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The early implementation of a teacher leadership and compensation system in a select Iowa public school as codified by House File 215

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THE EARLY IMPLEMENTATION OF A TEACHER LEADERSHIP AND

COMPENSATION SYSTEM IN A SELECT IOWA PUBLIC SCHOOL

AS CODIFIED BY HOUSE FILE 215

An Abstract of a Dissertation

Submitted

in Partial Fulfillment

Of the Requirements for the Degree

Doctor of Education

Approved:

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Dr. Vickie Robinson, Committee Chair

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Dr. April Chatham-Carpenter
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University of Northern Iowa

May, 2015

ABSTRACT

Thirty-one years ago, in 1983, the report "A Nation at Risk" (Denning, 1983) declared that teacher preparation systems were ill equipped to provide teachers the deep content knowledge they would need in order to be successful, that salaries were much too low, and that we needed to do a better job of recruiting young people into the profession. The 2001 reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (No Child Left Behind) is a call to action, one in which we are reminded that student achievement is stagnant or slipping around the country. In Iowa, attention to the topic of education reform intensified with the election of Terry Branstad as governor in November 2011.

Iowa House File 215 is Iowa's attempt to put into place, with the Teacher Leadership and Compensation System, the very suggestions that were first mentioned in 1983. We know that teacher leadership is important and central to the way schools operate (York-Barr & Duke, 2004), and schools with strong performance have been shown to have integrated leadership structures where teachers are empowered to make decisions (Marks & Printy, 2003; Neumerski, 2012). However, we also know that unsupportive principals, teacher leadership roles that are not well articulated, and resistance among teachers can lead to unsuccessful teacher leadership systems (Mangin, 2007).

This single case studied the early implementation of a teacher leadership and compensation system in a select Iowa school district by interviewing key district informants and analyzing the planning documents employed during the launch of the selected system.

The following conclusions were reached: (1) the appointment of teacher leaders within the confines of the law is challenging; (2) the role of the building principal has become more demanding during the early implementation phase with a greater emphasis on instruction as opposed to management; (3) minimal resistance was found just below the surface and related to a claim that collaboration time was lost among teachers; (4) minor changes to the system are likely and necessary during implementation; (5) a perception persists that funding for teacher leadership is available for three years; and finally (6) training for teacher leaders is considered a critical component of successful implementation.

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Dr. Dewitt Jones, Committee Member

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This has been an extraordinary journey and one that I will not soon forget. Projects such as these are the results of the hard work and perseverance of more than one individual. While my name appears on the title page, I know that this would not have been possible without the patience, support, and guidance of so many others.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Education seems to be constantly at a crossroads. Take, for example, the 1983

report from the President's Commission on Excellence in Education titled "A Nation at

Risk" (Denning, 1983). The report decried a stagnation in student achievement and

revealed that on international comparisons of student achievement, American students

were never first or second on tests and were at the bottom many times. The report went

on to make several recommendations designed to improve the status of the American

education system. Many of those suggestions are now part of the routine dialogue about

how to improve schools—recommendations such as the implementation of standards-

based curricula, more rigorous standardized tests, and student demonstration of mastery

before promotion. In fact, the No Child Left Behind legislation, which is the 2001

reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, epitomizes the

philosophy of more standardized testing in our schools. The Common Core, initiated by

the National Governors Association, is a movement to introduce a common set of

standards in schools across the country. Many of these suggested (and historical) reform

efforts are similar to the provisions included in Iowa House File 215, the signature

education reform legislation passed by the Iowa General Assembly during its 2013

session.

Included in our history of school reform efforts are recommendations for

strengthening and improving the teaching profession. The common theme in these

recommendations is providing teachers with more leadership opportunities and autonomy

to make decisions in the classroom. The centerpiece of Iowa House File 215 is an effort to do just that with the implementation of the Teacher Leadership and Compensation System.

The focus of this study is teacher leadership, but first, let us take a brief look back. The need to improve teaching, in essence to elevate the status of the profession and recruit young people to teaching is not a new topic. In reality, a report first published in 1983 captured the nation's attention, but it reads like it could have been published just last year. Denning (1983), in "A Nation at Risk," made arguments about improving entry into the profession, asserting that teacher salaries were much too low for teachers to earn a living without supplementing their income with part-time summer work. In addition, Denning claimed that teacher preparation programs were ill equipped to prepare teachers for the deep content knowledge they would need, and that there was a huge shortage of teachers, particularly in the areas of mathematics and science. Not only that, many of these teachers were not qualified to teach in these content areas. Though Denning began this dialogue in 1983, many of the findings and claims sound eerily familiar in 2014, and the recommendations, too, remain largely unaltered.

Take, for example, a call for more rigorous teacher preparation programs from colleges and universities, improved salaries that are performance based (with evaluation systems that include peer reviews tied to performance), lengthened teacher contracts so educators can collaborate and participate in professional development, and the development of career ladders that distinguish between educators. Recommendations include a call for more experienced teachers, such as master teachers to help supervise

teachers during their probationary years. The cycle continues and the debate rages about the status of our schools, how to fix them, and the failures they have become.

Indeed, it is rare for a week (or even a day, for that matter) to go by without some sort of story about the failings of our educational system gracing our daily news. Sometimes it is a school district in some far-off state that has recently been discovered cheating on standardized tests (it may not be all that far away in some instances, as was recently learned in Davenport, Iowa). Perhaps it is a story about bullying in some school district where the school "just hasn't done enough" to stop this kind of egregious behavior. Sometimes the stories are scandalous and include the unsavory fall from grace. But nothing stops the scathing indictment of formal education when test scores don't quite measure up to where we think they should be—and the blame is placed squarely on those in education, and the outcry comes from far and wide that our public school teachers are completely overpaid and incompetent.

We spend a lot of time in our country comparing our students—by state, against each other, and to other countries. Our policymakers do not like what they see in these comparisons, and apparently we are just not stacking up all that well on either the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) or the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) tests. According to a report by the National Governors Association published in 2008, American 15-year-olds ranked 25th in math and 21st in science achievement on an international assessment conducted in 2006 (Jerald, 2008). Recently, the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) released the results of the 2012 PISA, and once again the United States had performed

below average in mathematics and around average in reading (OECD, 2013). These are the types of stories that encourage policymakers to valiantly attempt to reform American public schools. History, no doubt, has a way of repeating itself (Denning, 1983), and many of these ideas and strategies have been repackaged, repurposed, and tried before, to no avail.

Our democracy is littered with failed reform after failed reform, from the educational upgrades that followed the Soviet launch of Sputnik to the punitive measures of No Child Left Behind. But these reforms just don't seem to deliver on the promises they make. Education reform has become a political issue, with very deep divisions between the Democratic and Republican parties (Tyak & Cuban, 1997) in our country. Educational reforms are often meant to correct perceived societal and educational problems. Consider the example of bullying, which is a significant issue in schools and society right now, further exacerbated with the advent of social media. This too has become a politicized component of the educational reform agenda that has become a major priority for the governor of Iowa in the 2014 General Assembly.

Education was one of the reasons that our current governor decided in 2010 to run for an unprecedented fifth term after being out of the governor's mansion since 1999. So, in 2011, Terry Branstad was once again elected governor of the state of Iowa. Upon his return to office, the governor outlined a bold agenda to provide a world-class education to all the children of Iowa. The plan was dubbed the "Education Blueprint," and the governor began his quest with the Iowa General Assembly in the winter of 2011 (Office of the Governor of Iowa, 2013a).

Education Blueprint

In October of 2011, the governor unveiled "One Unshakable Vision: World-Class Schools for Iowa." Included in this plan were several components designed to reform the educational landscape in Iowa. The centerpiece of the plan was the provision of great teachers and principals in every classroom (Office of the Governor of Iowa, 2011). In order to achieve this goal, the blueprint included as its first component recommendations such as attracting and supporting talented teachers; improving recruiting and hiring practices; and creating leadership roles, a meaningful evaluation system, and a transformational salary structure. The second component of the plan was to increase expectations and to fairly measure student progress. In order to meet this goal, it was recommended that the state expand the Iowa Core with a new and improved assessment framework, an accountability system that sought a waiver from No Child Left Behind as a means to ensure third-grade literacy. The final component of the vision suggested increasing innovation in Iowa schools. To achieve this goal, the creation of an innovation fund was suggested, along with increased pathways for innovative charter schools, an expansion of online learning options, and the engagement of parents and community members through a dedicated network.

What began as a worthwhile and noble goal quickly set off a very contentious and controversial movement when the Iowa General Assembly convened in January of 2012. It is worth noting, first and foremost, that the current makeup of the Iowa state government is divided sharply along party lines. In order to achieve legislative victories, it is necessary for politicians to set aside differences and work toward compromise. The

current Iowa House of Representatives and Office of the Governor are controlled by the

Republican Party, while the Democratic Party holds a slight margin in the Iowa Senate.

From the opening of the 2012 General Assembly, there were many unanswered questions

about the governor's blueprint for education, especially regarding the appropriations it

would take to enact this vision. There was no question that the cost of the proposed

legislative changes would be high, but while acknowledging this investment on one hand,

there seemed to be no substantive answer as to how, and if, the reforms would ultimately

be funded. This, coupled with the fact that the issue of basic state aid for the following

school year had not been settled, caused tremendous friction between school leaders and

the Office of the Governor and its surrogate, the Iowa Department of Education. In

addition to the unease about the funding, a significant pedagogical and philosophical

debate was beginning about some of the other reform measures under consideration.

Among the most controversial and debated were a proposal to retain third-grade students

who did not demonstrate reading proficiency by the end of their third-grade year, and an

introduction of online for-profit schools to the state education system. Disagreements

over the substance, the research base, and motives were under question from the time the

legislature gaveled in until adjournment. There is no mistaking the fact that many groups

were mobilized and lined up on both sides of these issues, and that some of the reforms

had very strong political sponsors while others simply did not (Tyak & Cuban, 1997).

The 2012 legislative session ended on May 9 without significant legislative

changes or movement on education reform. The Iowa Department of Education, through

administrative rule setting, was able to expand the concept of online for-profit K-12

schooling, and the legislature agreed in principle that all students should be proficient in reading by the time they completed the third grade. However, there was no funding mechanism attached to the legislation, rendering the initiative moot. The issue of basic state aid was also left unresolved, leaving many school districts in difficult budget situations without the built-in allowable growth increase. In the end, the legislature directed the Iowa Department of Education to convene several task forces that were given the responsibility of studying the aforementioned issues in greater depth with an expectation that they report their findings back to the General Assembly. Ultimately, these task force reports would form the framework for the education reform legislation signed by the governor in the waning days of the 2013 General Assembly. This legislation is now referred to as House File 215.

