Core Function	School Leadership and Decision Making	Effective Practice	Establish a team structure with specific duties and time for instructional planning

Indicator: The Leadership Team shares in decisions of real substance pertaining to curriculum, instruction, and professional development. (5142)

Explanation: The evidence suggests that effective leadership teams are comprised of the principal and a key corps of lead teachers who address, strategize, and create action plans for curricular and instruction issues. The Leadership Team is ever mindful to represent the beliefs and concerns of the entire staff. Effective Leadership Teams meet no less than twice per month to ensure continuity of their work and sustain the momentum needed to achieve their goals. Many Leadership Teams use the indicators of effective professional restructuring found in the *Handbook on Restructuring and Substantial School Improvement* (Redding, 2007).

Questions: What evidence will the district seek to determine that the principal and a group of lead teachers have formed and operate with fidelity as a Leadership Team? How will the district determine that the Leadership Team represents the beliefs and concerns of the rest of the staff? What processes does the Leadership Team use to ensure fidelity to meeting times? What processes does the Leadership Team use to communicate its work to all key stakeholders; the staff, parents, students, school board, and community? Does the Leadership Team consult the *Handbook on Restructuring and Substantial School Improvement* (Redding, 2007) to assist in its improvement planning?

Why Are Leadership Teams Important?

There are a variety of reasons why a principal should engage school staff and stakeholders in decision-making and leadership roles. Most simply, a principal cannot do it alone. The vast array of responsibilities placed upon a principal make it difficult for any one person to effectively execute all of them (Hallinger & Murphy, 2013; Von Frank, 2011). Not only is it often logistically impossible, but having a single leader make all decisions and solve all problems also creates a strict hierarchy and a dependency on that individual instead of building capacity in others (Lambert, 2002).

There is a wide research base around the idea of dispersing leadership roles, responsibilities, and power among the employees of an organization, and each of the models – instructional leadership, distributed leadership, shared leadership, transformational leadership, shared instructional leadership, or leadership for learning – incorporate common elements. Most notably, all of these leadership models encourage the principal to not simply delegate tasks, but instead empower teachers and school staff to share in the responsibility of running the school (Marks & Printy, 2003; Lucas & Valentine, 2002; Spillane, 2005).

Marks and Printy (2003) describe this sharing of responsibility as "the active collaboration of principal and teachers on curriculum, instruction, and assessment," in which "the principal seeks out the ideas, insights, and expertise of teachers in these areas" and collaborates to make the school better (p. 371). Instead of assigning tasks, shared leadership allows for the development of and focus on common goals between administration and staff, in the name of improving teaching and learning (Lucas & Valentine, 2002).

Professional growth of teachers also becomes both a responsibility and outcome of distributed leadership. Teacher leaders are often called upon to plan and implement professional development opportunities for their colleagues, but they can grow in their own roles through the process as well. Lucas and Valentine (2002) state that distributing leadership to teachers "extends the concept of teacher involvement beyond 'buy in'" (p. 24). Marks and Printy (2003) share a similar idea – that transformational leaders get stakeholders involved for both their own self-improvement as individuals, but also to get them to apply their own interest and talents to the good of the organization. Redding (2006) writes, "This mixture of personal support for all the players and focused attention to systemic goals, especially improved learning, is a balanced view of leadership" (p. 41).

Who Makes Up a Leadership Team?

The creation of a leadership team is a formalized way for a principal to share responsibility and decision-making power with staff. Typically these teams consist of the principal and a core team of teachers, representing multiple grade levels and content areas (Lambert, 2002). In some schools, a representative of the district office may participate in the leadership team, or it might include parents and students (Chrispeels, et al., 2000; Morgan & Clonts, 2008). Lambert (2002) also mentions a form of leadership teams with "open membership," in which any stakeholder is welcome to join if they would like.

The selection process for leadership team members tends to vary as well. Often, a principal will select the team members to ensure a diverse group of teachers, with characteristics, skill sets, and qualities that could enhance collaboration and move the work forward (Von Frank, 2011). Selection for the leadership team can be seen as a reward or form of recognition for teachers (Murphy, 2007). Other methods include soliciting volunteers, having a peer nomination process, or holding an election at the school (Chrispeels, et al., 2000; Lambert, 2002; Von Frank, 2011).

