

ABSTRACT

Leadership to Sustain Professional Learning Communities

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Doctoral Study Submitted in Partial Fulfillment  
of the Requirements for the Degree of  
Doctor of Education  
Administrative Leadership for Teaching and Learning

Walden University  
February 2010

## ABSTRACT

Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) have shown promise as a means to meet the challenge of the current education legislation. A problem that has surfaced is the inability of schools to **sustain** PLCs. This project study examined leadership characteristics of school principals in selected school districts to determine how these characteristics shape organizational culture and provide support for sustaining professional learning communities. At the center of this initiative have been the school principals and their leadership skills. The theoretical underpinnings of this study were based on the work of DuFour and DuFour, which places leadership of the principal at the forefront of successful school improvement. A mixed-methods approach with a sequential-transformative strategy was used. Quantitative data were collected by administering the Leadership Capacity School Survey to 30 principals. Descriptive statistics were used to determine which of Lambert's six critical constructs were most and least commonly practiced among the schools in the study. Qualitative data gathered through a focus-group discussion were analyzed through the typological process. Quantitative and qualitative findings indicated that broad-based, skillful participation in the work of leadership (Construct 1) was the most important leadership construct to the success of sustaining PLCs. The outcome of this project study was a professional-development model that will provide knowledge and understanding of the key leadership elements needed to develop an environment for sustaining PLCs. **The potential social impact of this study includes improved student achievement as a result of improved leadership by principals.**