The Design and Structure of the Building Distributed Leadership in the Philadelphia School District Project

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Introduction and Overview

Research over the last two decades has well established that focusing on instructional leadership is a key strategy for school improvement and that supporting school-based leaders plays a crucial role in improving lower achieving schools. As Philadelphia has moved toward core curricula as a focal point for instructional improvement, the lack of consistent school leadership has been a substantial constraint to school success. Newman, King, and Youngs (2000) delineated the tasks of instructional leadership that support improved student achievement, notably, comprehensive professional development that builds school capacity. Elmore (2000) has stated as one of his five principles that lay the foundation for large scale improvement that "the purpose of leadership is the improvement of instructional practice and performance, regardless of role." Instructional leadership must be a shared, community undertaking. Leadership is the professional work of everyone (Lambert, 2003). The complexity of the principal's role affirms, and the literature strongly suggests, the need to engage a significant number of classroom teachers, as one administrator cannot adequately serve as an impactful instructional leader for an entire school without that support (Elmore, 2000; Lambert, 2003; Lambert, et al., 1995; Lambert, et al., 1997; Olsen, 2000; Spillane, Halverson, and Diamond, 2001). The distributed perspective addresses these needs by providing a framework for collaborative, task-oriented leadership practice that draws upon the expertise of multiple individuals. In the Distributed Leadership Project, this was achieved by creating Distributed Leadership teams in each site, and then providing those teams with extensive training and leadership coaching. This paper describes the background, the operational design, and the implementation of the Distributed Leadership Project's program, which is in its third year of a four year grant.

There is no question that the challenges faced by principals in today's schools are greater than at any other time in history. The implementation of instructional reforms requires leadership and skills that most principals are not prepared to deliver (Elmore 2000). The study entitled *Beyond Islands of Excellence: What Districts Can Do to Improve Instruction and Achievement in All Schools – A Leadership Brief,* undertaken by

the Learning First Alliance and funded by the U.S. Department of Education (2003), focused on five high-poverty school districts across the United States making strides in improving student achievement. Recognizing that effective instruction was crucial to improving achievement, they were interested in learning more about how such districts promoted good instruction across their systems. One of the primary findings is that successful districts significantly redefined the role of school leadership beyond the principal.

Another of the primary findings was that principal and teacher leaders were crucial in defining the districts systems of instructional leadership. Nowhere was the districts' commitment to building instructional expertise more evident than in the development of principal and teacher leaders. Successful districts provided significant professional development in instructional leadership techniques and, to expand instructional development and efforts, relied significantly on teacher leaders. These teachers provided additional instructional support to colleagues by modeling lessons, providing one-on-one coaching, and assisting struggling teachers. Teacher leaders often relieved principals of administrative instructional duties, such as professional development planning, overseeing testing administration, and deepening the coherence of instructional practices. The expansion of leadership required significant collaboration among the building stakeholders.

Equally important to understanding what these school districts did for instructional improvement is knowing more about how these changes were undertaken or enacted by school leaders in their daily work. To explore the "how", Spillane, Halverson, and Diamond (2001) conducted a leadership study in Chicago which used a distributed leadership framework to examine the practices of leadership in urban elementary schools working to change mathematics, science, and literacy instruction. They maintained that "knowing what leaders do is one thing but without a rich understanding of how and why they do it, our understanding of leadership is incomplete." This understanding and its application is a critical underpinning for the work that we undertook in the Distributed Leadership Project. In fact, our work has extended the work of Elmore, Spillane, and others by developing a model and targeted professional development strategy for implementing distributed leadership.

We were guided in our understanding of the research of Spillane et al. in Chicago from insights from such reports as the Wallace Foundation's report entitled, "Making Sense of Leading Schools: A Study of The School Principalship" conducted by Portin, Schneider, DeArmond, and Gundlach (2003). Portin et al. noted that principals are responsible for insuring that leadership happens in at least seven critical areas (instructional, cultural, managerial, strategic, external development, micropolitical, and human resources) but they do not have to provide it all on their own. In their study, the authors distinguish between positional and *de facto* leaders and between leaders and leadership. They state:

> Principals, assistant principals, department heads, and others highly placed on a school's organizational chart, are leaders by position. However, *de facto* leaders exist in every school: individuals who, regardless of their position, help schools identify issues that interfere with student learning, create a more participatory environment, and help bring resources to bear toward meaningful change and reform. (Conversely, *de facto* leaders can also sabotage change by throwing the weight of their influence against it.) Whether appointed or *de facto,* leaders are thought of as the people who exercise discretion and influence over the direction of schools. *Leadership* is more of a broad characteristic of schools, a distributed capability in an environment that helps sustain changes that enhance student learning, improve instruction, maximize participation in decision making, and align resources to the school's vision and purpose (Portin et al., 2003).

It is important to note that all of the principals, regardless of school types, said that they shared at least some responsibility for instructional leadership with other adults in their building, given the current emphasis on the principal as instructional leader. This is important, as our focus in the distributed leadership schools will largely be leadership in this critical function which is typically not an area of controversy in collective bargaining agreements. The differences in the way key leadership functions are performed, according to Portin et al., go back to governance. Traditional public school leaders are profoundly affected by the actions of superintendents, district-wide school boards, and central offices. These groups are, in turn, influenced by federal, state, county, or city government policies and by collective bargaining agreements. As the Distributed Leadership Project developed, we anticipated these issues and included them as issues to be addressed through the distributed leadership agreements and understandings that were established at the outset.

Over the project's three years, the Penn Center for Educational Leadership has endeavored to contribute to preparing a new generation of leaders in Philadelphia who would be well-grounded in the skills and strategies needed to sustain high performing, standards-based schools. We worked with our partners to strengthen capacities of existing school leaders and to develop new school leaders for the future.

Background and Context

Philadelphia is among the largest school districts in the country with 190,000 students (K-12) enrolled in 263 schools. It has also been identified as one of the most socio-economically, financially, and academically troubled school districts in the country. When the Annenberg Foundation offered a small number of America's troubled cities the opportunity to vie for significant resources to restructure their public systems, the Philadelphia School District and a consortium of other partners responded with extraordinary support and a comprehensive school reform agenda designed to create a system in which virtually all schools and all students would be high performing. When our project began, extraordinary challenges still remained and in the 2003 round of state administered standardized testing – the Pennsylvania System of School Assessment (PSSA) exams in reading and mathematics – only 21.6% of the students scored proficient or above for their grade level (state target is 35%) in mathematics and only 27.5% in reading (state target is 45%). In that year, 194 schools in the Philadelphia public school system were in "School Improvement" or "Corrective Action" status due to failure to make adequate yearly progress (AYP) under No Child Left Behind Legislation.

Philadelphia has attracted the attention of educators and policymakers across the country as it has continually undergone dramatic changes in management structure and the approach to leadership at all levels of the educational system. In the three years of this project, there have been three turnovers of top-level leaders and their staffs. Each new leader intended to sharpen the focus in Philadelphia public schools on their core instructional mission and to infuse new measures of accountability for school leaders in improving academic achievement of students. A pressing need faced by the District then and now is to reduce the extremely high rate of turnover among school leaders and to develop a cadre of qualified candidates to fill a large number of vacancies which occur

every year. Nearly one out of five schools (forty-five) across the Philadelphia public school system began the 2003-2004 school year under the direction of a new principal. An even higher proportion of assistant principal positions – seventy-five out of two hundred and twenty-six, or 33% − were filled by new candidates. It is for this reason that our project targeted new leaders in our efforts to build distributed leadership teams and to build leadership capacity for Philadelphia schools.

These identified needs led the District to secure with Lehigh University a three-year grant (which began in the fall of 2003) from the U.S. Department of Education to launch a new urban school leadership program in Philadelphia, as well as to develop a multi-year Broad Foundation proposal with Temple University intended to build on the momentum gained from that partnership and other ongoing efforts in leadership development in the District. The Distributed Leadership Project was designed to significantly enhance and connect with those efforts and we have worked collaboratively with the proposed (and now eliminated) ALPS (Academy of Leadership for Philadelphia Schools) as they undertook their training work with administrators.

Project Focus and Goals of the Project

The vision for this project involved redefining and reshaping the role of school leadership in overburdened and complex urban schools. These goals represented a significant new dimension to the momentum and efforts to redefine leadership in the Philadelphia School District. We believed that our focus on developing teacher leaders and building distributed leadership teams would complement and ensure the sustainability of the programs that our partner institutions, Lehigh and Temple, and Philadelphia School District were undertaking. Their work focused on the recruitment, selection, preparation, and support for new school leadership and the continuing education and coaching of experienced school leaders. The project work prepared new principals and teacher leaders to function in a distributed leadership team to improve instruction and achievement. That process was supported by capacity (leadership) and content coaching and school-wide development of professional learning communities and routines which focus on building and learning issues. In developing a model for distributed leadership training and the support structures to sustain it, we believed that we

would greatly increase the likelihood of the principals' and staffs' success in each school. By working with teams in schools, we hoped to significantly impact system-wide efforts to improve instruction in each school.

The goals of this project are (see Appendix A):

1. To develop model distributed leadership teams and communities in 16 Philadelphia Schools.
2. To develop a targeted professional development strategy and regional teacher leadership development center.
3. To develop over 80 effective teacher leaders who can support 16 new principals and central office leaders in achieving and sustaining building-level instructional leadership.
4. To utilize other leadership building strategies including professional learning communities and coaching to support distributive leadership teams and achieve improved instructional focus and student outcomes in participating schools.
5. To create model distributed leadership agreements with the Philadelphia School District and its Unions and training and development partnerships with Temple University and Lehigh University in support of sustained leadership development and instructional improvement.

Project implementation and success indicators and year by year intended outcomes are outlined in Appendix A. This project was designed to develop new teacher leaders and to support new principals through the building of distributed leadership teams as they undertake responsibilities in their buildings over four years. Four schools were targeted in year one, four in year two, and eight in year three, for a total of 16 schools by the end of year three of the project. Cohort 1 has, therefore, experienced a year of training and start-up and 2 years of implementation. The schools were comprised of 10 elementary, 1 middle, and 5 high schools randomly selected. A randomized-control design was used and maintained in all elementary schools. In all schools, we worked with new principals and their identified teacher leaders and assisted them in creating a distributed leadership school setting.