<u>House File 215</u>

The 2013 legislative session began much as the 2012 session ended, with a bitter divide. Final resolution on the education reform legislation would not come until late in the session and would be one of the last items before the adjournment of legislators. The governor's strategy was simple and, in the end, successfully executed, and included two key components. First, instead of the broad-reaching goals and plans that were submitted as part of the "Education Blueprint," the governor chose a singular focus: the Teacher Leadership and Compensation Model. Second, the governor was steadfast in his determination that until the reform efforts were addressed, he would be unwilling to discuss basic state aid for the following school year. His Republican subordinates in the Iowa House ensured that discussion around this topic was deflected. While budgets were

being developed without the benefit of knowing what basic resources were going to be provided, the governor and House of Representatives maintained focus on the education reform debate. In addition, the governor backed up his proposal with the claim that the education reform plan would be funded, and then went so far as to provide costing models for the new plan. This was significant, because many school leaders were skeptical of a plan that was light on the details of how it was going to work. Not only was the governor's office able to provide projections about the cost of the reform and the algorithms for how the calculations were done, they also shared a commitment that sustainable funding would be provided.

Debate began, and for several weeks it appeared as though nothing was happening. Each chamber took time to have officials from the Iowa Department of Education and various stakeholders from around the state discuss and debate the proposals. For a short period of time it did seem as though the reform efforts had stalled and that in fact there would be no deal. The session ended up being extended beyond the anticipated adjournment because of a delay in the conference committee tasked with hammering out a compromise.

The bill finally signed into law by Governor Branstad was Iowa House File 215. Included in the legislation were several important components (Office of the Governor of Iowa, 2013b). Among those components was an increase in basic state aid (which included a change in terminology from "allowable growth" to "state aid supplement"). This was important because of the commitment on the part of the state to pick up the additional increases in state aid rather than pass them along to property owners as a tax

increase. Additional changes included items such as the Iowa Learning Online initiative, work with assessments, competency-based education, training and employment of teachers, instructional hours instead of days of instruction, and changes to the homeschool law (Iowa Department of Education, 2013). However, the centerpiece and costliest portion of House File 215 is without a doubt the introduction of the Teacher Leadership and Compensation System. When fully scaled up, the Teacher Leadership and Compensation System is estimated to cost an anticipated $150 million annually. This voluntary initiative gave school districts the option of implementing a comprehensive teacher leadership plan and provided funding with which to do so. The first year (2013-2014) was designed as a planning year for schools, with implementation occurring over a three-year period, commencing with the 2014-2015 school year. The Department of Education planned for approximately one-third of school districts being added annually, and will appropriate $50 million a year each year for 3 years to bring the initiative fully to scale across the state. School districts wishing to implement the program are required to participate in a competitive grant writing process in which they describe in detail the teacher leadership and compensation system they are planning to implement. When fully implemented, it is estimated that the state will invest $150 million annually in addition to the basic state aid package.

<div align="center">Teacher Leadership and Compensation</div>

Division VII of House File 215 (Office of the Governor of Iowa, 2013b) created the Iowa Teacher Leadership and Compensation System, which is designed to, among other things, improve student achievement by strengthening instruction. Like all other

professions, teachers need continual training in the newest techniques and strategies that are research-based and proven to work in order to meet the demands of an ever-changing student demographic. This has been a key component of the idea of instructional leadership that has traditionally been provided by building principals in effective schools (Rosenholtz, 1985). The Teacher Leadership and Compensation System is based on the premise that great teachers and principals are the key to increased student learning in the classroom (Office of the Governor of Iowa, 2011) Furthermore, there has been a recognition that the traditional way teachers are promoted in schools is to become principals, and not all teachers want to become principals. The net effect of this practice is that often the most effective teachers end up leaving the classroom to become principals. Part of the reason for this is that administrative salaries are often higher than those of regular classroom teachers. For example, men in one study were three times more likely to be unsettled about their position (as a teacher) and would either be interested in administrative roles or leave the profession altogether (Johnson & Birkeland, 2003). The Teacher Leadership and Compensation System is designed to recognize the fact that not all teachers have aspirations of becoming administrators. Some key features of this legislation include an increase in the base pay of teachers to $33,500 and the creation of pathways for teachers to assume leadership roles in their buildings.

The Teacher Leadership and Compensation System provides avenues to promote teachers to leadership roles without relinquishing their primary vocation: teaching. The question then becomes: What does the work of these teacher leaders look like, and how does it square with the role of the instructional leader (building principal)? The traditional

role of the building principal has been one grounded in the management and organization of the school building. While the day-to-day operations of the school building remain an important and paramount task of the principal, the responsibility of "instructional leader" has been added to the job description. In essence, the building principal is responsible for ensuring that quality instruction grounded in sound research is occurring in the classroom, and that student achievement is on the rise. If that is not happening, the principal is responsible for leveraging resources and strategies to ensure that it is.

A disconnect that sometimes occurs is a failure to realize that building principals are not experts in all content areas. While administrators were all teachers at some point in their career, they are likely not "masters of all" when it comes to instructional strategies. For example, the one-time music teacher turned building principal likely does not have the expertise to coach a reading teacher. Where the reading teacher struggles with instruction or a particular group of students, they more likely will turn to a trusted colleague with expertise in the field rather than the once-upon-a-time music teacher turned principal. That is what makes the prospect of the Teacher Leadership and Compensation System in Iowa so promising. It provides school districts with a vehicle and resources with which to make this happen. Such things have been proposed before and, in fact, have been codified. But as a state we have never been able to get them off the ground because of a lack of funding.

<div align="center">Three Options</div>

According to House File 215 (Office of the Governor of Iowa, 2013b) the 2013-2014 school year was designed as a planning year for school districts. Each school

district in Iowa was encouraged to apply for a planning grant by October 31, 2013. Every

school district that applied for the grant could expect to receive funding based on a per-

pupil allocation. (By the time the application deadline had been reached, every school

district in Iowa had applied for and been awarded the planning grant). The purpose of the

grant was to provide funding so individual school districts could develop a teacher

leadership model, build capacity for teacher leadership, and engage stakeholders in a

conversation about the benefits of teacher leadership. Iowa school districts were not

required to submit grant applications nor were they required to participate in the teacher

leadership program. It is important to note that this was a voluntary program. Districts

wishing to participate were able to submit plan proposals to the Iowa Department of

Education with a deadline of January 31, 2014. The legislation was designed to fund up

to one-third of Iowa school districts in the 2014-2015 school year. Following the initial

school year, a second set of Iowa school districts (roughly one-third) will be added and

funded during the 2015-2016 school year, and the final set of school districts will be

added and funded during the 2016-2017 school year (Iowa Department of Education,

2013). Once a school district has received the funding, the state will continue to fund the

program through a categorical funding mechanism included on the Aid and Levy

worksheet. For planning purposes, districts are asked to consider one of three options

when designing their teacher leadership plans. There are five commonalities between the

plans that are considered nonnegotiable. The nonnegotiable items included in the plan

include a new minimum salary of $33,500, improved entry into the profession,

differentiated meaningful teacher leadership roles, a rigorous selection process for

leadership positions, and aligned professional development. Our attention will focus on the three options specifically as they relate to the differentiated and meaningful teacher leadership roles (Iowa Department of Education, 2013). The discussion will not center on beginning teachers or career teachers, since those two categories of practitioners remain largely the same as current practice dictates.

Minimum Salary Requirements

An increase in base salary is notable because the current minimum salary for beginning teachers in the state of Iowa is $28,000. According to the Iowa Department of Education, there were 199 school districts in Iowa during the 2012-2013 school year with minimum salaries below $33,500 (Iowa Department of Education, 2013). However, the department estimates the cost to increase the base pay as minimal because the addition of capital would only need to go to beginning teachers and not necessarily be infused into the salary index. Yet the base pay is but one concern that is addressed through the Teacher Leadership and Compensation System. The proposed initiative is designed in part to change the way in which teachers are compensated. Current salary schedules, which are used in virtually all school districts, do little to promote collaboration or satisfy early-career teachers who may want to seek expanded opportunities for increased compensation (Johnson, 2012; Johnson & Birkeland, 2003).

This too bodes well for beginning teachers, who are new to the profession. According to Coggshall, Ott, Behrstock, and Lasagna (2010), young teachers are accustomed to positive reinforcement, and desire feedback and reward when they are doing things well. Since this generation of teachers makes up approximately 18% of the

workforce and growing, it is imperative that attention be paid to their needs. A major desire of the teacher leadership and compensation system is to recruit, retain, motivate, and reward teachers in schools (York-Barr & Duke, 2004). The findings from this study were part of the research base used to formulate the Iowa legislation. While pay is a consideration in this legislation, it was imperative that working conditions were addressed. In order to retain teachers, it is necessary to provide them with the resources and support they need in order to be and feel successful (Johnson & Birkeland, 2003).

Improved Entry to the Profession

Improved entry into the profession specifically addresses a need to strengthen the supports that are available to beginning teachers. Some of those supports include emotional support, pedagogical support, and planning/collaboration (Gilles, Carillio, Wang, Stegall, & Bumgarner, 2013). This could include additional mentoring by instructional coaches or mentor teachers, and greater opportunities for beginning teachers to observe model teaching in action. Schools that have a sense of success are those where induction includes robust and regular opportunities for new teachers to observe and work with experienced colleagues (Johnson, 2012). Many teaching positions now do not afford beginning teachers novice status whereby they can grow into their role by having a reduced teaching assignment and receiving regular feedback from mentors or targeted professional development (Johnson & Birkeland, 2003). The vehicle in which to deliver this model is the multiple and differentiated leadership roles that are described in greater detail below.

Rigorous Selection Process and Aligned Professional Development

Districts are also required to implement a rigorous selection process that includes

a selection committee comprising teachers and administrators. The selection of teacher

leaders must include clear measures of educator effectiveness that ensures assignments

are evaluated annually. While teachers may be assigned roles for multiple years, an

annual evaluation of the effectiveness of the role is required. It is also specified in the

legislation that the teachers must be beyond their initial license with a minimum of three

years' experience. Finally, the legislation requires that the professional development plan

for the teacher leaders be aligned to the Iowa Professional Development Model.

Differentiated and Meaningful Teacher Leadership Roles

In response to legislation from the 2011 General Assembly, the Iowa Department

of Education convened a task force on Teacher Leadership and Compensation. The task

force reviewed research and models that were in place in other states in an effort to come

up with sound recommendations that the legislature could consider in the Iowa model.