What Do Leadership Teams Actually Do?

The primary goal for leadership teams is to work collectively to address issues around and improvement in teaching and learning at the school (Marks & Printy, 2003). The leadership team must ensure alignment to a variety of external and internal forces – the needs of the students and staff, the curricular standards, the district expectations, and the vision that the principal has set for the school (Chrispeels, et al., 2000; Von Frank, 2011). While the principal is often still at the helm, the team acts as a peer group enacting a shared vision; members work together to use school data, best practices, and feedback from the school's stakeholders to determine how they will seek improvement and what supports are necessary to carry out their plan (Chrispeels, et al., 2000; Lambert, 2002).

Marks and Printy (2003) quote Poole (1995) in expressing the shift in the principal's role from a traditional hierarchical structure, saying that, "the principal becomes less an inspector of teacher competence and more a facilitator of teacher growth (p. 374). Instead of worrying about how their observation will be evaluated, teachers can be more driven to ensure that they are holding each other accountable (Von Frank, 2011). Murphy (2007) writes that leaders focused on learning work diligently to make sure that all of the other services and players within a school work in support of classroom instruction and teacher and student learning. He continues, emphasizing that good leaders are:

> ...aggressive in identifying and removing barriers that prevent colleagues from doing their work well. They provide intellectual stimulation and make certain that teachers have a high quality stream of job-embedded opportunities to expand, enhance, and refine their repertoires of instructional skills (Murphy, 2007, p. 74).

Working collaboratively to solve problems, address concerns, and move the school forward are the hallmarks of a leadership team; it is the principal's role to create an environment in which those conversations and resulting reforms can happen.

How Should Leadership Teams Ideally Operate?

Regardless of the composition of the team, it is encouraged to define formal roles and processes for the people who comprise it. Delineating roles and responsibilities can help reduce conflict and distraction and can provide structures for how to divide up the tasks at hand (Chrispeels, et al., 2000; Marks & Printy, 2003; Redding, 2006). It is also important to structure the norms for the leadership team to foster collaboration and establish expectations. Deciding how the team will communicate,

how regularly the team will meet, how the meetings will be run, and to what expectations each member and the group as a whole will be held (Chrispeels, et al., 2000; Redding, 2006).

Morgan and Clonts (2008) discuss how teams with whom they have worked have established norms such as treating all team members as peers, encouraging members to ask questions, and emphasizing that the process may not always be clear or linear. These types of norms help create a baseline of respect for both the people and the process within the leadership team. Ideally, such norms and established lines of communication will also extend to the school community as a whole (Chrispeels, et al., 2000).

However, while collegiality is critical, Lucas and Valentine (2002) emphasize the difference between it and collaboration. The latter may involve some vulnerability – for example, opening up one's classroom for others to regularly observe. Yet, if collaboration and honest sharing occurs in the name of improving teaching and learning, it will ultimately benefit the school's students and staff.

The other essential factor in allowing a leadership team to be effective is to provide ample time for critical conversations, observation, and collaboration. Teams should ideally meet twice per month, for at least an hour, to ensure time for productive and deep conversation (Redding, 2006). These meetings should be distinguished from instructional planning meetings, so that critical thinking and engagement can occur; team meetings may more closely resemble a study group, where professionals reflect, read, think, and learn together (Lambert, 2002; Morgan & Clonts, 2008). Morgan and Clonts (2008) also describe this "luxury of extended time" as an opportunity for the team members to get to know each other better both personally and professionally and work collectively toward improved teaching and learning for everyone in the school building (p. 347-348).