We were funded by The Annenberg Foundation at a total amount of approximately $4.9 million for the four year project. One-half additional year was

allowed for start up and agreement development purposes. Those resources have allowed us to assist the Philadelphia School District to achieve the outlined project goals and to help principals and teachers to create cultures of reflection, inquiry, and learning that enhance student achievement and complement the principals' leadership development that was occurring through the Principals Leadership Academy supported by the Broad Foundation.

A program logic model was developed (Appendix B) and a Theory of Change (by Project Evaluators in Appendix B) which are helpful in guiding the reader through the project. We will also use the project goals as frameworks in describing the program structure and development:

Goal 1: To develop model distributed leadership teams and communities in 16 Philadelphia schools.

Instructional leadership must be a shared, community undertaking. Leadership is the professional work of everyone in the school (Lambert, 2003). The complexity of the principal's role affirms the need to engage a significant number of classroom teachers as instructional leaders. The traditional model of formal, one-person leadership leaves the substantial talents of teachers largely untapped. Improvements achieved under this model are not easily sustainable; when the principal leaves, promising programs often lose momentum and fade away. As a result of these and other weaknesses, the traditional model has not met the fundamental challenge of providing quality learning for all students.

A powerful force in the quest for alternative and authentic perspectives on leadership practice is the notion of "distributed leadership" which is currently receiving much attention and growing empirical support (Gronn, 2000; Spillane et al., 2001). Instructional improvement requires that people with multiple sources of expertise work in concert around a common problem; this distributed expertise leads to distributed leadership (Spillane, et al., 2001).

In their recent review of successful school improvement efforts, Glickman et al. (2001) constructed a composite list of the characteristics of what they term the "improving school", a "school that continues to improve student learning outcomes for

all students over time". At the top of this list appears "varied sources of leadership, including distributed leadership" (ibid). Similarly, research by Silns and Mulford (2002) has shown that student outcomes are most likely to improve where leadership sources are distributed throughout the school community, and where teachers are empowered in areas of importance to them.

In contrast to traditional notions of leadership premised upon an individual managing hierarchical systems and structures, distributed leadership is characterized as a form of collective leadership, in which teachers develop expertise by working collaboratively. This distributed view of leadership requires schools to "decentre" the leader (Gronn, 2002) and to subscribe to the view that leadership resides "not solely in the individual at the top, but in every person at entry level who in one way or another, acts as a leader" (Coleman, 2002). A contrast of the traditional model and the distributed model intended in this development can be found in Appendix C.

The formal position, therefore, is not the only necessary requisite for leadership. Leadership as stated by Bernard (1938) "is contingent on expertise". Freedkin and Slater (1995) have written that school principals may effectively coordinate and control instructional activities only when they have been acknowledged as credible sources of advice on instructional matters. "Teachers . . . are an important source of leadership for teachers, and when teachers identify other teachers as leaders, they frequently invoke the human capital of these individuals; that is, the knowledge, expertise, and skill of the individual" (Spillane, Hallet and Diamond, 1999; Spillane, Diamond and Jita, 1999).

Distributed leadership, therefore, means multiple sources of guidance and direction, "following the contours of expertise in an organization, made coherent through a common culture. It is the *glue* of a common task or goal – improvement of instruction – and a common frame of values for how to approach that task" (Elmore, 2000).

It is not only reasonable but necessary to think about teams as one thinks about distributed leadership in a building. As Elmore (2003) says, "Powerful leadership is distributed because the work of instructional improvement is distributed." Schools that are improving seldom, if ever, engage exclusively in role-based professional development – that is, professional learning in which people in different roles are segregated from one another. Instead, learning takes place across roles. Improving schools pay attention to

who knows what and how that knowledge can strengthen the organization (Elmore, 2003). It is our belief that distributed leadership teams can accomplish that end in a more effective and coordinated way for the improvement of learning.

The Design for Philadelphia

Since distributed leadership is relatively new in its implementation in schools, a specific research-based training and development plan did not exist that addressed our needs in this project. The distributive perspective addresses the needs identified earlier by providing a framework for collaborative, task-oriented leadership practice that draws upon the expertise of multiple individuals. From a design perspective, the challenge was to develop structures and supports to enact that framework at the school level. Further, preparing teacher leaders and principals for building a distributed setting was an important priority. In the Distributed Leadership Project, this was achieved by creating Distributed Leadership teams in each site, and then providing those teams with a carefully designed and extensive plan for training and leadership coaching (Program Logic – yellow box).

Distributed Leadership teams were formed through an interview process. Interested schools were required to first agree to the project and secure a 2/3 vote of the faculty. Interested individuals submitted applications which were reviewed by the principal and Project Director and Assistant Project Director of the project. Appointment required the approval of the principal. The teams were typically comprised of three to seven individuals, including the principal and assistant principal(s). All received stipends for participation.

During the first year of the project, the teams attended 70 hours of professional development. The training modules were initially modeled on Spillane's (2006) conception of distributed leadership and what teacher leaders needed to know and be able to do. The framework of the modules was developed with James Spillane over a period of several weeks. They were expanded after high schools became involved to address authority, task, and indentify boundaries (Hirschhorn and Gilmore, 1992) which presented needs not surfaced in elementary schools. Training was front-loaded through a week-long session during the summer, which included two days of training by Spillane

on Distributed Leadership and another two days focusing on Professional Learning Communities. A fifth day was focused on the analysis and use of data and one other half-day module. Full and half-day trainings were then conducted throughout the school year on focus and task-specific topics such as "Student Work and Data Analysis" and "Mission and Direction: Building Committed Vision and Goals," as well as process-oriented topics such as "Teams/Teamwork and Conflict Resolution" and "Motivation: The Key to Effective Leadership." In addition to these modules, distributed leadership teams received intensive support from a leadership coach throughout the school year.

Goal 2: To develop a targeted professional development strategy and a regional leadership development center for developing teacher leaders.

The Professional Development Strategy

The teacher leadership development program content is a critical factor in this project. As mentioned in Goal 1, the Director of the project consulted with James Spillane in developing the original framework of training for teacher leadership. That consultation lead to the development of 70 hours of leadership training (see Appendix D: Curriculum Modules) which was delivered throughout year one in modules utilizing both national consultants and University of Pennsylvania faculty which ranged from 3.5 hours (half day) to 7 hours (full day) to 14 hours (two full days).

The topic of each training module was designed to prepare the leadership teams for issues related to and supporting distributed leadership theory guiding the grant. The initial goal was to cultivate teams that function in and of themselves as professional communities and to develop routines with a focus targeted only to instructional leadership and improvement. These teams served as a catalyst for broader change in the school, by both sharing their expertise in specific instructional practices and by working to establish and support norms of collaboration and collegiality among school staff, which fostered professional inquiry into practice and support instructional improvement. The teams also promoted expanded leadership in instruction by their colleagues through 40 additional hours of professional development which they could target to need-specific building and staff instructional needs.

Our project drew on existing programs in the Graduate School of Education at Penn, building on content and processes in those programs and supplementing them, based on needs indentified in buildings, with the best, appropriate content and processes from other nationally known programs and consultants. It was our plan to customize our work to the project schools as much as possible, while developing a teacher leader development program that was transportable to sites who wished to engage in building distributed leadership teams and settings. It was our intent to develop teacher leaders who could coach colleagues, support learning communities, and lead instruction-based issues (data analysis and planning, staff development, retraining staff, curriculum and instruction planning, etc.) in their buildings.

Our primary sources for program content are the 46 modules that have been developed for the Mid-Career Doctorate in Educational Leadership at Penn. Modeled on executive business administration programs at leading business schools, the program addresses the ongoing transformation of public and private educational organizations from a leadership perspective. The curriculum fosters a deep understanding of organizations, institutions, and learning, and their implications for schooling. A focus on inquiry-based leadership cuts across the program's core content areas:

- *Instructional Leadership:* Educational leaders need to be able to grasp and negotiate the learning needs of students and teachers, both in terms of the curriculum that suits their needs and the methods best used in teaching the curriculum.
- *Organizational Leadership:* Successful leaders have many positive qualities, but one of the most important is the ability to use their power to inspire others to change and improve.
- *Public Leadership:* Leaders need to be engaged in productive relationships with the various communities that form the civic context for leadership activities.
- *Evidence-Based Leadership:* Leaders need to be able to identify and employ a variety of data sources and analysis methods to inform decision-making and become more able consumers and producers of data.

The core curricular areas and the 46 modules represent rich sources of leadership learning that were drawn upon to meet the skills required to develop a distributed school leadership team. Those modules were selected based on advice from our national experts and the needs identified in each building chosen.

Finally, the program components were also consistent with training occurring in the Urban School Leadership Development Program developed by Lehigh University and the Academy for Leadership in Philadelphia Schools developed by the Philadelphia School District. While these programs were centered on developing successful principals, elements from both were utilized in the preparation of teacher leaders where continuity and quality can be enhanced by doing so.

In order to build a structure that would be sustainable and scalable, all modules were instructionally designed and co-owned by the School District of Philadelphia and the University of Pennsylvania, and consist of a facilitator guide, participant guide, powerpoint presentation, and a videotape of the original presenter.

This training and the topics were targeted to building teacher leadership in instructional improvement and building a school culture (see blue boxes in Program Logic, Appendix B) which emphasized instructional improvement. The modules have been effective for these purposes, especially in elementary schools, which were our entire school population in year one. As we entered high schools (years two and three) we found expanding needs and added additional sessions focused on building trust, change strategies, and networks. Especially problematic was the introduction of a leadership team focused on instruction in high schools where departments were especially strong and believed that they were empowered as leaders for that purpose.

The development of a Regional Leadership Development Center was an important addition to this grant by the The Annenberg Foundation and represented an additional way to sustain and support this and other leadership work in the region. A sum ($300,000) was allocated to support the beginning of such a Center with the development of an Operating and Advisory Board, hiring an Executive Director, and developing Regional representation, bylaws, and articles of incorporation that would get the Center off the ground.