Those states included the Arizona Teacher Career Ladder; the Q Comp Model in

Minnesota; Career Pathways in Baltimore, Maryland; the Pro Comp System in Denver;

Colorado; and the TAP System in Eagle County, Colorado. In concert with these models,

the task force relied on a report from the National Governors Association in 2011 that

discussed new models of teacher compensation and lessons learned from six states

(National Governors Association, 2011). This report described the goals of these states

and was broad and far reaching. Many of the states described in this report intended to

alter teacher compensation plans to include evaluations based on value-added measures

and performance-based pay. In these instances, reforms were met with resistance from state teacher unions. Iowa's plan does not include performance-based pay, but it does make improved teaching and learning a focus of compensation and evaluation (National Governors Association, 2011). In fact, some of the key goals of the Rhode Island plan are similar in nature to what is proposed in Iowa: career advancement opportunities for teacher leaders other than moving into school administration, and ongoing, job-embedded professional development.

Interestingly, teachers who are relatively new to the teaching profession express a desire to stay in education. According to some authors (Coggshall et al., 2010), in order to truly ensure that these young professionals are retained, it is imperative that policymakers design differentiated career options for teachers to avoid burnout in the classroom. The belief is that Iowa's teacher leadership and compensation system will assist with retention and ensure that young teachers remain satisfied with the teaching profession, a critical goal of Iowa's teacher leadership and compensation plan.

Teacher career paths. The model that formed the basis of the legislation is known as the Teacher Career Paths, Leadership Roles, and Compensation Framework. It was derived from the work done by the Teacher Leadership and Compensation Task Force. It creates model, mentor, and lead teacher roles. The objective is to create an environment of collaboration and opportunities for teachers to move into leadership roles without becoming administrators, which has been an often-cited area of dissatisfaction with many public school teachers (Johnson & Birkeland, 2003). Most teachers desire meaningful collaboration with their colleagues (Coggshall et al., 2010), and in fact are more likely to

stay in schools where teachers collaborate (Johnson, 2012). In this system, all

assignments for teacher leaders are considered to be 1 year in length. The model teacher

is described as one who models teaching full time and serves as a model of exemplary

service, typically a teacher who could be observed delivering instruction for novice and

career-level teachers. The model teacher would receive extra compensation and an

extended contract of 5 days. The second role in this framework is a mentor teacher. These

teachers receive a larger salary supplement and an additional 10 days of contract time.

The caveat in this assignment is that mentor teachers should not have a teaching load

exceeding 75%, to allow them time to mentor other teachers. The third role in this system

belongs to lead teachers, that is, those who teach 50% of the time, devoting the other half

of their time to the planning and delivery of professional development, instructional

coaching, the mentoring of other teachers, and the evaluation of student teachers. This

instructor will also receive a larger salary supplement than the other teachers, while at the

same time assuming an extended contract of 15 days. It is important to note that the other

"must haves" (e.g., a rigorous selection process) are necessary to implement this model of

teacher leadership.

     Instructional coach. The Instructional Coach Model was incorporated into the

legislation after some educational leaders opined that the original model was too rigid

and inflexible. Using the same requirements that the system include the five "must

haves," the Instructional Coach Model was born. In addition to the model teacher (those

who teach full time but serve as models of exemplary teaching practice with 5 additional

contract days), this model features an instructional coach, a curriculum teacher leader,

and a professional development leader. The instructional coach provides a way in which to move professional development into a teacher's classroom, thus eliminating some of the isolation that has been commonplace in teaching (Johnson, 2012). While receiving a salary supplement, the instructional coach engages full time in instructional coaching and has a contract that is 10 days longer than that of the career teacher. The model also provides for curriculum and professional development leaders, who also do not require a specified teaching role. Furthermore, this teacher leader receives a salary supplement along with an extended contract of 15 days. Primary responsibilities include planning and implementing professional development and curriculum that strengthens instruction in the classroom.

Comparable model. In an effort to provide even more flexibility to school districts, the option of a comparable plan was also written into the legislation. The only guidelines in developing this plan are that the proposed system must include the five "must haves" that honor the intent of the Teacher Leadership and Compensation legislation. Those five items are: (1) an increase in the minimum starting salary to $33,500; (2) improved entry into the profession; (3) differentiated multiple, meaningful teacher leadership roles; (4) rigorous selection process; and (5) aligned professional development.

Key Terminology

Several key terms will be used throughout the course of this dissertation when discussing multiple roles as they relate to leadership, both in terms of those who serve as

administrative leaders and teacher leaders. It is important to draw a distinction between each to ensure a proper understanding.

- Instructional Leader: Not to be confused with a teacher leader, this is someone who is serving as an administrator of an Iowa public school. Administrators in the state of Iowa are licensed by the Board of Educational Examiners in the State of Iowa.

- Teacher Leader: This is in reference to any position that a teacher may assume in a school district that does not require an additional license. House File 215 was very clear that teachers who wished to assume leadership positions not be required to obtain an additional license through the Board of Educational Examiners. This is a generic term that includes model or mentor teachers, instructional coaches, professional development leaders, and curriculum leaders. None of the teacher leader positions referred to below assume any administrative function and are not licensed teacher evaluators.

- Initial or Resident Teachers: These are teachers who are new to the profession and have recently completed an accredited teacher preparation program. While they have a license to practice, this license is preliminary. Initial or resident teachers are not considered teacher leaders, but are more often the direct beneficiary of the leadership provided by other teachers.

- Model or Mentor Teachers: These are teacher leadership roles wherein the teacher has assumed some leadership responsibilities in addition to their regular classroom teaching duties. These teacher leaders may spend a portion of the day delivering

instruction in the classroom and a portion of the day working with other teachers

providing leadership.

- Instructional Coaches, Curriculum or Professional Development Leaders: These too are teacher leaders. However, their main responsibilities occur outside the classroom, and they do not have a regular teaching assignment.

<div align="center">Theoretical Framework</div>

Multiple lenses and frameworks exist in which to view this work. For that reason, I have chosen a convergence of two theoretical frames. I first look at Complexity Leadership Theory, which is an examination of the complexities inherent in organizations and how different relationships exist between individual leaders and the overlapping of roles (Lichtenstein et al., 2006; Uhl-Bien, Marion, & McKelvey, 2007). Then the discussion will turn to Distributive Leadership Theory. I do this because, upon recognizing the complexities in school organizations, I believe this theory suggests that distributing instructional expertise may be a more effective way of optimizing the effectiveness of schools rather than relying on one individual leader (Spillane, Diamond, & Jita, 2003; Spillane, Halverson, & Diamond, 2004).

Complexity Leadership Theory

Complexity Leadership Theory suggests that leadership is far too complex to be left to one individual, but rather is an interplay of various actors (Uhl-Bien et al., 2007). Organizations are too "messy" for decisions to be attributed to a single individual (Lichtenstein et al., 2006). This lens provides for a framework for leadership that enables complex adaptive systems (CAS) to learn, create, and adapt to problems (Uhl-Bien et al.,

2007) without the reliance on those in managerial or administrative positions. Complex adaptive systems are made up of people who share common interests, knowledge, and goals due to their history or position (Lichtenstein et al., 2006). I argue that schools should in fact be considered complex adaptive systems. Uhl-Bien et al. (2007) explain that in this framework, top-down or bureaucratic control can hamper the effectiveness of the complex adaptive system, which in our example is the school. In fact, Complexity Leadership Theory proposes that workers resist the urge to bring their work problems to management for resolution. This goes against the traditional view of the top-down bureaucratic control mechanisms that is prevalent in many Iowa schools. Complexity Leadership Theory suggests that events are not constructed and shaped by any one single individual or event, but rather they develop and change over time through the actions and interactions of many individuals (Lichtenstein et al., 2006).

The framework for Complexity Leadership Theory describes three leadership functions that are referred to as adaptive, administrative, and enabling (Uhl-Bien et al., 2007). Adaptive leadership emerges from the interactions of the CAS as they adjust and solve the problems of the organization. In schools, adaptive leadership could perhaps best be viewed within the confines of the professional learning community (PLC). Lichtenstein et al. (2006) describe adaptive leadership as a tension that is created by challenging beliefs and personal knowledge bases. This tension often generates completely new information that was unanticipated based on the *individual* knowledge base alone. The PLC is best defined as a group of teachers who work interdependently on matters of instruction (DuFour, 2006). In essence, they are primarily tasked with

ensuring that students are exposed to a guaranteed and viable curriculum. Through the

development of common formative assessments, the PLC is able to work together

(interdependently) to craft instruction through adaptive leadership that is designed to

meet the needs of all learners. Consider the functioning of the PLC. A group of teachers

responsible for the same curricular content who have been accustomed to working

independently on matters of instruction are now working interdependently. They

negotiate essential learning outcomes that will be explicitly taught in each individual

classroom, thus ensuring a guaranteed curriculum. They create common formative

assessments that are used to measure the effectiveness of instruction as it relates to the

essential learning outcomes. Then, they compare their data with that of other members of

the PLC. This comparison of common formative assessment data shines a light on the

strengths and weaknesses in instructional strategies of each individual member of the

PLC, enabling the collective group to interdependently craft instruction to meet the needs

of all learners, thus not only guaranteeing a common curriculum for all learners, but

making it viable as well.

> Adaptive leadership is defined as emergent change behaviors under conditions of interaction, interdependence, asymmetrical information, complex network dynamics, and tension. Adaptive leadership manifests itself in CAS and interactions among agents rather than in individuals, and is recognizable when it has significance or impact. (Uhl-Bien et al., 2007, p. 309)

Administrative leadership refers to the actions of those in management who plan,

coordinate, allocate resources, and attempt to operate the organization in as efficient a

manner as possible. In schools, this would often refer to the building-level principals.

Although Uhl-Bien et al. (2007) remind us that top-down bureaucratic control can

hamper efforts of the CAS, it is worth noting the importance of this role in the organization. While based on authority and position, administrative leadership has the authority to make decisions for the organization. In schools, this could be allocating the resources that are necessary to complete the work of the PLC (adaptive leadership) or ensuring that scheduling of the work day enables teachers to meet and work together interdependently on matters related to instruction. For example, the administrative leaders of the school could ensure that a schedule exists that allows time for the PLC (adaptive leadership) to meet in efforts to collaborate and work together on interdependent goals.

Enabling leadership is the catalyst that creates the conditions necessary for adaptive leadership to thrive, which include creating appropriate organizational conditions and facilitating the flow of knowledge among all leadership components (Uhl-Bien et al., 2007). The role of enabling leadership, then, is to foster and create the conditions that allow adaptive leadership to occur. In a traditional sense, this role of enabling leadership can often be viewed as that of a middle manager (who in schools is often defined as a principal), and while the roles may often seem to overlap, in this case when I refer to enabling leadership, it should be seen as a reference to those in formalized teacher leadership roles. Formal teacher leaders in this sense enable the environment that can nurture the process, but they are not necessarily the source of the change in the organization (Lichtenstein et al., 2006). Those roles may include instructional coaches, mentor teachers, or professional development leaders. These teacher leadership roles are designed to provide the knowledge base and leadership to ensure that adaptive leadership thrives.

