teams you directly participated as a member.

Level of Team	District 1 Non-OIP Small	District 2 OIP Small	District 3 Non-OIP Medium	District 4 OIP Medium	All District Total
District Leadership Team	16	9	1	1	27
Building Leadership Team	11	20	3	11	45
Teacher or Grade Level Teams	28	19	13	45	105
No Participation on District Team	3	2	0	9	14
*Total N of Responses from District	58	50	17	66	191

\*Note – Teachers indicated they served on multiple team levels.

Table E9. Responses to Question 9: There are well-functioning district, building, and teacher teams in our school.

	District 1 Non-OIP Small	District 2 OIP Small	District 3 Non-OIP Medium	District 4 OIP Medium	All District Total
Strongly Agree N (% of District)	5 (13.2%)	4 (12.1%)	1 (7.7%)	7 (12.5%)	17
Agree N (% of District)	23 (60.5%)	18 (54.5%)	8 (61.5%)	34 (60.7%)	83
Disagree N (% of District)	7 (18.4%)	10 (30.3%)	4 (30.8%)	11 (19.6%)	32
Strongly Disagree N (% of District)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	1 (1.8%)	1
No opinion/No observation N (% of District)	3 (7.9%)	1 (3%)	0 (0.0%)	3 (5.4%)	7
Total N of responses from District	38	33	13	56	140

Table E10. Responses to Question 10: The leadership district, building, and teacher leadership teams support the goals we like to attain in our school.

	District 1 Non-OIP Small	District 2 OIP Small	District 3 Non-OIP Medium	District 4 OIP Medium	All District Total
Strongly Agree N (% of District)	3 (7.9%)	7 (21.9%)	0 (0.0%)	7 (12.7%)	17
Agree N (% of District)	27 (71.1%)	18 (56.3%)	9 (69.2%)	32 (58.2%)	86
Disagree N (% of District)	2 (5.3%)	4 (12.5%)	2 (15.4%)	12 (21.8%)	20
Strongly Disagree N (% of District)	0 (0.0%)	1 (3.1%)	0 (0.0%)	1 (1.8%)	2
No opinion/No observation N (% of District)	6 (15.8%)	2 (6.3%)	2 (15.4%)	3 (5.5%)	13
Total N of responses from District	38	32	13	55	138

Table E11. Responses to Question 11: How much professional development was provided to district employees related to utilizing the district, building, and teacher teams in your school district?

Days of Training	District 1 Non-OIP Small	District 2 OIP Small	District 3 Non-OIP Medium	District 4 OIP Medium	All District Total
More than 5 days of training	1	5	0	3	9
3 – 4 days of training	6	14	3	17	40
1 – 2 days of training	16	7	3	20	46
Less than 1 day of training	1	1	3	9	14
No training was provided	10	4	4	4	22
Total N of responses from District	34	31	13	53	131

Table E12. Responses to Question 12: Please indicate which of the following describes your length of service with the current school district.

Years of Service	District 1 Non-OIP Small	District 2 OIP Small	District 3 Non-OIP Medium	District 4 OIP Medium	All District Total
0 – 5 years	14	6	7	18	45
5 – 15 years	10	12	9	30	61
15 – 25 years	10	9	8	5	32
Over 25 years	6	6	6	6	24
Total N of responses from District	40	33	30	59	162

Table E13. Responses to Question 13: Please indicate which of the following describes your total service years in education.

Years of Service	District 1 Non-OIP Small	District 2 OIP Small	District 3 Non-OIP Medium	District 4 OIP Medium	All District Total
0 – 5 years	10	1	2	13	26
5 – 15 years	10	14	6	25	55
15 – 25 years	11	12	13	13	49
Over 25 years	9	5	9	9	32
Total N of responses from District	40	32	30	60	162

Table E14. Responses to Question 14: Please indicate level of education you have most recently completed.

Education Level	District 1 Non-OIP Small	District 2 OIP Small	District 3 Non-OIP Medium	District 4 OIP Medium	All District Total
Bachelor Degree	10	5	2	15	32
Master Degree	22	20	16	35	93
Post – Master Licensure	8	8	10	9	35
Total N of responses from District	40	33	28	59	160

Table E15. Responses to Question 15: Please indicate the grade level that best describes you current work assignment.

Work Assignment	District 1 Non-OIP Small	District 2 OIP Small	District 3 Non-OIP Medium	District 4 OIP Medium	All District Total
Elementary Principal	0	1	1	0	2
High School Principal	0	1	0	0	1
Central Office	2	0	0	0	2
Guidance Office	0	1	0	1	2
Teacher Grades K - 3	12	6	18	15	51
Teacher Grades 4 - 6	11	9	7	7	34
Teacher Grades 7 - 8	13	10	7	1	31
Teacher Grades 9 - 12	13	14	1	36	64
*Total N of responses from District	51	42	34	60	187

\*Note – Some teachers answering the survey indicated they taught multiple levels.