In their policy brief entitled *Building Capacity for Educational Reform*, O'Day, Goertz, and Floden (1995) indicate that teacher capacity interacts with organizational capacity. They go on to say that

> an individual's ability to accomplish the goals set by the new standards
> depends not only on personal capacity but also on the capabilities of his or
> her colleagues. Among the factors influencing an individual teacher's

ability to teach are the formal and informal networks to which they belong and the teaching context – or culture – of the school. These dimensions of teacher capacity, in turn, are interdependent with those of the department, school and district. (Goertz and Floden, 1995)

This project sought to add capacity to the District through the levels of support that came from the partnership created by the three institutions of higher education and others who can facilitate and assist in providing professional development and other services needed to support change in Philadelphia. Diane Massell (1998) looked at state strategies for building local capacity and found an external infrastructure which provided professional development and technical assistance. She describes external infrastructure as consisting of "regional institutions, educational networks, professional associations, and institutions of higher education" (Massell, 1998).

The Regional Leadership Center

We have begun, as a major institution of higher education in the Philadelphia region partnering with Temple and Lehigh Universities and community organizations, to establish a regional teacher leadership development center which would assist in supporting the sustainability and dissemination of these training goals and models. Since the funding available to do this work is less than that necessary to reach all of the schools in Philadelphia, it is our goal that successes in the 16 buildings targeted by this project may constitute a strong incentive for the District to move forward with this work in the remaining buildings. By developing a regional teacher leadership development center with a cadre of available trainers who have done this work in 16 schools, we would increase the likelihood that that work could continue with a stable training force in place. We have utilized all of the resources at the University of Pennsylvania (and our University partners) in determining the very best trainers, as well as the talented and skilled staff in the Philadelphia schools, who can together form a training corps that could make an ongoing difference.

As we developed and implemented our model for distributed leadership in Philadelphia schools, we have developed a "trainer of trainers" model to ensure that we also build internal capacity. As we have identified exemplary sites who are working effectively in a distributed leadership capacity, we have used those sites as models and

we have involved some of those teachers and administrators in future training. Since we intend to replicate effective distributed leadership practices in Philadelphia, we have consciously built on external capacity for that purpose.

The regional teacher leadership development center will assist with sustainability and function to disseminate training and effective practices from successful distributed leadership schools. We have conducted annual national conferences on distributed leadership to explore with our colleagues what we have learned and how we can use the Regional Training Center to extend that learning across the country. At this writing, an Operating Board has been seated, representing the region, and bylaws and articles of incorporation have been filed. An Executive Director job description has been developed and that position is being advertised and filled.

Goal 3: To develop over 80 effective teacher leaders who can support 16 new principals and central office leaders in achieving and sustaining building-level instructional improvement.

Subject matter and instructional knowledge represent important contexts for teacher leaders' work (Ball and Lacey, 1984; Little, 1993; McLaughlin and Talbert, 1993; Siskin, 1991; 1994). While subject matter specializations are less defined in the elementary level and more directly defined as one moves towards high school, subject matter is an important context for all teachers, regardless of their level of teaching (Stodoldsky, 1988). As one considers reform practices across the land, there is no question that literacy and numeracy have seen many efforts to define what best practice is and how best practices effect student achievement in each building. We expect, and will be assessing, the extent to which strong literacy and numeracy programs across each building are in place at expected levels. The existence of strong programs are essential for maximum impact on student achievement and ongoing developments in professional learning communities.

Knowledge for and about instruction is more complex and multi-dimensional. Spillane, Coldren, and Diamond (2001) cite Shulman's work as especially relevant here. His definitions and distinctions about content knowledge and general pedagogical knowledge are especially useful. Content knowledge refers to the facts of the discipline –

the knowledge, understanding, skill, and dispositions that are to be learned by students, where general pedagogical knowledge includes principles and strategies of classroom management and organization that appear to transcend subject matter (Shulman, 1987).

Curricular knowledge involves the programs designed for the teaching of particular subjects and topics at a given level, the instructional materials available, and the characteristics that serve both the indications and contraindications for the use of particular curriculum or program materials in particular circumstances. Knowledge of learners and their characteristics, concerns of students, and their cultural backgrounds and interests are important in order to make representations interesting to students (Shulman, 1987; Kennedy, 1991). Finally, the wisdom of practice is the maxim that guides the practices of able teachers (Shulman, 1987) – it is knowledge that comes from the teacher's experiences in the classroom. All of these issues become very important as one considers a distributed leadership context because the work of teachers in the classroom represents the most fertile ground for determining areas of responsibility in a distributed leadership setting. Portin et al. (2003) conclude that the area of major consensus for shared leadership across the variety of schools focused on the instructional function. This was identified as the area where principals had not only the highest involvement but where there was the strongest consensus for that involvement across schools.

School-Based Professional Development

Almost everyone writing in the last twenty years about how to improve teaching recommends changing the traditional organization and content of professional development so that it better addresses teachers' learning needs and incorporates findings from cognitive psychology about students' learning needs. Reformers had argued that professional development needed to help teachers teach for understanding requires both new ideas about what counts as professional development and new policies that provide the framework within which professional development can occur.

Given this context and our goal to develop professional learning communities, it was important that we assist in the development of a shared vision in each building, and support the discussion about and implementation of effective instructional practices. In an effort to create not only leadership continuity but a collective capacity to impact

student achievement, we complemented our leadership training and the training that the District has already done with support, team-initiated training that would assist in ensuring that that continuity is widely spread across building faculty. As a result, 40 hours of building-determined need-specific supplemental training that might be required in order to address either curriculum or instruction issues was intended as part of this project and provided in support of the District's standards and program objectives.

To support this important element of the project, a distinguished program in Penn's Graduate School of Education, The Penn Literacy Network (PLN) was involved. Led by Dr. Bonnie Botel-Sheppard, PLN has a 26-year history in providing long-term comprehensive, and self-sustaining professional development and coaching in literacy and mathematics best practices to districts across several states. PLN completed an on-site assessment of literacy and numeracy practices to ascertain if they are rich in active reading, writing, speaking, and listening activities that promote critical thinking, problem-solving, and logical reasoning as focused on the Pennsylvania Academic Standards and the District's curricula. They have helped to determine whether a shared vision and best practices are in place in each building and to what extent.

The results of this assessment identified deficits in virtually all of our sites and helped to determine what additional training or coaching was necessary in literacy and numeracy in each building. A customized plan was developed and presented to the leadership team and the faculty based on this work and the project has involved PLN and other specific consultants in targeted follow-ups. This has been an important prerequisite concurrent to the development of professional learning communities.

While we have developed effective teacher leader and administrative teams who have been conscientious in addressing instructional priorities, the District leadership has constantly undergone change and reorganization. Many supports such as professional development, content coaches, etc., originally included to support the schools in the Project, have been eliminated. At this writing, the 40 hours of professional development per school that the project has created is the major source of ongoing development targeted to their needs available to them. This and the deficit that each began with has been a substantial obstacle to the effectiveness of the teacher leaders and the teams.

Goal 4: To utilize other leadership-building strategies including professional learning communities and coaching to support distributed leadership teams and achieve improved instructional focus and student outcomes in participating schools.

Halverson (2001) maintained that a professional community provides a model for creating the conditions for teachers to hear, share, and experiment with new ideas about practice. He cites the considerable research on the character and effects of professional communities in schools (e.g., Louis, Kruse, and Bryk, 1995; Bryk, Camburn, and Lewis, 1997; Newman and Wehlage, 1995; Youngs and King, 2000; Supovitz and Poglinco, 2000). These researchers indicate that characteristics of schools with strong professional communities include:

- a clear sense of shared purpose and collective responsibility for student learning;
- professional inquiry among staff to achieve that purpose, including opportunities for sustained collaboration and reflection on practice;
- deprivatization of teaching practice and norms of collegiality among teachers and leaders and, finally;
- opportunities for staff to influence school activities and policies.

Strong communities in schools that promote collective responsibility for student learning and norms of collegiality among teachers have been associated with higher levels of student achievement (Lee and Smith, 1996; Little, 1982; Louis, Marks, and Kruse, 1996; Newman and Wehlage, 1995). Research has provided strong evidence that low performing schools can overcome challenges that accompany reform efforts and increase student achievement when the staff and school are organized as Communities of Continuous Inquiry and Improvement (Hord, 2004) or Professional Learning Communities. These communities are school organizations in which staff and administrators actively engage in shared leadership practices focused on the improvement of student learning (Hord, 2004; Louis and Kruse, 1995; Newman and Wehlage, 1995; DuFour and Eaker, 1998). Characteristics of professional learning communities that strongly relate to improving student outcomes include:

- Supportive and shared leadership requiring facilitative and collegial participation of the principal who shares leadership by inviting staff input, decision-making, and action in addressing school issues and challenges.

- Shares values and vision, especially with an unwavering focus and commitment to improved learning for all students.
- Collective staff learning and application of learning to seek new knowledge and application of this learning to solutions that address student needs.
- Supportive conditions that encourage and sustain a collegial culture and collective learning and action.
- Shared practice and peer support for individual and collective instructional improvement.

Professional learning communities do not generate spontaneously in schools (Grossman, Weinberg, and Woolworth, 2000). We do know that a distributed leadership perspective helps to identify and understand the practices that establish the conditions of professional community in schools (Spillane, Halverson, and Diamond, 2001). In the efforts to focus on how leadership is distributed through a school building, one must focus on the leadership tasks necessary for that to occur. A distributed perspective defines instructional leadership as the establishment and maintenance of the conditions for improving teaching and learning and, thus, is supportive of and supported by the development of a professional learning community practices in a school. The professional learning community structure, therefore, is an essential component for both improved student learning and shared leadership. In is also essential to creating the model distributed leadership communities that are intended as part of Goal 1 in this project.

It should be noted that Supovitz and Christman (1993) in their policy brief entitled *Developing Communities and Instructional Practice: Lessons from Cincinnati and Philadelphia* have well-documented the long history of developing professional learning communities in the School District of Philadelphia. These efforts stem back to several prior administrations. In their analysis of the extent to which they are in place and working, Supovitz and Christman found that, in Philadelphia, the reform

> positively influenced the communal culture of schools and the relationship among teachers. However, only in the subset of the schools and teacher communities did the reforms penetrate the instructional culture between teachers around teaching and learning. In these cases, the communal reforms were coupled with an instructional intervention thus . . . only

where *communities* focused on changing the instructional practices of their members was there measurable improvement in student learning. (1993)

It has been our belief that this project should build on the work already done in the District to address the challenges of building professional learning communities, reinforcing their purpose in a distributed leadership context. We have believed that if that context is focused on instruction and student learning and lead by our distributed leadership teams, it would provide a foundation for a more effective building-level learning community. That community would both facilitate engagement and instructional practice and build a coherent focus on improved learning and teacher development at the school level. In doing so, it would reinforce the leadership capacity of the principal. Or, as Supovitz and Christman (2003) state, "if it takes a village to raise our children, then a community of teachers can more effectively instruct them." That has been a target of this project.