These three leadership functions work together in a dynamic relationship in which they can either help or oppose one another. It is, however, important to remember that administrative leadership that is overly authoritarian or bureaucratic can thwart adaptive leadership, which cuts against the development of teacher leadership systems. Complexity leadership theory offers much more than just the simple notion of empowerment of individuals; it drives responsibility downward and in turn takes a significant burden off formal leaders, allowing them the opportunity to identify and develop relationships across the organization (Lichtenstein et al., 2006).

Distributive Leadership Theory

School leadership that is instructional, participative, and distributed is inclusive of teacher leadership and recognizes that leadership must emerge from individuals within an organization and not just in a select few formalized leaders (York-Barr & Duke, 2004). Distributed leadership theory recognizes that leadership [in schools] is an interactive practice rather than defined by rigid roles (Mangin, 2005). Therefore, I will have also situated this research using the lens of distributed leadership theory. This view of leadership describes leadership tasks that are performed by multiple formal and informal leaders (Spillane et al., 2004). Understanding how leaders work together and separately is an important component of this type of leadership practice. Spillane et al. argue that this framework should be viewed through the interaction of multiple leaders, and that what is critical in this regard are the interdependencies that exist in carrying out the leadership activities. Leadership is not necessarily about formal titles or responsibilities per se, but rather the interactions among individuals. This type of leadership enables multiple leaders

to work together, each bringing a separate resource and perspective to bear. In addition,

each leader brings a different skill set that exceeds that of the complementary leaders.

Therefore, say Spillane et al., the collective sum of all the leadership leads to an evolution

of the leadership practices. Additionally, the distributed leadership theoretical model

argues that the study of leadership activity should not be confined to the individual as the

unit of analysis, but rather to the school. This suggests that leadership is a shared

responsibility among building principals and teachers alike.

> Further, the distributed leadership perspective also suggests that intervening to improve school leadership by focusing exclusively or chiefly on building the knowledge of an individual formal leader in a school may not be the most optimal, or the most effective, use of resources. If expertise is distributed, then the school rather than the individual leader may be the most important unit for thinking about the development of leadership expertise. (Spillane et al., 2004, p. 29)

Therefore, distributed leadership is viewed as leadership activity that is spread across the

organization to multiple individuals and roles across the school (Smylie, Mayrowetz,

Murphy, & Louis, 2007). This not only relies on each person in the organization doing

their part, but also relies heavily on the mutual relationships of those doing this work. An

important consideration is the critical role that principals play in this regard. The support

from district administrators is critical to the principles of distributed leadership theory.

The overlapping of leadership functions and interaction between instructional leadership

underscores the importance of teacher leadership (Mangin, 2005). This type of leadership

should not be designed, then, to transfer leadership functions from one leader to another,

but rather to stretch those leadership functions across leaders, which will have

multiplicative benefits (Mangin, 2005; Spillane et al., 2004), which is how distributive

leadership is best understood.

<center>Statement of the Problem and Research Claim</center>

Who is best equipped to help teachers improve instructional practice in schools?

Is it the building principal as the instructional leader, or do instructional improvements

come from a trusted colleague? While the building principal is indeed the instructional

leader, often he or she does not have the pedagogical skills needed to provide the type of

feedback that is necessary to improve instruction in some content areas. For example, the

former music teacher may be ill equipped to provide valid coaching to a reading teacher.

Instructional coaches who are content specific can provide specific examples. In one

study (Bean, Draper, Hall, Vandermolen, & Zigmond, 2010), the coach was able to

provide detailed feedback to the teacher on what they really liked about the instruction,

and then proceeded to give a suggestion about how to make paired reading more

interesting for students. A building principal who has not previously served as a reading

teacher would not likely be able to provide that level of detailed feedback to a teacher. In

the same study, the coaches were able to model specific instructional strategies for the

teacher—most certainly not a skill that would be transferable to a principal who does not

have those pedagogical skills in the first place.

However, due to the complexities in the Iowa Public School system and the

traditional ways in which school leadership is manifested, several variables will have

impact on the implementation of teacher leadership systems in Iowa. Without proper

planning and understanding of the complexities in leadership and a willingness to truly

distribute leadership responsibilities, teacher leadership in Iowa may not be fully realized.

In the guidance document provided by the Iowa Department of Education, the

following claim is made:

> If we effectively compensate teachers; recruit and promote excellent teachers and
> provide support as they collaborate effectively to refine their practice; create the
> political will and understanding necessary to remake the status of the teaching
> profession; give highly effective teachers the opportunity to grow, refine, and
> share their expertise; and develop a clear system with quality implementation,
> then student learning will increase, student outcomes will improve, and students
> will be prepared to succeed in a globally competitive environment. (Iowa
> Department of Education, 2013, p. 2)

But that statement fails to recognize that building principals are the primary instructional

leaders in schools. In some cases principals may be resistant to sharing leadership with

teachers due to managerial ambivalence. Indeed, principals have worked long and hard to

become principals. Once they assume that mantle of leadership they want to protect those

positions, especially considering that they will be held accountable for what others do

(Barth, 2001). Principals may have a fear of losing power in their building, mutual trust

may be lacking among principals and teachers, or principals (and teachers) may not have

the skill set needed to share leadership. Yet the claim is made that by building social and

human capital in schools, principals can distribute leadership throughout the organization

and lighten the workload for all vested parties. However, due to the complexities in the

organization, the concern and resistance among teachers and principals alike are

increased. Unless these variables are properly addressed, a lower level of implementation

of the teacher leadership system could result. Yet the opposite should also be true. By

addressing those concerns and utilizing the strengths of each member of the organization

in a deliberate manner, the implementation will increase, thus having the desired effect of strengthening instruction in the school, which will ultimately impact student achievement in a positive manner.

Research Purpose

The purpose of this research is to examine the implementation of Teacher Leadership and Compensation Systems in Iowa schools during the initial rollout of the legislation enacted in House File 215. While House File 215 is designed to be phased in over a period of three years, this research focused on the implementation and rollout of a select district during in the first wave of implementation, which occurred during the fall of 2014. This research uncovered data relevant to the planning of Teacher Leadership Systems, the training mechanisms that were utilized both by teachers who become teacher leaders and the principals who work with them, and a close examination of the relationship between the planning for teacher leadership systems in Iowa schools and the reality in which they found themselves. This research will prove useful as additional schools implement teacher leadership systems in the next two waves, as prescribed by House File 215.

Research Question

The planning for teacher leadership systems in Iowa began in earnest across Iowa in the fall of 2013. During those planning stages, a variety of stakeholders representing teachers, administrators, school board members, and community members collaborated to develop systems unique to the needs of each individual district. While planning was underway, there was no real unified model for districts to follow. Questions regarding

contractual obligations were left unresolved. The selection of teacher leaders and the

committees charged with making those selections remained ambiguous. Concerns arose

from many school districts uncertain that the teacher leadership systems they were

planning would be sustained, not only financially, but with teachers brave enough to

assume the mantle of leadership. The biggest unresolved question seemed to be this: If

we build it, will they come (teachers)? The unresolved question also remains regarding

the professional development that will be necessary to ensure the success of the system.

Plans were submitted without any real idea of what training would be needed to provide

newly anointed teacher leaders, who would provide that training, or what that training

was going to cost.

This study, then, will attempt to answer one very simple question: Does the

panacea of the teacher leadership systems planned for in the fall of 2013 match the reality

of implementation in the fall of 2014?

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

The approach that was taken in this literature review consisted first of using very broad search terms using the standard search protocols from the research library. Keywords such as *instructional leadership, teacher leadership*, and *shared leadership* provided an appropriate launching point. After reviewing the abstracts of these papers, I was able to ascertain if a study would be of use for this review. Several scholars stood out through the course of this inquiry, and so much more time was devoted to the work of these researchers. Examining the literature that was reviewed by the Iowa Department of Education during the development of the Iowa Teacher Leadership and Compensation Systems also proved to be a fruitful endeavor. It is also worth noting that as the inquiry continued to develop, the review took an unexpected turn: The review of literature from one particular study or another would lead to an examination of another study. While the initial inquiry and search focused on recent studies (first search parameters included material only as far back as 2007), these studies included reference to prior studies. This, of course, led me to examine much earlier work, some of which went back to as early as 1985. I think it is also worth noting that an attempt was made to limit the scope of this review to works that were qualitative in nature, because this study was designed as a qualitative work where the stories that were told by the participants seemed to be the most important variable. However, it is also worth noting that salient information was obtained from the review of some of the quantitative studies examined. The studies included were from those whom I believe to be the most prominent scholars on this topic.

Finally, it is necessary to point out that the vast majority of the literature that was reviewed on this topic came from articles published in scholarly journals. Authors of books or other articles from what I would describe as "second-tier" publications were used only when necessary as supporting documentation or as a means to further strengthen a specific argument or point. Once again, in these instances the focus was primarily on those prominent scholars of the subject at hand.

The literature in the area of teacher instructional leadership and principal instructional leadership is broad and very far reaching. To help narrow the focus of the research, literature was examined and organized into categories specific to this study. These categories included instructional leadership, challenges of instructional leadership, teacher leadership (including common forms of teacher leadership as they relate to instructional improvement as envisioned by House File 215: Mentoring and Instructional Coaching), shared leadership between principals and teachers, and the challenges of teacher leadership. For the purposes of this review, a deliberate approach was taken with an examination of instructional leadership and a definition of what instructional leadership looks like, along with some of the characteristics of instructional leadership. Then I examined the challenges of instructional leadership and how they exacerbate the challenges of the work of the principal as instructional leader. Using that same type of approach, I surveyed teacher leadership. Since teacher leadership comes in many varieties, and teacher leaders tend to serve in many different roles, our discussion will focus on the role of teacher leader as it is being developed in the state of Iowa. Specifically, the current study included an examination of mentors and instructional

coaches. The review of relevant literature will help round out a discussion on teacher leadership with a look at the different types of roles that teacher leaders serve in schools. The literature will delineate and describe the differences in teacher leaders who serve in supporting roles and those who serve in developmental roles. In addition, I have examined the challenges often facing teacher leaders. Finally, I paid particular attention to literature that offered insight into the relationship that exists between the instructional leader (building principal) and the teacher leader.