References and Resources

Chrispeels, J., Castillo, S., and Brown, J. (2000). School Leadership Teams: A Process Model of Team Development, *School Effectiveness and School Improvement*, 11(1), 20-56. Retrieved from http://www-tandfonline-com.proxy.library.vanderbilt.edu/doi/pdf/10.1076/0924-3453(200003)11%3A1%3B1-A%3BFT020

Chrispeels, J. and Martin, K. (2002). Four School Leadership Teams Define Their Roles Within Organizational and Political Structures to Improve Student Learning. *School Effectiveness and School Improvement*, 13(3), 327-365. Retrieved from http://dx.doi.org/10.1076/sesi.13.3.327.3430

Hallinger, P. and Murphy, J. (February 2013). Running on Empty? Finding the Time and Capacity to Lead Learning. NASSP Bulletin, 97(5). Retrieved from http://bul.sagepub.com/content/97/1/5

Lambert, L. (May 2002). A Framework for Shared Leadership. Beyond Instructional Leadership, 59(8), 37-40. Retrieved from https://www.bcpss.org/bbcswebdav/institution/PUBLICINFO1112/2013%20Summer%20Leadership%20Institute/Binder%20Materials/Tab%2002%20-%20Teacher%20Teams/Additional%20Resources/A%20Framework%20for%20Shared%20Leadership%20ASCD.pdf

Lucas, S. and Valentine, J. (2002). Transformational Leadership: Principals, Leadership Teams, and School Culture. *American Educational Research Association.* Retrieved from http://files.eric.ed.gov.proxy.library.vanderbilt.edu/fulltext/ED468519.pdf

Marks, H., and Printy, S. (August 2003). Principal Leadership and School Performance: An Integration of Transformational and Instructional Leadership. Educational Administration Quarterly, 39(3), 370-397. Retrieved from http://eaq.sagepub.com.proxy.library.vanderbilt.edu/content/39/3/370.full.pdf

Morgan, D. N., & Clonts, C. M. (2008). School Leadership Teams: Extending the Reach of School-Based Literacy Coaches. Language Arts, 85(5), 345–353. Retrieved from http://www.jstor.org.proxy.library.vanderbilt.edu/stable/41962291

Murphy, J. (2007). Restructuring Through Learning-Focused Leadership. In H. J. Walberg (Ed.), *Handbook on Restructuring and Substantial School Improvement*, 71-83. Charlotte, NC: Information Age Publishing. Retrieved from http://www.p12.nysed.gov/accountability/AOC/resources/articles/HandbookonRestructuringandSubstantialSchoolImprovement.pdf

Redding, S. (2006). *The Mega System: Deciding. Learning. Connecting*. Academic Development Institute. Retrieved from http://www.adi.org/mega/

Redding, S. (2007). Systems for improved teaching and learning. In H. J. Walberg (Ed.), *Handbook on Restructuring and Substantial School Improvement*, 99–112). Charlotte, NC: Information Age Publishing. Retrieved from http://www.p12.nysed.gov/accountability/AOC/

resources/articles/HandbookonRestructuringandSub-stantialSchoolImprovement.pdfSpillane, J. (2005). Distributed Leadership. The Educational Forum. Retrieved from http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/00131720508984678

Spillane, J., Halverson, R., and Diamond, J. (April 2001). Investigating School Leadership Practice: A Distributed Perspective. Educational Researcher, 30(3), 23-28 Retrieved from: http://www.jstor.org/stable/3594470

Spillane, J., Halverson, R., and Diamond, J. (2004). Towards a theory of leadership practice: A distributed perspective. Journal of Curriculum Studies, 36(1), 3-34. Retrieved from http://ddis.wceruw.org/docs/spillane-halversondiamond2004jcs.pdf

Strahan, D., Cooper, J., and Ward, M. (2001). Middle School Reform Through Data and Dialogue: Collaborative Evaluation with 17 Leadership Teams. Evaluation Review, 25(1), 72-99. Retrieved from http://erx.sagepub.com.proxy.library.vanderbilt.edu/content/25/1/72.full.pdf

Von Frank, V. (Fall 2011). Leadership teams set the course for school improvement. The Learning Principal. Retrieved from http://learningforward.org/docs/default-source/pdf/principal-fall-2011-web.pdf

Walstrom, K., and Seashore Louis, K. (October 2008). How Teachers Experience Principal Leadership: The Roles of Professional Community, Trust, Efficacy, and Shared Responsibility. Educational Administration Quarterly, 44(4), 458-495. Retrieved from http://eaq.sagepub.com.proxy.library.vanderbilt.edu/content/44/4/458.full.pdf