Professional Learning Communities in Project Schools

This project has supported this focus on professional learning communities in several ways. Working with a national consultant, we began the project with two days of training on developing professional learning communities. Further, we conducted a baseline, school-wide survey intended to help each school's distributed leadership team assess the state of professional learning communities in their school. The results have been shared with the staff and, after analysis, we have worked with the team to create an action plan for enhancing the development of the school as a professional learning community. Developing/refining the vision for each school was also an important assessment question.

This process provided baseline information on the content and process of the professional learning community and development activities and a plan for moving forward. Individual teacher action plans have supported this effort. This project has also supported that plan through needed education, professional development, coaching, or consultation on an ongoing basis.

An important focus for professional learning communities, and built into early training, is to increase the team's capacity to analyze and understand student work and

data. While the School District of Philadelphia has undertaken rigorous efforts to use data to guide district/school decision-making, we concluded that all schools were not skilled in using data. As we built professional learning communities focused on the achievement of all children, it was critical for teams to be able to use student and school data to identify student needs, improve assignments and instruction, assess student progress, and inform professional development. Data was also used by the school distributed leadership team for program direction (by measuring program effectiveness, instructional effectiveness, guide curriculum development and implementation, etc.), resource allocation, and accountability purposes.

We used student work and data as the primary mechanism for schools in focusing and directing the efforts of professional learning communities. Teachers increased their capacity to analyze student work and data, and built data walls to map out critical targets for improving instruction in the building. Translating successful data-driven decision-making into educational strategy and practice requires a team approach. Our leadership coaches have worked with teams to assist in that effort.

The Leadership Coaching

The leadership coaching has been an important part of our implementation strategy. In their comprehensive study of coaching in America's choice schools, Poglinco, Bach, Hovde, Rosenblum, Saunders and Supovitz (2003) have described coaching as "a form of inquiry-based learning characterized by collaboration between individual, or groups of, teachers and more accomplished peers. Coaching involves professional, ongoing classroom modeling, supportive critiques of practice, and specific observations.

Neufeld and Roper (2003) in their monograph entitled *Coaching: A Strategy For Developing Instructional Capacity,* argue for "change coaching" which addresses "whole school, organizational improvement and help schools examine their resources – time, money, and personnel – and allocate them more effectively. They developed the leadership skills of both teachers and principals." Since this project was developed in concert with two other projects (funded by other organizations) which focus on principals, it is important to remember that this work focused primarily on the education

and support of administrators and teacher leaders in each building. Neufeld and Roper identify the following ways in which change coaches can be helpful to those administrators and teacher leaders:

- Help principals understand the importance of recruiting teachers to assume instructional leadership roles to drive whole-school change
- Act as strategists and assistants in building capacity for shared decision making
- Model leadership skills for principals as well as for teachers
- Assist in scheduling
- Help principals organize their time so that they are able to visit classrooms regularly to observe instruction and offer feedback to teachers.

We believed that change or leadership coaches (or capacity coaches as they came to be called in the Boston Annenberg site) could be extremely valuable in the development of a distributed school setting and leadership agenda that would evolve in such a setting.

Neufeld and Roper (2003) have explained that the goal of coaching is "to engage educators in collaborative work designed to contribute to the development of intellectual capital in schools." It is clear that training itself does not necessarily result in enhanced performance. Hesketh (1997) has indicated that one issue in the lack of transfer of training is that, in general, training programs do not explicitly impart metacognitive skills to trainees. Yet metacognitive skills – the ability to think about one's thoughts, feelings, and behaviors – are essential features in mastering new skills (Carver and Scheier, 1998). Since the fostering of metacognitive skills is central to the coaching process, it has been suggested by Grant (2001) that coaching may prove to be a useful adjunct or replacement for some training programs. Olivero, Bane, and Kopelman (1997) found that training followed by one-to-one coaching, significantly increased productivity compared to training alone. We have endeavored to affect similar results through the use of multiple strategies, including content and capacity coaching.

Leadership (capacity) coaching is the primary coaching that was used in the project. We utilized the knowledge, skills, and experience of retired principals and school leaders who were chosen for the specific skills that they brought to the project. These principals and school leaders have undergone a rigorous executive education program to add to their already substantial backgrounds which cover aspects of this

project that are essential to its implementation. All coaches were trained with the teams in the 70 hours of leadership work required. In addition, we also drew upon an additional resource that our Lehigh University partner began as part of their U.S. Office of Education (USOE) grant. Their center, which was created in collaboration with the National Association of Elementary School Principals (NAESP), assisted newly placed elementary and middle school principals through standards-based mentoring, coaching, collegial support, peer assistance, and networking. NAESP also partnered with National Association of Secondary School Principals (NASSP) to create the National Mentor Center. That Center had already been engaged to assist Philadelphia in their former ALPS Program for training administrators. We utilized the same plan for additional training for our coaches.

Once trained, the coaches were hired to spend 10 hours per week in each distributed leadership building with the teams coaching each team and their members. In that way, an ongoing presence could reinforce the leadership skills, action plans, and developments that the teams undertook. They also reinforced the literacy and numeracy practices and assisted in facilitating the 40 hours of professional development that teams undertook. We met monthly with the coaches to gauge implementation and to address problems and training needs.

Goal 5: To create model distributed leadership agreements with the District and its Unions and a training and development partnership with Lehigh and Temple Universities in support of sustained leadership development and instructional improvement.

Spillane, Coldren, and Diamond (2001) argue that a distributed leadership framework requires that leadership activity "is distributed in the interactive web of actors, artifacts, and situations, which form the appropriate unit of analysis for studying leadership practice." Consequently, leadership practice is not only the purview of positional leaders, but is rather stretched over the work of both formal and informal leaders. Since job descriptions and responsibilities are often defined by contracts, it was logical to attempt to look at decision issues that are faced in a school setting and reach

some level of agreement and understanding about which would be critical in a distributed leadership setting.

In *Making Sense of Leading Schools: A Study of the School Principalship*, Portin et al. (2003) have indicated that a school's governance structure effects the ways key leadership functions are performed. The differences in governance structures across different types of institutions were found to influence the degree to which adults in the school share leadership responsibilities. It also suggested that governance affects how much authority the school had to act in each of the seven leadership areas. In a traditional public setting, the combination of Union contracts, constraints on resources, and a historical vesting of power in the principal can thwart opportunities to distribute leadership across school management functions. The Annenberg Foundation's past history with "Children Achieving" in Philadelphia and the diminished effects of their $50 million investment required that we focus on key issues before we began this project.

Since buildings would require a level of commitment that at times exceeded the contract, we believed that not only would agreements be needed with the District and their Unions, but also with individual principals and teacher leaders (see Appendix E). Over eight months was required before the implementation of this project to obtain those agreements. A thorough explanation of all contract implications was explored and clarified and Memoranda of Understanding (see Appendix E) was signed by all parties.

While this process created some tensions and difficulties during those eight months, the project has enjoyed collaborative and positive support from the District and the Philadelphia Federation of Teachers. This work anticipated and resolved conflict and contract issues before they occurred and we have experienced a model result because of it. A Distributed Leadership Agreement and understanding has prevented implementation problems that would have, but did not, occur.

Conclusion/Summary

Building Distributed Leadership in the Philadelphia School District Project was developed by the Penn Center for Educational Leadership to create model distributed leadership teams in 16 Philadelphia school and expand the capacity and quality of school leadership in Philadelphia. This project adds a substantive leadership dimension – the

development of teacher leaders to build a distributed school setting focused on achieving building-level instructional improvement.

This paper describes the operational design and implementation of the Distributed Leadership Project. During the first year of the project, the teams attend 70 hours of professional development (instructionally-designed training modules). The training modules were initially modeled on Spillane's (2006) conception of distributed leadership. In addition to professional development, distributed leadership teams receive intensive support from a leadership coach throughout the school year. The overall goal of this training and support is to cultivate teams that function as professional communities focused on instructional leadership and improvement. These teams then serve as a catalyst for broader change in the school, by both sharing their expertise in specific instructional practices and by working to establish and support norms of collaboration and collegiality among school staff, which foster professional inquiry into practice and support instructional improvement. A randomized-control design is utilized to evaluate progress in elementary schools. Finally, the development of a regional teacher leadership development center increases the likelihood of sustainability and dissemination.

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APPENDIX A

PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION & SUCCESS INDICATORS

PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION AND SUCCESS INDICATORS			
GOALS	**ACTION PLAN ELEMENTS**	**EXPECTED OUTCOMES**	**SUCCESS INDICATORS**
1. To develop model distributed leadership teams and communities in 16 Philadelphia schools.	• Develop new principal and teacher leaders (teams) in distributed leadership with 16 schools. • Develop distributed leadership agreements and understandings. • Develop a shared vision of informed practice in each building. • Develop professional learning communities in each building. • Coach and mentor to create a distributed leadership school setting.	• Development of characteristics of training model for distributed leadership. • Teacher leaders and administrators trained in key organizational elements and as a team. • Distributed leadership agreements in place and functioning. • A written and practiced shared vision of informed practice in place in all schools. • Development of professional learning communities in all schools with a focus on instruction. • Teams supported by leadership coaches and evidence that distributed leadership teams are working in all schools.	• Identification of key elements of a comprehensive professional development model. • Teacher leaders supporting the principal in agreed leadership areas in all schools. • Principals and teacher leaders working as a distributed leadership team in all schools. • Evidence that distributed leadership agreements are working being implemented and honored. • Consistent reference to and adherence to shared vision by school staff. • Teams leading and faculty involved in PLC's focused on instruction.
2. To develop a targeted professional development strategy and a regional teacher leadership development center for developing teacher leaders.	• Develop principal and teacher leaders (teams) in distributed leadership. • Develop a regional teacher leadership development center and a cadre of trainers.	• Refinement of education model and development of a professional development strategy for teacher leader development. • Development of a cadre of professional trainers who are effective in delivering the training. • Development of a regional teacher leadership development center for principals and teachers on distributed leadership.	• Clear articulation of a education model and professional development strategy that has worked consistently in developing teacher leaders. • Identification of a training cadre of at least two effective trainers per module of distributed leadership education. • Clear articulation of program of services, and staff to deliver professional development to principals and teachers. • A regional teacher leadership development center will be collaboratively planned, developed, and operate before the end of this project.
3. To develop over 80 effective teacher leaders who can support 16 new principals and central office leaders in achieving and sustaining building-level instructional improvement.	• Educate over 80 teacher leaders in distributed leadership. • Develop a shared vision of informed practice and supplemental training on best practices in instructional and curricular areas (if needed). • Increase capacity for analysis and understanding of student work and data.	• 80 teacher leaders are supporting new principals in distributed leadership in all buildings. • Teacher leaders share and promote the shared vision developed in each building. • Teacher leaders possess, update, and regularly share best practices in instruction and curricular areas. • Teacher leaders assist teachers in analyzing and understanding student data	• Principals' Evaluation Team reports effectiveness of teacher leaders in distributed leadership setting. • Teacher leaders promote the shared school vision, and coach staff in implementation. • Teacher leaders and teachers practice and lead sessions for data analysis and use. • Teacher leaders support the professional learning communities and actively participate in their development and growth.