In recent years, a tremendous amount of attention has been focused on reforms designed to improve schools. But this is not a new phenomenon. Certainly we can trace efforts to improve schools back as far as the day when the Soviet Union launched the Sputnik satellite and the nation cried out that we were falling behind in math and science. Then came the most famous of reports that proposed major reform efforts to education, *A Nation at Risk*. This report was followed by the 2001 renewal of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, which has become famous under the name *No Child Left Behind.* It was in this legislation where political leaders from all levels of government expressed a desire to improve the quality of education for our youth. A common theme that has been woven throughout this tapestry of reform has been a call for the increased involvement of teacher leadership systems in schools. In fact, most national reform movements since *A Nation at Risk* have recommended robust teacher leadership systems (Barth, 2001). Yet, as our history will tell, we can put in place the best policies that are proven to be the most effective and research based—and still come away with a failed reform effort.

Spillane et al. (2003) argued that there are two primary reasons for such failures: an inability to take the initiative to scale and the challenge of substance. "Going to scale" quite simply means having the resources to implement the reform across the system (in this case, I am speaking specifically of Iowa), and the "challenge of substance" refers to implementation with fidelity. Implementing a teacher leadership system means, quite simply, that we give teachers more leadership responsibilities. In many cases this is achieved by taking them out of classrooms to serve as instructional coaches, mentors of inexperienced or novice teachers, or leaders of professional development initiatives. When we take our teachers out of the classroom to be teacher leaders, we leave a void that needs to be filled by another teacher. Taking teacher leadership to scale in Iowa is going to require a large infusion of capital—when fully "taken to scale" as Spillane and his colleagues suggest (2003), it is estimated to cost somewhere in the neighborhood of $150 million annually.

Then there is the question of substance. This suggests that we must define exactly what it is that teacher leaders are doing, what they are responsible for, and how we ensure that the *substance* of this work is implemented with fidelity. Iowa currently has 346 school districts, all of which will have the opportunity to implement a teacher leadership system. Each school district has a different idea of what the proposed teacher leadership system should look like based on their individual needs. Each school district in Iowa also has a current leadership structure—assistant principals, principals, and superintendents— who all have different philosophies of what teacher leadership should look like. Some believe teacher leadership holds great promise, while others believe implementing

teacher leadership is a tremendous waste of taxpayer resources. The key in regard to the *substance* of teacher leadership is to make sure those school districts that decide to implement it are all doing so with fidelity and within the local context.

The substance of Iowa's teacher leadership and compensation system forms the premise behind the landmark education reform legislation passed into law following the General Assembly of 2013. The primary purpose of implementing teacher leadership systems in Iowa is to strengthen instruction in Iowa school districts (Iowa Department of Education, 2013). This document argued that the principal alone cannot strengthen instruction. He or she must have the help of competent and knowledgeable teacher leaders. One must wonder if in fact the principal *wants* the help of teacher leaders, and if so, does the principal have the capacity to implement a robust teacher leadership system?

By creating teacher leadership systems that promise to strengthen instruction, the believed outcome, then, is twofold: that is to provide a world-class education to all students and to elevate the teaching profession (Office of the Governor of Iowa, 2011). Strengthening instruction begins with professional development, and ensuring quality professional development for teachers has historically been the responsibility of the principal, who serves as the instructional leader in the school system. The idea of an instructional leader has its roots in the 1980s (Rosenholtz, 1985), and the role has been traditionally viewed as belonging to the building principal, insofar as the principal is considered the primary source of educational expertise (Marks & Printy, 2003). To be that expert, it is necessary, then, for the building principal to be up to date on the latest instructional strategies and have a firm understanding of curriculum material and

assessment systems so they can help teachers implement sound instructional programs in their schools (Gulcan, 2012). In order to properly realize this role, it would likely mean continued professional development for principals, reading research on new instructional strategies, testing out instructional strategies, and designing professional development for the teaching staff. Indeed, much of that does happen in Iowa public schools. Yet, there is no mistaking the tremendous complexities within the role of the building principal. Having a clear understanding and vision of curriculum, instruction, and assessment (i.e., being an instructional leader) is incredibly challenging (Quinn, 2002). Some principals are able to navigate the intricacies of managerial effectiveness with ease yet struggle with the idea of instructional leadership, while others may flourish as instructional leaders while falling short on managing the day-to-day operations of the school. It is very clear that too narrow a focus on management issues does a disservice to teachers and to students, yet the reality is that most principals do not provide sufficient instructional leadership (Printy, Marks, & Bowers, 2009; Quinn, 2002). This would suggest that a balance must exist between principal as instructional leader and principal as manager of a school building. As our review of the literature will clearly demonstrate, principals, in fact, need help. Because of the sheer volume of responsibilities of the building principal, it is very difficult to do both, and to do both well. So where do we begin? First, I will examine what it really means to be an instructional leader in schools.

<div align="center">Instructional Leadership</div>

Leithwood, Harris, and Hopkins (2008) made seven strong claims about successful school leadership, but the first is perhaps the most powerful. School leadership

is second only to classroom teaching as an influence on student learning. Supovitz,

Sirinides, and May (2010) found that principal leadership is an indicator of teachers'

change in instruction, at least in terms of English/language arts and math. Although

principal leadership is second only to classroom teaching, we must understand that

principals do not have a direct impact on student achievement, which makes a lot of

sense, because principals typically do not have direct or daily interaction with students in

the buildings they lead. The indirect impact of principals on student achievement happens

via teachers, who *do* have a direct and daily impact on students (Supovitz et al., 2010).

That influence comes in the form of providing leadership in matters of instruction, as the

instructional leader in the school. It is best to first look at instructional leadership through

the lens which says that its primary point is to develop and improve instruction (Gulcan,

2012). If we use broad strokes, instructional leadership could include all leadership

activities that may affect learning in schools. That includes a lot of leadership activities.

In fact, the argument could be made that all activities a principal engages in have an

impact on learning in the school. Because of this, it has been very difficult to construct an

accurate account of what school leadership is that goes beyond general, broad-based

suggested practices (Spillane et al., 2004). A review of the literature by Neumerski

(2012) found no consensus as to what exactly an instructional leader is or what this leader

does. In a study conducted by Scribner, Crow, Lopez, and Murtadha (2001), principals

who described themselves as instructional leaders indicated that they were student

centered and focused on learning. These principals also seemed to recognize and

understand the accountability environment in which they work.

When the concept of instructional leadership first developed in the 1980s, the primary role of the principal was to supervise classroom instruction, coordinate curriculum, and monitor student progress. However, the actual practice of instructional leadership falls far short of this ideal (Marks & Printy, 2003). Some 30 years later, a good definition of the principal as instructional leader continues to elude us.

As Quinn (2002) explained, researchers still do not always agree on a definition of what an instructional leader is or looks like, or how this work is actually done. But again, there should be no mistaking the fact that the instructional leader should be working together with the faculty in their school to lead and improve instruction (Neumerski, 2012). The characteristics of instructional leadership may be broad and difficult to pinpoint, but of paramount importance should be the emphasis on teaching and learning (Spillane et al., 2003). As principals target their instructional leadership skills to individual small groups of teachers, a greater likelihood of instructional improvement will occur for the largest number of students (May & Supovitz, 2011). By targeting those skills on the teachers, the principals are having an indirect impact on student achievement. Quinn's study clearly showed that principals who are strong instructional leaders are a fundamental component in schools that embrace a high level of student engagement. (Student engagement has been demonstrated to be the most effective way to positively impact student achievement.) Furthermore, the same study found that higher levels of active learning resulted in higher student achievement. Marzano, Waters, and McNulty (2005) outlined 21 responsibilities of school leadership that are proven effective. One is the principal serving as an instructional resource. Others include

involvement in curriculum, instruction, and assessment; monitoring and evaluating the impact of school practices; and providing teachers with materials and professional development necessary in order to be successful in the classroom. Although this is a very broad range of responsibilities, the critical attributes seem to indicate that the primary responsibility of instructional leadership is being attuned to the ideas of teaching and learning in the classroom. In a study conducted in schools implementing the Success For All Schools reform efforts, it was found that implementation was strongest when the principal acted as a curriculum leader, but the authors went further, stating that principals could not act alone (Datnow & Castellano, 2001). It should not come as a surprise that principals cannot do it alone—witness the difficulty we continue to have identifying with clarity what exactly an instructional leader does! Yet, the attainment of school achievement goals depends on the direction and support of the building principal (Printy et al., 2009). Principals who are strong instructional leaders have more of an impact on classroom instructional practices, particularly in the realm of student engagement in those classrooms, which is the medium most likely to affect student achievement (Quinn, 2002).

Yet new principals do not often have the skill sets that enable them to be effective instructional leaders. Perhaps this can be explained in part by the fact that the definition of instructional leadership continues to be quite nebulous. Or perhaps it is the fact that sometimes a principal's skill set is not evenly matched to their field. Gulcan's (2012) study suggested that more attention should be paid to taking a principal's specialty area into consideration when they are appointed, and to assign them only to schools that suit

their fields. A report by the Institute for Educational Leadership also suggested that the

identification, selection, and preparation of school leaders should be tailored (Gulcan,

2012; Institute for Educational Leadership, 2005). Put simply, this could mean that

principals serving in elementary schools come from the ranks of elementary teachers,

while principals serving in secondary schools come from the ranks of secondary school

teachers. One could even take this idea a step further and say that in charter or magnet

schools with special emphases, the leader of that school should have an understanding of

those particular emphases. It is worth noting that the superintendent of the Iowa School

for the Deaf and Blind was criticized because he was neither deaf nor blind. The

members of that school community felt that it was imperative that their school leader

have experiences that would situate him within their culture.

Understanding differentiated instructional practices is another area of deficit

identified by superintendents (Cray & Weiler, 2011), and understanding instructional

practices is a component of instructional leadership. Effective instructional leaders must

have an understanding of curriculum, instruction, and assessment, matters that are

undoubtedly tied to differentiated instructional practices. The fact that this is an area of

deficit described by superintendents could be further explained by the fact that many

principal preparation programs emphasize administrative and management skills at the

expense of providing knowledge and understanding of curriculum and instruction

(Institute for Educational Leadership, 2005). Further, school leaders themselves indicate

that they often feel unprepared to meet the challenges that go with the standards and

accountability movement. Educational and instructional leaders who are unable to

mobilize and spread the expertise necessary for instructional improvement in their

schools are unlikely to be very successful (Spillane et al., 2003). Providing teachers with

appropriate professional development is another key ingredient of the role of instructional

leader and principal in a school. If principals do not have a clear understanding of

curriculum, instruction, and assessment; differentiated instructional practices; or if their

skill set is not properly matched to their position, it stands to reason that providing quality

professional development to teachers is going to be a challenge. Yet, all that being said,

understanding and developing staff is a central way in which the school is able to

accomplish organizational goals, ergo increase student achievement (Leithwood et al.,

2008).