Prepared by: The Penn Center for Educational Leadership
Graduate School of Education
University of Pennsylvania

	PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION AND SUCCESS INDICATORS		
GOALS	**ACTION PLAN ELEMENTS**	**EXPECTED OUTCOMES**	**SUCCESS INDICATORS**
3. (continued)	• Develop professional learning communities.	• Teacher leaders coach and support professional learning communities.	• Evidence that distributed leadership teams are achieving and sustaining building level instructional improvement. •
4. To utilize other leadership-building strategies including professional learning communities and coaching to support distributed leadership teams and achieve improved instructional focus and student outcomes in participating schools.	• Develop a shared vision of informed practice and provide supplemental training in best practices in instructional and curricular areas (if needed). • Develop professional learning communities in each building. • Provide coaching and mentoring to create a distributed leadership school setting.	• A written shared vision developed by school and in place. • Shared vision guides practice in each school. • Best practices are in place/or supplemental training undertaken. • Professional learning communities focus on shared vision and best practices for instruction. • Leadership coaching and mentoring supports the distributed leadership teams. • Content coaching (if necessary) supports school staffs in instruction, in literacy, and numeracy.	• Written shared vision is evident in practice. • Each building is meeting content standards or supplemental training undertaken as confirmed by on-site assessment of best practices. • Professional learning communities are in place in all buildings and focused on instructional improvement. • Distributed leadership teams are working effectively in each building. • Improvement of deficits can be observed as a result of coaching. • Evidence that distributed leadership teams are achieving improved instructional focus and student outcomes in participating schools.
5. To create model distributed leadership agreements with the District and its unions and a training and development partnership with Temple and Lehigh Universities in support of sustained leadership development and instructional improvement.	• Develop distributed leadership agreements and understandings. • Develop a regional teacher leadership development center and a cadre of trainers.	• A written model distributed leadership agreement and understanding will be developed with both teacher's and administrator's unions. • That model agreement will guide implementation processes for distributed leadership. • Partners will be written into this project for collaborative work and be part of the communication/governance structure. • Collaterally, Penn will be brought into their ongoing projects for continuity and communication. • The regional teacher leadership development center will incorporate outcomes of the work of Lehigh, Temple, and the School District of Philadelphia.	• The project will encounter few or no conflicts in implementing training or teams in buildings. • Any problems that might occur can be easily and amicably resolved. • Communication and cooperation with Lehigh and Temple will extend resource and represent a model for future efforts. • A regional training center will be collaboratively planned, developed, and operate before the end of this project. • School District of Philadelphia capacity will be extended by training many District leaders teachers and administrators) who can train others.

Distributed Leadership Initiative Outcomes

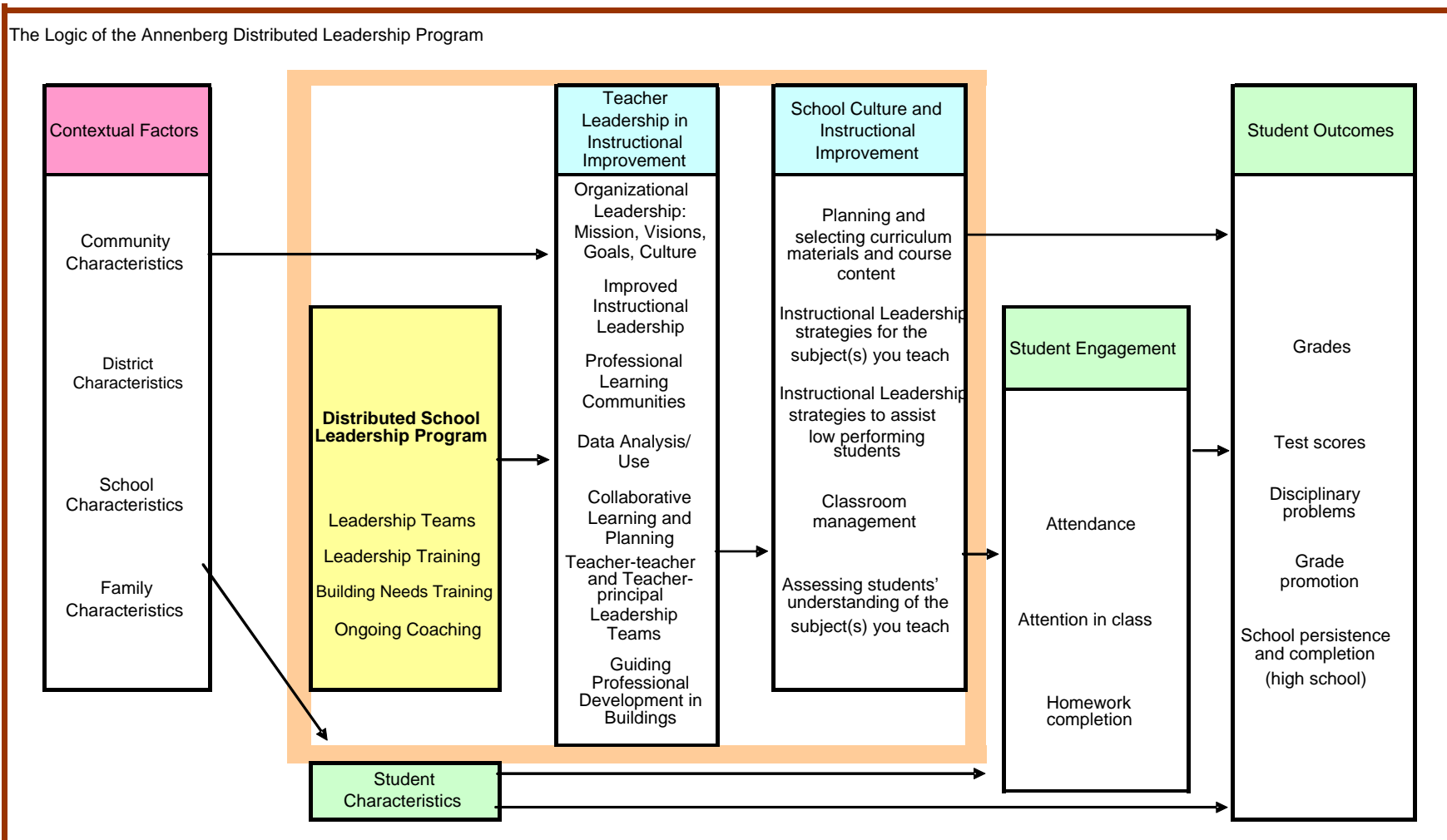| Short-Term Outcomes (1-2 Years)	Intermediate Outcomes (2-3 Years)	Long-Term Outcomes (4-5 years)
• Development of characteristics of training model for distributed leadership		
• Teacher leaders and administrators trained in key organizational, instructional, and evidence-based elements and as a team	• Refinement of education model and development of a professional development strategy for teacher leader development	
• 20 teacher leaders are supporting new principals in distributed leadership in all buildings	• 40 teacher leaders are supporting new principals in distributed leadership in all buildings	• 80 teacher leaders are supporting new principals in distributed leadership in all buildings
• Development of a cadre of professional trainers who are effective in delivering the training	• Development of a second cadre of professional trainers who are effective in delivering the training	
• Distributed leadership agreements in place and functioning		
• A written model distributed leadership agreement and understanding will be developed with district's teacher and administrator unions		
• That model agreement will guide implementation processes for distributed leadership	• That model agreement will guide implementation processes for distributed leadership	• That model agreement will guide implementation processes for distributed leadership
• A written shared vision developed by four (4) schools and in place	• A written shared vision developed by eight (8) schools and in place • Shared vision guides practice in eight (8) schools	• A written shared vision developed by sixteen (16) schools and in place • Shared vision guides practice in sixteen (16) schools • A written and practiced shared vision of informed practice in place in all schools
• Professional learning communities focus on shared vision and best practices for instruction	• Professional learning communities focus on shared vision and best practices for instruction • Best practices are in place/or supplemental training undertaken	• Teacher leaders coach and support professional learning communities • Development of professional learning communities in all schools with a focus on instruction

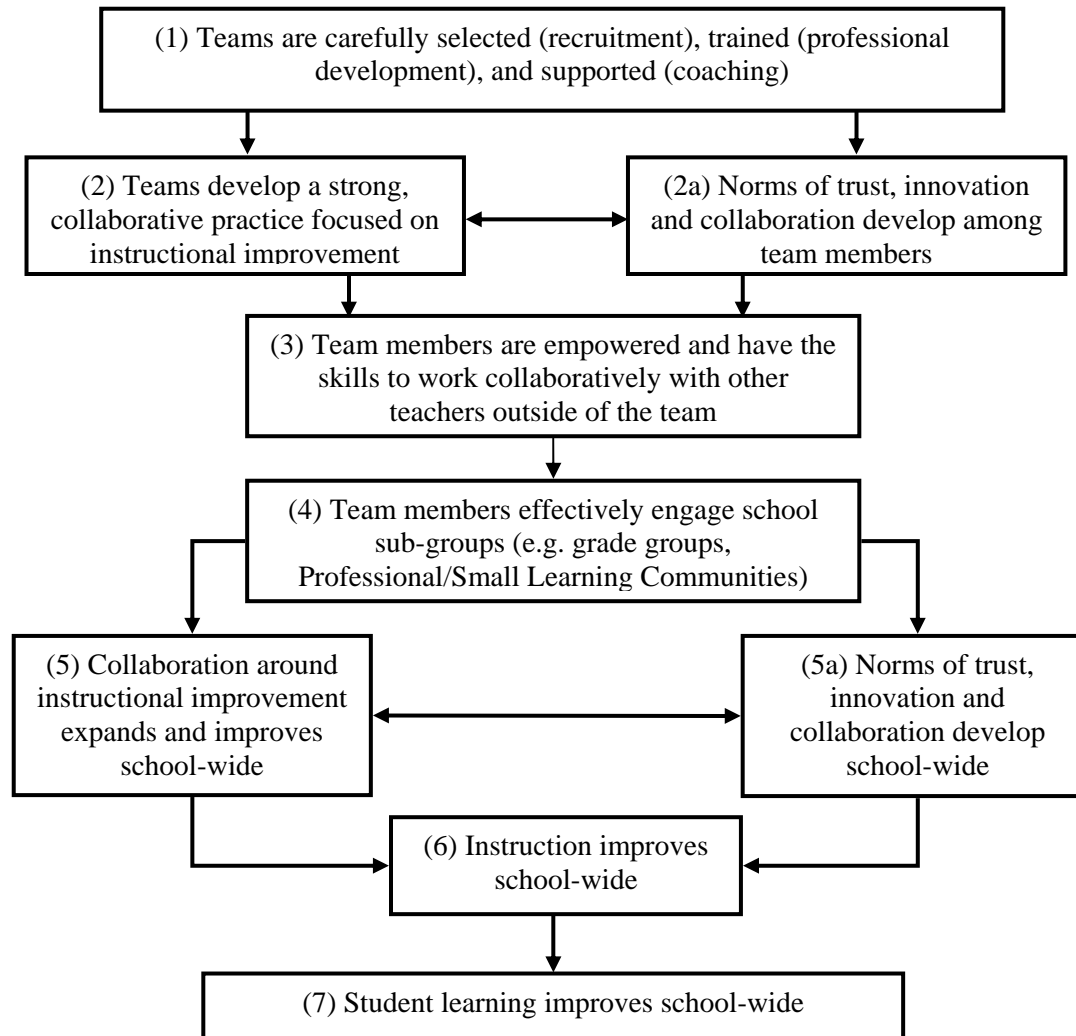| Short-Term Outcomes (1-2 Years)	Intermediate Outcomes (2-3 Years)	Long-Term Outcomes (4-5 years)
♦ Teacher leaders assist teachers in analyzing and understanding student data	♦ Teacher leaders assist teachers in analyzing and understanding student data ♦ Teacher leaders share and promote the shared vision developed in each building	♦ Teacher leaders assist teachers in analyzing and understanding student data ♦ Teacher leaders share and promote the shared vision developed in each building
	♦ Teacher leaders possess, update, and regularly share best practices in instruction and curricular areas	♦ Teacher leaders possess, update, and regularly share best practices in instruction and curricular areas
♦ Leadership coaching and mentoring supports the distributed leadership teams	♦ Leadership coaching and mentoring supports the distributed leadership teams	♦ Leadership coaching and mentoring supports the distributed leadership teams
♦ Content coaching (if necessary) supports school staffs in instruction, literacy, and numeracy	♦ Content coaching (if necessary) supports school staffs in instruction, literacy, and numeracy	♦ Content coaching (if necessary) supports school staffs in instruction, literacy, and numeracy ♦ Teams supported by leadership coaches and evidence that distributed leadership teams are working in all schools
♦ Partners will be written into this project for collaborative work and be part of the communication/ governance structure	♦ Collaterally, Penn will be brought into ongoing partner projects for continuity and communication ♦ Partners will participate in communication/governance structure	♦ Partners will participate in communication/governance structure

♦ Development of a regional teacher leadership development center for principals and teachers (including distributed leadership). Key activities:
  • Conduct visitations
  • Form Leadership Center Advisory Council
	♦ Development of a regional teacher leadership development center for principals and teachers (including distributed leadership). Key activities:
	  • Form Leadership Center Advisory Council
	  • Develop Funding Base
	  • Explore and select possible site
		♦ Development of a regional teacher leadership development center for principals and teachers (including distributed leadership). Key activities:
		  • Hire Executive Director
		  • Finalize site development
		  • Finalize base of funding
		  • Conduct opening event
		
		♦ The regional teacher leadership development center will incorporate outcomes of the work of Lehigh, Temple, and the School District of Philadelphia.

PROGRAM LOGIC AND THEORY OF CHANGE

The Program Logic

The Logic of the Annenberg Distributed Leadership Program

Contextual Factors	Distributed School Leadership Program	Teacher Leadership in Instructional Improvement	School Culture and Instructional Improvement	Student Engagement	Student Outcomes
Community Characteristics		Organizational Leadership: Mission, Visions, Goals, Culture	Planning and selecting curriculum materials and course content		Grades
District Characteristics		Improved Instructional Leadership	Instructional Leadership strategies for the subject(s) you teach		Test scores
School Characteristics	Leadership Teams Leadership Training Building Needs Training Ongoing Coaching	Professional Learning Communities	Instructional Leadership strategies to assist low performing students	Attendance	Disciplinary problems
Family Characteristics		Data Analysis/ Use	Classroom management	Attention in class	Grade promotion
		Collaborative Learning and Planning			School persistence and completion (high school)
		Teacher-teacher and Teacher-principal Leadership Teams	Assessing students' understanding of the subject(s) you teach	Homework completion	
		Guiding Professional Development in Buildings			

Student Characteristics

37

Theory of change (school level)

(1) Teams are carefully selected (recruitment), trained (professional development), and supported (coaching)

(2) Teams develop a strong, collaborative practice focused on instructional improvement

(2a) Norms of trust, innovation and collaboration develop among team members

(3) Team members are empowered and have the skills to work collaboratively with other teachers outside of the team

(4) Team members effectively engage school sub-groups (e.g. grade groups, Professional/Small Learning Communities)

(5) Collaboration around instructional improvement expands and improves school-wide

(5a) Norms of trust, innovation and collaboration develop school-wide

(6) Instruction improves school-wide

(7) Student learning improves school-wide

MOVING TO A DISTRIBUTED LEADERSHIP STRUCTURE:

A FRAMEWORK FOR THE ANNENBERG DL PROJECT REVISED

Moving to a Distributed Leadership Structure: A Framework For the Annenberg DL Project Revised

Building Distributed Leadership Initiative

Distributed Leadership in Practice Workshop

November 2, 2007

John DeFlaminis
Executive Director
Penn Center for Educational Leadership
University of Pennsylvania

||Penn Center for Educational
LEADERSHIP

Moving to a Distributed Leadership Structure Implementation Checklist

Stage of Implementation	Please Check	Details of Implementation Observed
Level 1 – Traditional Chain of Command		
Level 2 – Leader is Central		
Level 3 – Shared Decision-Making and Authority		
Level 4 – Extensive Shared Decision-Making and Authority		
Level 5 – Distributed Leadership		
Level 6 – Highly Distributed Leadership		

Name _____

Name of School _____

2

1

Moving to a Distributed Leadership Structure
Leadership in Schools

Traditional Leadership	**Distributed Leadership**
• Information flows through formal and informal channels; based on need to know	• Open and Distributed information system
• Emphasis on stability	• Emphasis on change and adaptability
• Decision-making centers in school leader	• Decision-making shared with team members
• Principal directs the organization's members in influencing the core work	• Direction of organization's members is distributed in influencing the core work
• Emphasis on vertical role structure leadership	• Emphasis on empowered, Distributed Leadership

3

Level 1 – Traditional Chain of Command
Positions leader above and separate from the work team.
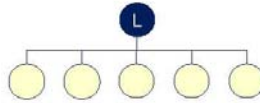
The Leader	**Team Members**
• Locus of leader command between the team and higher management	• Follow directions.
	• Work for the leader more so than with each other.
• Has sole authority for decision-making.	• Have limited access to higher management. Provides information to leader as requested.
• Set apart by role, title, and position.	• Limited communication with the leader (mostly around work).
• Directs the organization's members in influencing the core work.	• No direction of organization's members in influencing the core work.

4

Level 2 – Leader is Central

Positions leader from above to the center of the work group (especially for communications) but distinction still exists between what leader and work team does.
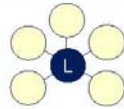
The Leader	Team Members
• Leader locus central to team communication and decision-making.	• Rely on leader for information and direction.
	• Provide information to leader for decision-making as needed.
• Directs most activities.	• Individual leadership may be exercised on non-leader led issues.
• Accessible to all team members.	• Directed by leader on key decisions.
• Directs the team and organization members in influencing the core work	• May affect direction of organization members in influencing the core work.

5

Level 3–Some Shared Decision-Making & Authority

Positions leader central to the team but leader begins to shift decision-making authority. Team members share responsibilities belonging to leader who encourages communication, collaboration, and teamwork among team members.
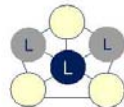
The Leader	Team Members
• Shares decision-making authority in selected areas.	• Involved in decision-making in selected areas.
• Encourages independence/leadership in selected areas.	• Scope of responsibility expands for some team members.
• Promotes teamwork, collaboration and communication among team members.	• Developing teamwork and collaborative/communication skills.
• Develops team and team members for increased responsibility.	• Growing collaborative team and spirit. May not include entire team.
• Shares direction of organization members in influencing the core work.	• Share some direction of organization members in influencing the core work.