<div align="center">Challenges of Being an Instructional Leader</div>

In the high stakes and accountability environment of No Child Left Behind,

principals are concerned with responding to mandates and challenges like meeting

Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP; Scribner et al., 2001). The reality is that the job of a

school principal is stressful. In one study, 92.1% of principals reported that their job was

stressful; of these, almost 40% reported a high level of stress (Boyland, 2011). Dealing

with state mandates, demanding district office personnel, and confrontational parents is

incredibly time consuming. On top of that, most principals in the average-size Iowa

school, as the chief disciplinarian in the school, are also tasked with student discipline.

The administrative demands on the principal's time often leave precious few minutes to

assume the role of instructional leader—in spite of the critical importance of this role that

I have previously indicated. Boyland also reported that one of the most stressful

components of the job was "task overload," and that there is not enough time to be an instructional leader. Schools are very complex organizations, perhaps too complex for principals to lead alone, and the assistance of qualified teachers to help fulfill this role is needed to meet this challenge (York-Barr & Duke, 2004).

Indeed, the strain on principals to perform administrative duties and managerial tasks, on top of overseeing curriculum, professional development, and providing appropriate instructional materials for teachers, is compounding. The fact that management of schools often dominates principals' time and thus relegates instructional initiatives to the back burner is well documented (Spillane et al., 2004). Due to expanding mandates that include higher accountability as a result of No Child Left Behind, increased standardized testing, the quest for schools with highly qualified teachers, and increased pressures to meet Adequate Yearly Progress, the principalship may in fact be an "undoable position" (Queen & Queen, 2005). There just simply is not enough time in a day to complete all the tasks that need to be done, and the paperwork required for Iowa school administrators is daunting. In a study that asked principals to keep daily logs that recorded their instructional leadership activities, these administrators reported that only 8% of their time was spent on instructional leadership activities (May & Supovitz, 2011). Increased paperwork and managerial tasks make principals feel as though they are simply not able to complete the tasks of an instructional leader (Boyland, 2011). For those reasons, it has been suggested that principals may benefit from dispersing leadership among various stakeholders in the community and by providing formalized leadership roles to teachers (Mangin, 2007; Marks & Printy, 2003).

The point here is that this is not only good for the principal by easing their burden. It is also good for teachers who wish to assume more leadership responsibilities, and it is also good for the school and impactful on students. This research has articulated that too narrow a focus on administrative or management issues by a principal is a disservice to teachers and to students (Quinn, 2002). Leithwood et al. (2008) remind us of the impact of the principal as instructional leader: Strong school leadership is second only to classroom teaching as an indicator of student success, and principals as instructional leaders have an indirect yet strong effect on student achievement. Reducing the workload of principals through task overload may provide principals with a decreased stress level, thus allowing them to focus on other tasks important to their role of instructional leader (Boyland, 2011). It is worth noting, however, that implementing teacher leadership initiatives that have a primary goal of reducing administrative workload is a huge mistake. Smylie et al. (2007) found that acting on this type of motive may prove to be detrimental to the development of teacher leadership and may create significant mistrust. While workload reduction might be a goal of distributing leadership throughout the organization, making it the primary goal of teacher leadership systems is perhaps the wrong lens through which to view this work. By and large, teachers are uninterested in performing mundane paperwork tasks; they are more interested in having an impact on student learning. That is, after all, why they became teachers in the first place. As we will soon discover, there are other ways that principals can distribute leadership tasks that not only will have the ability to reduce the workload of principals, they will at the same time

honor the work of our most effective teachers and provide them with opportunities to increase their own leadership skills.

As instructional leaders, principals are often engaged in the type of work that requires them to develop teachers through in-services in specific content areas. As a result, it forces principals to work in areas that may be outside of their comfort zone, where they have limited skills or knowledge. Imagine a principal delivering a professional development program in the area of advanced math when their area of expertise is foreign language! When principals perform tasks that may be considered essential to instructional leadership, they often rely on their own subject matter or pedagogical knowledge and influence when carrying out these tasks (Spillane et al., 2004). Principals who do not have pedagogical experience in some of these subject areas could be at a distinct disadvantage. Obviously this could lead to the feeling of task overload that is mentioned above, contribute to high stress levels, and create the sense that the role of principal is simply an undoable position (Boyland, 2011; Queen & Queen, 2005; York-Barr & Duke, 2004). A better way could be to distribute leadership to teachers who *are* experts in that content area. This would have the effect of reducing the workload of the administrator; however, reduction in workload would not be the primary goal of the distributed leadership. The primary goal in this case would be to provide quality professional development to teachers in content-specific areas by using the expertise and the human resources that are available within the teaching ranks. Principals, through transformative distributive leadership, are thus encouraged to build capacity by delegating leadership responsibilities to skilled individuals, or teachers, if you will, in the

school community (White-Smith, 2012). The truth is that peer influence has a higher

association with changes in instruction than does principal leadership, as evidenced by

the study of Supovitz et al. (2010). A well-respected and qualified math teacher will have

much more credibility delivering math professional development to math teachers than a

well-respected (and well-intentioned) principal who at one time was, perhaps, a foreign

language teacher. Therefore, I move on to explore the concept of teacher leadership,

paying particular attention to how teacher leadership roles and systems may be realized

and implemented in Iowa.

<div style="text-align: center;">Teacher Leadership</div>

As I have already discussed, Leithwood et al. (2008) claimed school leadership is

second only to classroom teaching in terms of student learning from the perspective of

the importance of school leadership. Yet this also tells us about something else: the

importance of the classroom teacher. Indeed, the *classroom teacher is the most important*

factor in terms of student learning in the classroom. If that is true, then it would stand to

reason that this factor be leveraged in greater capacity—thus assuming some leadership

responsibilities. Therefore, an important consideration when considering the value of

teacher leadership is to recognize those leadership practices and attributes that fall outside

of traditional bureaucratic positions of power (Scribner & Bradley-Levine, 2010). It

would be important, then, to identify those teachers in school who are not formalized

leaders. Perhaps it is a teacher with excellent pedagogical skills who assists others in the

development of their craft. Another candidate could be that trusted colleague whom all

teachers gravitate toward when dealing with student discipline issues or unruly pupils.

The point is that teacher leaders and other professionals play important roles in leading instructional improvement—that is, it is not solely the responsibility of the building principal (Spillane et al., 2004), and this may or may not be already formalized within current school structures. We already know and use teacher leadership in multiple areas in schools, just not always in formalized ways. From choosing textbooks and instructional materials, shaping curriculum, and even determining staff development policies, these are all roles where teacher leadership is needed and sometimes manifests itself in informal ways. Unfortunately, these domains where teacher leadership is needed are often where it is least seen (Barth, 2001).

After a review of two decades of research into teacher leadership, York-Barr and Duke (2004) suggested that teachers indeed hold a central and important role in the way schools operate. Yet it is difficult to find teachers willing to take on the mantle of administration, because they are often unwilling to accept a position that includes such increases in expectations as additional training, larger workload, and more accountability (Institute for Educational Leadership, 2005). In Kentucky, the state was in a situation where they had actually overproduced by 6,000 the number of teachers qualified to assume administrative positions (Muth, Browne-Ferrigno, Bellamy, Fulmer, & Silver, 2013). Simply put, these 6,000 teachers completed principal preparation programs and were qualified for administrative license *but had never applied for an administrative position.* This could suggest that teachers are less interested in becoming administrators and more interested in furthering their personal knowledge by completing an advanced degree. As Iowa puts together systems for teacher leadership and compensation in

districts across the state, there may be concern that not enough teachers are willing to take on the roles of teacher leadership. With that mantle of leadership comes extra training, a larger workload, and more accountability.

Still, in the past couple of decades, particularly since a movement was established to decentralize decision-making in schools, practitioners began to formalize teacher leadership roles, recognizing the legitimate force they bring to school improvement efforts (Mangin, 2007). Teachers hold a tremendous amount of influence within their schools, either formally or informally, by creating professional norms and inviting those teacher leaders to step forward (Printy et al., 2009). Teachers who may have expertise in specific content areas may be looked to for leadership; this is known as "institutionally legitimized content area expertise" (Scribner & Bradley-Levine, 2010). Think of that trusted colleague so many turn to when crafting a response to an angry email, or the tips teachers may get from the colleague two doors down who has just implemented a new teaching strategy with great success. These are certainly ways in which leadership in schools is distributed in an informal manner.

Many teachers find other ways in which to contribute to the leadership structure in schools without needing to leave the classroom, their primary vocation. Whether teacher leadership is formalized or informal, there is no question that teacher leadership matters. Schools where there is strong school performance were found to have leadership structures that are integrated; that is, the leadership structure is shared with teachers, empowering them to make instructional decisions in regard to curriculum, instruction, and assessment (Marks & Printy, 2003; Neumerski, 2012). Strong school performance

was identified as pedagogical quality and authentic achievement. In other words, students in these schools were able to demonstrate attainment of content more often through authentic-type assessments. In these instances, schools with integrated leadership structures (integrated leadership is a combination of transformational leadership and shared instructional leadership) outperformed those that did not. The same study also found the opposite to be true: In low-achieving schools, principals were more likely to centralize the control of the school and less likely to engage in shared leadership. That should come as no surprise when considering the challenges faced by building principals to serve as instructional leaders (Boyland, 2011). If principals spend the majority of their time on managerial issues or lack the pedagogical skills necessary to carry out some of these tasks, it is reasonable to assume that these schools will be lower performing.

Leithwood and Mascall (2008) found that teachers with designated or formal leadership roles in schools held strong influence over their peers. In fact, the more formalized the leadership role, the greater the perceived influence they had in the school. And, in higher-achieving schools, there appeared to be higher levels of influence to all teachers and groups as opposed to lower-achieving schools where teachers appeared to have less influence. If a key task of leadership is to improve student achievement, then a focus must be on improving teacher performance (Leithwood & Mascall, 2008). But like principal leadership, there is little consensus as to what teacher leadership really is or how it functions, and it has not been clearly or consistently defined (York-Barr & Duke, 2004). In the following sections, we will spend some time describing two of the main themes of teacher leadership and how they may be implemented as part of Iowa's

implementation of the Teacher Leadership and Compensation System, as defined in

House File 215. This is not meant to be an exhaustive description, nor is it meant to fully

articulate what teacher leadership roles will actually manifest themselves in Iowa schools.

Some districts may take a different approach to articulating leadership roles, so some

liberties and assumptions have been taken in this case to identify what I believe the most

common roles will be.