6

3

Level 4–Extensive Shared Decision-Making & Authority

Leader and team develop confidence in shared decision-making and authority. Team members share more responsibilities belonging to leader who encourages even greater communication, collaboration, and teamwork.
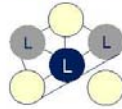
The Leader	Team Members
• Shares decision-making authority in more areas and across more team members.	• Involvement in decision-making in more areas and across more team members.
• Encourages independent leadership in more areas and across more team members.	• Scope of responsibility expands for most team members.
• Promotes teamwork, collaboration, and communication among team members	• Strong teamwork and collaborative communication skills.
• Develops interdependent team and team members for increased responsibility.	• Strong, interdependent and collaborative team and spirit.
• Shares direction of organization members in influencing the core work.	• Share more direction of organization members in influencing the core work.

Level 5 – Distributed Leadership

The leader is no longer central to the team and greater interdependence develops and exists between the team members and the leader. The leader has delegated some responsibilities and decisions and the team's authority has increased.
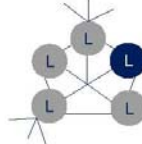
The Leader	Team Members
• Has shifted from sole doer to supporter, coach, and facilitator in distributed areas.	• Assume distributed duties/areas with little assistance from the leader.
• Works with team to expand authority to higher level responsibilities.	• Work closely with school staffs and, in many cases, other team members. Some form their own networks.
• Coordinates the team efforts.	• Assume distributed responsibilities formerly held by the leader and have decision-making authority in those areas.
• Allows others to direct organization members in influencing distributed areas of the core work.	• Direct organization members in influencing distributed areas of the core work.

4

Level 6 – Highly Distributed Leadership

Team members are self-directed and the leader's role has shifted to other issues, while still providing direction and acting as a resource when needed. Group members are available for more responsibility.
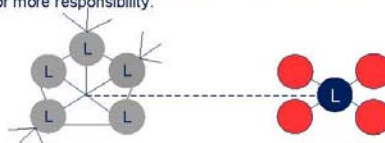
The Leader

- Supports, coaches and counsels (as needed) the self-directed teams as they take on increasingly challenging responsibilities.
- Free to focus on new issues outside the teams.
- Identifies new responsibilities for team.
- Delegates to others to direct organization members in influencing distributed areas of the core work.
- May begin another distributed leadership team in new area.

Team Members

- Self-directed and confident in distributed leadership areas. Makes decisions in those areas.
- Take full ownership of most aspects of delegated areas.
- May be able to assume more new responsibilities. Highly evolved networks develop.
- Direct organization members in influencing distributed areas of the core work.

9

CURRICULUM MODULES

Annenberg Distributed Leadership in Philadelphia Schools Project
Curriculum Modules

Ref	Title		Time (hours)

0	The Distributed Perspective
	  1. Module One
	    -Unit One-Leaders, Leadership, Leadership Practice
	    -Unit Two-Core Elements
	    -Unit Three-Practice Aspect
	    -Unit Four-Diagnostic and Design
	  2. Module Two
	    -Unit Two-Diagnostic Work: Working from the Top
	    -Unit Three-Working from the Bottom
		James Spillane with Camille Rutherford, Treavor Doherty, The School of Education and Social Policy Northwestern University	14

	Modules Developed by the Distributed Leadership Project		
1	Developing Professional Learning Communities	Ann Delehant	14.00
2	Mission and Direction: Shared Vision, Values and Commitments	John DeFlaminis, Alice Reyes, Jeanne Vissa	3.50
3	Emotional Intelligence	David Smith, Eddie Mwelwa (Teleos)	3.50
4	Building District Leadership Teams	Charles Dwyer	3.50
5	Teamwork and Conflict Resolution	Charles Dwyer	3.50
6	Building Bridges and Connections	Harris Sokoloff	3.50
7	Evidence-Based Leadership Using Data to Guide School Improvement	Jon Supovitz	7.00
8	Leadership for Literacy Teaching and Learning	Patricia Baxter	3.50
9	Motivation: The Key to Effective Leadership	John DeFlaminis	3.50
10	Fostering Leadership in Mathematics	Jeanne Vissa	3.50
11	Collaborative Learning Cultures	Debbie Bambino	3.50
12	Developing Evidence-Based and Shared Decision-Making	John DeFlaminis, Jon Supovitz	3.50
12	Total Number of Modules		70.00

Annenberg Distributed Leadership in Philadelphia Schools Project
Curriculum Modules

Ref	Title		Time (hours)
0	*The Distributed Perspective* Learn about the Distributed Perspective of Leadership which includes leadership practice as the central and anchoring concern; leadership practice as generated in the interactions of leaders, followers and their situations and how the aspects of the situation both contribute to defining leadership practice and are defined through leadership practice. 3. Module One • Unit One-Leaders, Leadership, Leadership Practice • Unit Two-Core Elements • Unit Three-Practice Aspect • Unit Four-Diagnostic and Design 4. Module Two • Unit Two-Diagnostic Work: Working from the Top • Unit Three-Working from the Bottom	James Spillane with Camille Rutherford, Treavor Doherty, The School of Education and Social Policy Northwestern University	14.00
	Modules Developed by the Distributed Leadership Project		
1	*Developing Professional Learning Communities* Learn about effective learning communities including how to link the work of professional learning communities with student achievement, building community and trust, protocols for looking at student work, the elements of a good rubric and practice writing a rubric.	Ann Delehant	14.00
2	*Mission and Direction: Shared Vision, Values and Commitments* Learn how to delineate the role that leaders play in developing vision and goals and sustaining them for their schools. Learn how to consider stakeholder roles from a cultural perspective when defining mission and vision.	John DeFlaminis, Mary Hornyak, Jeanne Vissa	3.50
3	*Emotional Intelligence* Learn how to work well with others, have self-confidence, bounce back from difficulties, empathize with how others are feeling and to control your emotions.	David Smith, Eddie Mwelwa (Teleos)	3.50
4	*Building District Leadership Teams* Learn about teambuilding which commits people to engage in patterns of behavior and produces performance that results in desired outcomes.	Charles Dwyer	3.50
5	*Teamwork and Conflict Resolution* Learn the types of conflict and approaches to managing conflict in an effort to obtain cooperation in attaining goals.	Charles Dwyer	3.50

6	*Building Bridges and Connections* Learn a multi-faceted understanding of concepts and practices for engaging different stakeholders in improving student learning. This module focuses on different engagement practices and how to apply them inside, as well as outside, your school.	Harris Sokoloff	3.50
7	*Evidence-Based Leadership Using Data to Guide School Improvement* Learn how to effectively use data to inform decision-making, provide effective feedback, and review the use of data modeling tools. You will identify ways to make innovative use of student performance data at your school.	Jon Supovitz	7.00
8	*Leadership for Literacy Teaching and Learning* Learn how to define literacy within the context of your work, review best practices for school-wide literacy practices, explore research-based literacy strategies and draft an action plan for literacy leadership.	Patricia Baxter	3.50
9	*Motivation: The Key to Effective Leadership* Understand motivation and how it evolved as a process over time; develop an understanding of the elements of motivation and how each can be managed in a school setting, and the connections between the elements of motivation, motivating colleagues and functioning as a distributed leadership team.	John DeFlaminis	3.50
10	*Fostering Leadership in Mathematics* Learn how to identify directions for mathematics learning to propose for your school, consider best practices in mathematics education and understand changes in mathematics education.	Jeanne Vissa	3.50
11	*Collaborative Learning Culture*s Learn about collaboration including the current status of collaboration in your school, possible resisters, structures and tools that can be used to sustain collaboration and how to develop a theory of action that builds the collaborative capacity of your team and staff as a whole.	Debbie Bambino	3.50
12	*Developing Evidence-Based and Shared Decision-Making* Learn about and understand the mental models that impact our thinking and the role of data in decision-making; use data to improve the quality and acceptance of your team's decision and explore models that can help the distributed leadership team to understand when and how to involve others in shared decision-making.	John DeFlaminis/Jon Supovitz	3.50
	Total Number of Module Hours		70.00

APPENDIX E

MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING

Responsibilities of the Principal in the Distributed Leadership Project

I.   With respect to Initiative training, each Principal will:

a.   Engage in at least one hundred (100) hours of training for each new School site in its first year of the Initiative. Up to forty (40) hours may be scheduled during the summer. The remainder will be scheduled during the school year, up to six (6) hours per week, and may include Saturday activities.

b.   Subsequent to the School's initial year of Initiative participation, engage in not less than five (5) training hours each year throughout the remainder of the Initiative.

II. In addition to those hours dedicated to training, each Principal will fully support the Initiative in the following manner:

a.   Utilize and support the leadership coach in his/her work with the Distributed Leadership Team which shall consist of a minimum of ten (10) hours per week per year for each school site, a minimum of five (5) of these hours will be spent with teacher leaders.

b.   Participate in this Initiative with a commitment to distributed or shared leadership in the area of instructional improvement for the School.

c.   Provide leadership to the selection team in the selection process of teacher leaders and determine the final decision regarding those selected.

d.   Engage in all training activities with teacher leaders so that an effective team can be built.

e.   Commit to the development of a written shared vision to guide the practice and focus of the professional learning communities in the School.

f.   Work with the Distributed Leadership Team in creating effective professional learning communities with a focus on instruction in each School.

g.   Agree to utilize leadership coaches to support the Distributed Leadership Team.

h.   Oversee the work of the Distributed Leadership Team in the area of instruction to maximize the Team's effectiveness.

i.   Arrange schedules and coverage to ensure that teacher leaders are available to work with coaches according to the schedule developed by the Distributed Leadership Team.

j.   Ensure that the technical providers and evaluators have ready access to information, such as school-level data, and are able to work easily on-site with principals, teacher leaders, and other School personnel.

k.   Permit the Regional Superintendent and the Executive Director, Leadership Academy to oversee of the effectiveness of the principal's work.

l.   Permit evaluators to monitor progress in all areas agreed upon by the School District and Penn.

m. Provide a monthly report to Penn, the School District of Philadelphia, and the Annenberg Foundation regarding the progress of the DLI. Such report will be in a format as provided by Penn and shall be submitted no later than the fifth day of each month following the month for which the information is reported.

Responsibilities of the Teacher Leaders in the Distributed Leadership Project

III. With respect to Initiative training, each teacher leader will:

c. Engage in at least one hundred (100) hours of training for each new School site in its first year of the Initiative. Up to forty (40) hours may be scheduled during the summer. The remainder will be scheduled during the school year, up to six (6) hours per week, and may include Saturday activities. Summer 2006 training is June 25 through June 29 at Penn

d. Subsequent to the School's initial year of Initiative participation, engage in not less than five (5) training hours each year throughout the remainder of the Initiative.

IV. In addition to those hours dedicated to training, each Teacher Leader will fully support the Initiative by signing a memorandum of agreement and participating in the following manner:

n. Utilize and support the leadership coach in his/her work with the Distributed Leadership Team which shall consist of a minimum of ten (10) hours per week per year for each school site, a minimum of five (5) of these hours will be spent with teacher leaders.

o. Participate in this Initiative with a commitment to distributed or shared leadership in the area of instructional improvement for the School.

p. Engage in all training activities with other teacher leaders and the principal so that an effective team can be built.

q. Commit to the development of a written shared vision to guide the practice and focus of the professional learning communities in the School.

r. Utilize rostered common prep time for the Initiative coaching, mentoring, and school leadership activities.

s. Work with the principal and the Distributed Leadership Team in creating effective professional learning communities with a focus on instruction in each School.

t. Agree to utilize leadership coaches to support the Distributed Leadership Team.

u. Oversee the work of the Distributed Leadership Team in the area of instruction to maximize the Team's effectiveness.

v. Regularly update and share best practices in instruction and curricular areas with colleagues.

w. Assist teachers who are not members of the team in analyzing, understanding and using student data.

x. Ensure that the technical providers and evaluators have ready access to information, such as school-level data, and are able to work easily on-site with principals, teacher leaders, and other School personnel.

y. Permit evaluators to monitor progress in all areas agreed upon by the School District and Penn.

Distributed Leadership Initiative
School-Based Memorandum of Understanding

This School-Based Memorandum of Understanding memorializes the agreements and understandings among the members of the Distributed Leadership Team at [Name] School who have agreed to participate in the Distributed Leadership Initiative ("DLI" or "Initiative") advanced by the University of Pennsylvania's Graduate School of Education ("Penn") in partnership with the School District of Philadelphia with funding from the Annenberg Foundation.

DLI is a multi-year program in which selected School District schools will participate. The focus of the Initiative is on training teacher leaders and supporting new principals through the building of distributed leadership teams and professional learning communities for instructional improvement in the participating schools.

The term of the Initiative is four years and will target four Schools in year one, four additional Schools in year two, and eight additional Schools in year three ("School" or "Schools").

Penn in its sole discretion and in conjunction with the Annenberg Foundation, may discontinue the involvement of a particular School, principal, and/or teacher, at any stage of involvement in DLI. In the event such discontinuation is necessary, Penn, with the agreement of the Annenberg Foundation, may choose to select an alternate.

The School District, Penn, the Philadelphia Federation of Teachers ("PFT"), and the Commonwealth Association of School Administrators ("CASA") are parties to a Memorandum of Understanding and have endorsed their individual and collective commitments to the Initiative.

At [Name] School, DLI will promote the advancement of the school's shared vision.

In focusing on school-level instructional improvement, DLI will enhance the school improvement plans in [Name] School and support its implementation.

The Principal of [Name] School, and Teacher Leaders selected as members of the Distributed Leadership Team of the school, by their endorsement of this MOU, agree to carry out their responsibilities for the Initiative's success as follows:

Roles and Responsibilities of the Principal

Upon the School District's selection of the [Name] School for inclusion in the Initiative, the Principal agreed to the selection and will voluntarily participate in the Initiative.

A.   With respect to Initiative training, the Principal will:

1.   Engage in at least one hundred (100) hours of training for each new School site in its first year of the Initiative. Up to forty (40) hours may be scheduled during the summer. The remainder will be scheduled during the school year, up to six (6) hours per week, and may include up to two Saturday activities each year.

2.   Subsequent to the School's initial year of Initiative participation, engage in not less than five (5) training hours each year throughout the remainder of the Initiative.

B.   In addition to those hours dedicated to training, the Principal will:

1.   Utilize and support the leadership coach in his/her work with the Distributed Leadership Team which shall consist of a minimum of ten (10) hours per week per year for each school site, a minimum of five (5) of these hours will be spent with teacher leaders.

2. Commit to continuing his/her assignment to [Name] School during the term of the Initiative (eg no lateral transfers). (The above notwithstanding, a promotion to a new administrative position shall not be prohibited)

3. Commit to the principles of distributed or shared leadership in the area of instructional improvement for the [Name] School.

4. Provide leadership to the selection team in the selection process of teacher leaders and make the final decision regarding those selected.

5. Engage in all training activities with teacher leaders so that an effective Distributed Leadership Team can be built.

6. Commit to the development of a written shared vision to guide the practice and focus of the professional learning communities in the [Name] School.

7. Work with the Distributed Leadership Team of the [Name] School to create effective professional learning communities that are focused on instructional improvement in the [Name] School, and oversee the Team's work to maximize effectiveness.

8. Roster common prep time for Initiative coaching, mentoring, and school leadership activities.

9. Arrange schedules and coverage to ensure that teacher leaders are available to work with coaches according to the schedule developed by the Distributed Leadership Team at [Name] School.

10. Ensure that the technical providers and evaluators have ready access to information, such as school-level data, and are able to work easily on-site with all personnel in [Name] School.

11. Recognize that the Regional Superintendent and the Executive Director, Leadership Academy will oversee the effectiveness of the principal's work as it relates directly to the DLL.

12. Permit evaluators to monitor progress in all areas agreed upon by the School District and Penn.

13. Provide a monthly report to Penn, School District, and the Annenberg Foundation regarding the progress of the DLL. Such report will be in a format as provided by Penn and shall be submitted no later than the fifth day of each month following the month for which the information is reported.

The Principal agrees that her/his faithful attendance in training, mentoring, and Initiative activities, as well as the degree to which she/he has implemented Distributed Leadership strategies shall be incorporated into her/his annual goals for purposes of performance appraisal by the School District.

The Principal agrees that a stipend of $3,000 for the first year, and $2,200 for the second, third, and forth years of the School's involvement with the Initiative for the Principal's work in the Initiative for full Initiative participation will constitute total compensation for such participation. Full Initiative participation for the Principal is delineated in A and B above.

Roles and Responsibilities of Teacher Leaders

Upon the School District's selection of the [Name] School for inclusion in the Initiative, and the selection team's decision on the Teacher Leaders to participate in the Initiative, each Teacher Leader who is named in this MOU has agreed to voluntarily participate in the Initiative.

A. With respect to Initiative training, each Teacher Leader will:

1. Engage in at least one hundred (100) hours of training for each new School site in its first year of the Initiative. Up to forty (40) hours may be scheduled during the summer. The remainder will be

scheduled during the school year, up to six (6) hours per week, and may include up to two Saturday activities each year.

2. Subsequent to the School's initial year of Initiative participation, engage in not less than five (5) training hours each year throughout the remainder of the Initiative.

B. In addition to those hours dedicated to training, each Teacher Leader will:

1. Utilize and support the leadership coach in his/her work with the Distributed Leadership Team which shall consist of a minimum of ten (10) hours per week per year for each school site, a minimum of five (5) of these hours will be spent with teacher leaders.

2. Utilize rostered common prep time for Initiative coaching, mentoring, and school leadership activities.

3. Implement the professional development program, of [Name] School including mentoring activities as it is modified to achieve consistency with the Initiative.

4. Fully support the Initiative in the following manner:

   o Assist and help manage the ongoing development of the professional learning communities with a focus on instruction.

   o Coach and support professional learning communities.

   o Promote a shared vision of informed practice.

   o Regularly update and share best practices in instruction and curricular areas with colleagues.

   o Assist teachers who are not members of the team in analyzing, understanding, and using student data.

   o Support the principal and each other in efforts to improve the content knowledge and instructional strategies of teachers, and, as a result, the student achievement in the [Name] School as well as other participating Schools.

   o Permit the evaluation team to monitor progress in all areas agreed upon by the School District and Penn.

   o Work collaboratively with the principal and other Teacher Leaders in promoting quality instruction for all students.

   o Allow evaluators to enter and observe individual classrooms for Initiative evaluation/assessment purposes.

Such training, meetings, coaching, and activities may be scheduled within the regular teacher workday, including prep time, as well as during non-school hours. Teacher Leaders recognize the Principal's authority to modify the school roster in order to maximize the common meeting time available for members of the DLI Team.

Teacher Leaders recognize that DLI's success depends on their full participation and commitment to the Initiative.

Teacher Leaders agree that a stipend of $3,000 for the first year, and $2,200 for the second, third, and forth years of the School's involvement with the Initiative for the Teacher Leader's full Initiative participation in lieu of compensation determined by the staff development or extracurricular rates of the

Collective Bargaining Agreement. Full Initiative participation for the Teacher Leaders is delineated in A and B above.

<u>Roles and Responsibilities of the Building Representative</u>

As the elected representatives of the teaching staff at [Name] School, the Building Representative recognizes her/his responsibility to promote productive relations between [Name] School's administration and staff.

The Building Representative will be knowledgeable about Initiative goals as well as the terms of agreement of PFT in the MOU related to DLI implementation. The Building Representative's signature on the MOU indicates that he/she will work to resolve disputes that would obstruct the implementation of the initiative at [Name] School.

<u>Representations</u>

Each of the Parties understands and agrees that this School-Based Memorandum of Understanding and the terms herein are contingent upon the Memorandum of Understanding executed by the School District of Philadelphia, the University of Pennsylvania, through the Penn Center for Educational Leadership, the Philadelphia Federation of Teachers, and the Commonwealth Association of School Administrators. This School-Based Memorandum of Understanding is further contingent upon Penn's receipt of appropriate funding from the Annenberg Foundation.

In witness hereof, the Parties to this agreement have executed this memorandum to be effective the date and year first written above.

School District of Philadelphia

University of Pennsylvania, through the Penn Center for Educational Leadership

By: _____
[Chief Executive Officer or other official]

By: _____
Dean of the Graduate School of Education

[NAME OF SCHOOL AND AUTHORIZED SIGNATURE]

[EMPLOYEE NAMES]

By: _____
Employee

By: _____
Authorized signature

By: _____
Employee

By: _____
Employee

[NAME OF BUILDING REPRESENTATIVE]

By: _____
Employee

By: _____
Building Representative

By: _____
Employee