Mentoring

Mentoring is selected as a key teacher leadership role, specifically because of how

it is situated in the guidance on Iowa's Teacher Leadership and Compensation System. In

this role, we are specifically speaking of those who provide supports to beginning

teachers. One of Iowa's goals in this legislation is to improve entry and induction into the

system. Further, teacher leadership can take many forms and is not isolated to just

instructional coaches or department heads. We can state that an important task of teacher

leadership is found in the work that mentor teachers do to help induct novice teachers to

the profession. A study completed by Gilles et al. (2013) found that a mentor program in

a school was a tremendous asset and that novice teachers saw their mentor as the biggest

resource available to them in the induction program. The characteristics of mentoring that

were most prevalent in this study were general support, practical/pedagogical support,

and personal support. New teachers have suggested that participating in mentoring

programs helped reduce feelings of isolation, increase self-confidence, and improve

problem-solving capabilities (Hobson, Ashby, Malderez, & Tomlinson, 2009). Mentors

have been found to help mentees put difficult problems into perspective. Notice that the key person who provides leadership in this relationship is not the building principal!

Participation in mentor programs not only helps with the induction program of new teachers, but also has reciprocal benefits for those who serve as the mentors. Some of these benefits include reduced feelings of isolation, but also the mentors' ability to be self-reflective of their own practice and to learn new ideas or perspectives from their mentee (Hobson et al., 2009). These teachers have also reported that they enjoy the increased collaboration that comes from mentoring. Teachers new to the profession often have a fresh perspective that their veteran mentor teachers can take advantage of.

Instructional Coaching

In the guidance document for Iowa's Teacher Leadership and Compensation System, one of the preferred models of teacher leadership is titled the "Instructional Coach Model." Coaches are teacher leaders who serve as change agents at the instructional level (Fullan & Knight, 2011). Instructional coaching began with a belief that teacher learning and professional development is best served when it is embedded within the confines of the instructional day (Neumerski, 2012), and it envisions teachers learning through interactions with their more "expert" coaching peers. This is a key driver of the model that is part of House File 215. Peer influence has been shown to be a positive indicator of teachers' change in instructional practice, and higher levels of conversation and interaction around teaching and learning have been associated with a change in instruction as reported by teachers in Supovitz et al. (2010). Take, for example, the idea that instructional coaches are free to collaborate with professional learning

communities (DuFour, 2006) in the development and refinement of customized

instructional strategies that meet the needs of the students they serve. Further,

instructional coaches can be valuable resources in the improvement of instruction if

principals are free to be instructional leaders (Fullan & Knight, 2011)—for example,

leveraging the resources that are needed for the instructional coaches and teachers to

collaborate. These authors went on to claim that without instructional coaching, many of

the reform efforts that we are currently embarking on will not be successful. Instructional

coaches have been shown to increase teacher expertise in instruction, which has the effect

of improving student achievement. Instructional coaches have also been described as

providing embedded professional development every day to teachers that results in

improved instructional practice (Knight, 2004).

Teachers were more positive about coaches when they were engaged in activities

that were designed to directly impact instructional practice in their respective schools

(Bean et al., 2010). Gaining access to classrooms continues to be a challenge for teacher

leaders. Although not a cure-all, developing relationships with teachers, engaging in

nonthreatening leadership, and targeting subsets of teachers were three strategies

employed in one study that helped to maximize teacher leaders access (Mangin, 2005). In

addition, teachers held a more negative view of coaches when they were perceived to

spend more time on managerial issues, or any issue not related specifically to working

with teachers on instructional issues. Student achievement was higher at schools where

more time was spent coaching as opposed to managerial-related tasks.

Types of Tasks That Teacher Leaders Perform

Gigante and Firestone (2007) argued that the types of tasks that teacher leaders perform can be broken down into two categories: those that are supportive in nature and those that are developmental in nature.

The authors described supportive roles as simply providing support for teachers. They described such tasks as managing and preparing materials for the teachers, building confidence, generating enthusiasm for a program, or piloting a curriculum. The majority of these tasks were not related to teaching and learning or school district improvement. In many cases, teachers in this type of *supportive* teacher leadership were involved in organizational maintenance. Another key finding in this study was the perception by teachers who served in this type of leadership role of feeling generally unsupported by building principals, and that the role they were serving in was not clearly articulated.

On the other hand, and again looking at the study by Gigante and Firestone (2007), teachers who are serving in teacher leadership roles that are developmental in nature tell a different story. These activities include such tasks as designing activities and lessons, answering content questions, modeling or team teaching, and facilitating professional development. These types of teacher leadership roles are designed to focus on teaching and learning and school district improvement. Unlike those serving in support roles, these teacher leaders seem to enjoy more support and developed more positive relationships with teachers and principals alike.

Challenges of Teacher Leadership

Teacher leadership is not without substantial challenges. Some of the primary challenges articulated in the literature that make teacher leadership programs less than effective include unsupportive principals, roles that are not well articulated, and resistance among teachers (Mangin, 2007). Teachers are not all that accustomed to collaborative work. They are used to going into their classroom, closing the door, and being left alone. An isolationist culture of schools continues to be predominant, making it much more difficult for teacher leaders to assist in improving instruction (Mangin, 2005). Teachers who are in a leadership role are often viewed by peers as someone who is achievement oriented and willing to take risks, which can put them at odds with their colleagues (York-Barr & Duke, 2004). Bean et al. (2010) proposed that it is difficult to make the transition from teacher to teacher leader (coach), and that in one case it had cost one of the authors a friendship because she was put in a situation where she needed to observe her friend. A certain kind of taboo exists when teachers assume leadership roles; it is almost as if they have violated a set of norms within the organization (Barth, 2001). The unfriendliness of some school cultures simply leads to these teachers being ostracized by their peers. Instead of being viewed as a trusted colleague, they may be viewed as someone in an administrative role. In a study conducted by Mangin (2005), 12 teachers who served in teacher leader roles had doors slammed in their faces (both figuratively and literally) when attempting to gain access to some teachers' classrooms. This study found that access to teachers' classrooms was among the biggest challenges for teacher leaders. All leaders in this study reported some level of resistance.

Indeed, teachers have been socialized to be private—that is, they are used to going into their classrooms, closing the door, and teaching. Because of this, teacher leaders as improvers of instruction face many obstacles, as noted by Mangin (2005). In fact, they found that in order for teacher leaders to gain access to teachers, they have to compromise their instructional improvement objectives. For example, this may include these teacher leaders focusing their work more on providing supportive types of leadership activities rather than developmental activities. This severely limits the scope of their impact and waters down the amount of change expected of teachers. When teachers accept the mantle of leadership, it appears that they are "stepping out of line," which can put them at odds with their colleagues. It is not uncommon for schools to have opposition from teachers whenever introducing a change initiative; however, every school typically has those who are interested in new ideas (Knight, 2004). The key, then, for the teacher leader is to gain the trust and access of those teachers who are interested in the new ideas and change initiatives.

In addition, a failure to properly train teacher leaders can be an impediment and source of frustration for these leaders (Fullan & Knight, 2011). A failure to train leaders can lead to an unsuccessful system that results in frustration and in many cases the abandonment of school programs. Teachers who have not had leadership training or training that enables them to navigate the conflicts they will encounter can experience significant frustration. But if teachers are properly trained, it can have a significantly positive effect and can serve as a force multiplier for gains in student achievement. Results from a study that utilized a teacher leadership model that relied on instructional

coaches found that coaches who participated in a rigorous yearlong training program prior to working with teachers found success (Biancarosa, Bryk, & Dexter, 2010). In fact, this study demonstrated significant gains in student literacy that compounded each subsequent year. Not only does proper training have an impact on teachers' ability to navigate shifting relationships, student achievement is impacted as well.

Principals have worked a long time to become principals; they may feel threatened, want to protect those positions, and be unwilling to share leadership with others (Barth, 2001). After all, principals are the ones ultimately responsible for what does or does not happen in their buildings. But a concern that the instructional leader's influence is diminished through distributing and sharing leadership is simply unfounded. In a report by Leithwood et al. (2008), it was discovered that there is no loss in power or influence on the part of leadership when the collective influence of other teachers in the school increases. Yet principals who are unsupportive can actually serve as an impediment to teacher leadership (Barth, 2001). For example, teachers who experience the most difficulty with their role often come from principals who are unsupportive or who misunderstand the role of the teacher leader (Bean et al., 2010). This role ambiguity can lead to administrators assigning tasks to the leader that prevent them from working with teachers to improve instruction, such as managerial or clerical tasks.

When principals do understand that the role of the instructional teacher leader is to strengthen instruction by helping to plan lessons, create rubrics, analyze test scores, and provide instructional expertise, it helps the teacher leader to achieve their primary goal in the teacher leadership position—providing direct instructional support. It also

helps the principal by increasing the capacity of the human resources available to impact student achievement in a positive way. Indeed, principal support is crucial to the role of the teacher leader. In a study conducted by Smylie et al. (2007), lack of engagement by principals in the teacher leadership initiative led to feelings of mistrust and resulted in a floundering initiative. That same study also found that when the principal is supportive, teachers are more likely to engage in leadership activities in the school. The takeaway here is that the support of the building principal is a key component to ensuring the success of the teacher leadership systems in schools. Additionally, teachers in leadership positions, particularly those serving as instructional coaches, can have their efforts squandered through poor collaboration with principals or poorly defined job responsibilities and ultimately end up serving in quasi-administrative roles (Fullan & Knight, 2011). Administrative leadership, in particular that of the building principal, is absolutely critical to the success of teacher leadership systems (Smylie et al., 2007).

Communication about the roles of the teacher leader is crucial to the success of the position. Because communication is so important, it is critical that district leadership clearly articulate with building administrators the work and role of teacher leaders (Mangin, 2007). Failure to clearly articulate the purpose of teacher leadership can lead to misunderstanding about the role of teacher leaders, which, as mentioned above, can exacerbate the problems in a culture that includes unsupportive building principals. Mangin (2005) found that poor communication can lead to teachers interpreting the role of teacher leader as a supervisory one that would include monitoring and evaluation, which again, as mentioned above, can lead to feelings of isolation. Where communication

is not as strong about the role and responsibilities of the teacher leader, administrators sometime utilize teacher leaders in noninstructional ways, for example, working on the budget or completing administrative paperwork or some other "supportive leadership role" (Gigante & Firestone, 2007). If communication from the district leadership clearly articulates the role of the leader, it tends to influence how the principal views and understands the role of the teacher leader (Mangin, 2007).

York-Barr and Duke (2004) described a study that demonstrated the influence the principal can have over the success of teacher leadership programs. In one school where the program was viewed negatively, teachers reported that the principal was not visible, teachers were left on their own, and there was no real communication between the teacher leaders and the principal. Teacher resistance to teacher leadership was found to be exacerbated in schools where there was a failure of administrators to introduce the teacher leader to the faculty (Mangin, 2005). This is an important symbolic gesture that shows support for teacher leadership. In a school where the program was viewed positively, teacher leaders and principals communicated frequently and worked closely together. If teacher leadership is crucial to the health and performance of the school, principal support is key to this success.

Mangin (2005) offered three primary ways that administrators can improve their level of support for teacher leaders. The first is for the building-level principal to set expectations for working with teacher leaders. This study found that when teachers did not understand the work of the teacher leader, resistance and anxiety increased. But when those expectations were set, including the types of interactions that should occur,

resistance decreased. The second way principals were able to improve the success of teacher leadership was to show support for instructional change. For example, when principals exercise their role as evaluators and insist on improved instruction, teachers perceive teacher leaders as less of a threat and more of a resource. Finally, teacher leaders reported that it was helpful to meet with administrators and receive guidance about their roles and positions. A primary ingredient is the establishment of clear and open communication between the building principal and teacher leader.

<p align="center">Shared Leadership Among Principals and Teachers</p>

Sharing and distributing leadership among teachers and principals in matters of curriculum, instruction, and assessment can create a powerful educational program (Printy et al., 2009). When school leadership is distributed widely across the school, the influence increases on teachers and students alike (Leithwood et al., 2008). It is recognized that this work is best done through the collaboration and partnership of multiple individuals and cannot be left to one person alone. The truth of the matter is that school leaders do not operate in isolation and that schools are incredibly complex organizations (Lichtenstein et al., 2006; Neumerski, 2012; Uhl-Bien et al., 2007). While a building principal may operate as a member of the team, it could be the collective responsibility of the team to work interdependently toward the common goal (Marzano et al., 2005). This team effort then moves organizations beyond the analysis of what an individual leader does or actions they take, to ways those interactions complement the efforts of other leaders or colleagues toward the completion of the task for the betterment and improvement of the system (Spillane et al., 2003; Uhl-Bien et al., 2007).

The term "collective leading" is used to describe multiple leaders working together to co-enact a task (Spillane et al., 2003). In this example, three separate individuals are all working together to achieve an overarching goal. Consider a workshop or professional development opportunity where the principal ensures that everyone stays on task and on schedule and in which one teacher (leader) leads the discussion and another teacher (leader) clarifies the rest of the group members' contributions and records the progress of the group.

Indeed, this is, in essence, distributing the leadership (Spillane et al., 2004) across the organization. This process has the ability to reduce the workload for those in formal administrative roles while at the same time reducing the chances of error based on the decision of a single leader (Leithwood & Mascall, 2008). Furthermore, it has been demonstrated that shared instructional leadership between principals and teachers has led to changes in student achievement (Marks & Printy, 2003). It is important to note, however, that as leadership becomes more distributed and teachers take on new responsibilities (largely outside and beyond the classroom), principals will also be required to work to change and to set increasingly more refined goals (Smylie et al., 2007). Principals will need to understand the contributions of teacher leaders and be able to coach and work with them in a way that is mutually beneficial to the organization. Moreover, the greater the trust between teachers and principals, the more likely that the leadership system will take on more complex leadership responsibilities (Smylie et al., 2007).

Teacher leaders, especially instructional coaches, will find the most benefit when working collaboratively with the building principal. When building principals and teacher leaders share a common vision of teacher leadership as a means to help teachers improve instruction, it tends to pay greater dividends. A study by Carlisle and Berebitsky (2011) found that when instructional coaches worked closely with the principal, it enabled the coach to serve as a change agent in the school. In turn, this resulted in higher gains in student achievement, regardless of teacher experience or teacher attitudes. This type of shared instructional leadership requires the collaboration of the principals and teachers in matters of curriculum, instruction, and assessment (Marks & Printy, 2003). Through collaboration with the building principal, instructional teacher leaders may help teachers implement new curriculum, engage in professional development, provide feedback, participate in co-teaching, or model lessons (Mangin, 2007) in a much more effective way than the building principal because they may have a better understanding of the real work applicability of the pedagogy and the instructional strategy to be employed. This type of collaborative partnership can pay great dividends, allowing each member of the distributed leadership cooperative to leverage their leadership capital in the most effective way and to the betterment of the school. When working with those teachers who may be uncommitted and resistant, the principal can be of valuable service, and likewise, the teacher leader can work with teachers to ensure that instructional strategies and interventions the principal sees as the focus of school improvement are implemented with fidelity (Datnow & Castellano, 2001).

The success of a teacher leadership program in a school is largely dependent on how well the building principal embraces the concept. This is corroborated by Supovitz et al. (2010), who found a significant relationship between principal leadership on peer influence. School leadership that develops trust fosters an environment of collaboration among teachers around issues of teaching and learning. Teacher leaders and coaches who work closely with the building principal underscore their position as leaders in the school who are able to elicit credence in their ability to offer advice on how to improve instruction for students (Bean et al., 2010). In schools where there is support for teacher leaders and where they find success, it is due to the support systems that the building principal has in place (Gigante & Firestone, 2007). Some of those supports may include such things as providing social and material resources, e.g., positive relationships and involvement with professional development. Evidence also suggests that administrative support for teacher leaders can help facilitate access into the classroom and promote instructional improvement (Mangin, 2005). The principal also provides support by allowing time to perform the assigned tasks. For example, when developing the building-wide instructional schedule, the principal can provide common planning time as well as time for the leadership team to collaborate with teachers. Gigante and Firestone (2007) also found that unless administrators understand what the role of the teacher leader is, support it through verbal acknowledgement, and provide the time necessary for these leaders (Hobson et al., 2009), it will not have the support from the rest of the teaching faculty. Furthermore, schools with successful teacher leadership initiatives had principals who had a very high knowledge of the work of the teacher leader and a high level of

interaction with the teacher leader (Mangin, 2007). This high level of knowledge of what the teacher leader should do cannot be assumed to be intuitive to the building principal, but rather must be part of a comprehensive principal professional development program (Fullan & Knight, 2011).

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH DESIGN

This study has attempted to answer one very simple question: Does the panacea of the teacher leadership systems planned in the fall of 2013 match the reality of implementation in the fall of 2014?

The focus of this study was the rollout of the Teacher Leadership and Compensation System that was included as part of Governor Branstad's education reform legislation that was signed into law in 2013. Each school district in Iowa was provided an opportunity to submit a grant application to the Iowa Department of Education for a teacher leadership and compensation system. The grant application was to describe in detail the district's vision of teacher leadership, how the teacher leadership system connects to current initiatives, how it improves entry into the profession, the teacher leadership roles, how teacher leaders are selected, how teacher leaders are used to strengthen professional development, how teacher leaders are monitored to gauge their impact on instruction, and the capacity and sustainability of the teacher leadership and compensation system.

This study consisted of a qualitative inquiry that examined a single-subject case study: a school district in Iowa with an enrollment of less than 1,000 students that was approved and accepted to begin the rollout of the teacher leadership and compensation system in their district. The focus was on the first two months of this rollout and included interviews of key informants.

Specifically, this inquiry examined the differences and similarities between the plan submitted and the plan as it is actually being implemented during the first two months of the rollout. Of particular interest during the investigation was the development of relationships between principals and teacher leaders as they distribute leadership in these very complex systems. With that in mind, I have situated this inquiry through the lens of Distributive Leadership Theory and Complexity Leadership Theory (Lichtenstein et al., 2006; Spillane et al., 2004; Uhl-Bien et al., 2007).

Methodological Standpoint

Qualitative research is, by the most basic definition, an inquiry, an attempt to answer a question based on some sort of phenomenon. Denzin and Lincoln (2008) define all research as scientific and further opine that it is a search for power and truth. All types of research, however, are alike in that they are an inquiry or investigation that is done in a systematic manner (Merriam, 2009).

Unlike quantitative research, qualitative research does not attempt to isolate the independent and dependent variables, nor does it utilize an experimental design. Surveys and experiments that are grouped together are often labeled quantitative because ". . . the focus is on how much or how many and results are usually presented in numerical form" (Merriam, 2009, p. 5). Furthermore, the positivist researcher is more inclined to utilize a quantitative approach and believe that an absolute one-size-fits-all solution is out there and is measurable, observable, and stable (Merriam, 2009).

On the other hand, the qualitative researcher recognizes that there is no single approach, that there can be multiple truths, and that they are all valid (Merriam, 2009).

Qualitative research typically takes place in the natural setting through observation, interviewing, and the telling of stories. The approaches are varied and encompass several methods, including case studies, politics and ethics, participatory inquiry, visual methods, and interpretive analysis (Denzin & Lincoln, 2008). Merriam (2009) contended that "a study is naturalistic when it takes place in a real-world setting rather than a laboratory, and that whatever was being observed was allowed to happen naturally" (p. 7).

Qualitative research has many different characteristics, and hence a debate exists on how best to describe this type of inquiry (Merriam, 2009). Merriam explored the question of which varieties are best: naturalistic, interpretive, or qualitative. In any case, qualitative researchers are most interested in understanding how people make sense of the experiences they have in the world. In the brief section that follows, I will be discussing the four basic characteristics of qualitative research as defined by Merriam: a focus on meaning and understanding, the researcher as the primary instrument of data collection, an inductive process, and rich description.

As previously suggested, the researcher is attempting to derive meaning from how people make sense out of their lives. The researcher is interested in how people interpret their experiences. The perspective that is most important belongs to the participant, not the researcher. Merriam (2009) described this as an insider's perspective (the participant) rather than the outsider's perspective (researcher). Furthermore, there is an understanding that the researcher is not trying to predict how the phenomenon may impact the future, but rather wishes to understand the nature of that particular setting and what it means for the participants in that setting. A second key characteristic of qualitative research is that

the researcher is the primary instrument of data collection. This is unlike other types of

research that rely on surveys or experimental design as the primary instrument of data

collection. The advantages to the researcher of being the primary data collection

instrument include the ability to expand their understanding of the phenomena, to

"immediately clarify and summarize material, check with respondents for accuracy of

interpretation, and explore unusual or unanticipated responses" (Merriam, 2009, p. 15).

The disadvantage to the researcher as primary data collector is the bias that the researcher

may have in regard to the study. However, Merriam suggests that it is important to

identify and monitor these biases, paying particular attention to how they may be

impacting the course of the study. Shining a light on biases may in fact lead to a deeper

understanding of the phenomenon and enhance the credibility of the research.

Although researchers are attempting to gain a greater understanding, they do

begin with a basic framework that enables a focus on their work. Throughout the course

of the study in the field, the framework is inductively formed through what is learned.

Unlike the positivistic approach, where numbers and graphs are used to depict results,

pictures and words are used to describe what a qualitative researcher has learned. Details

are likely to be highly descriptive and include documents, interviews, field notes, and

observations.

Merriam (2009) does not suggest these four characteristics as an exhaustive

description of qualitative research; they are only the basic characteristics. Furthermore,

qualitative research is flexible and responsive to changing conditions in the study. The

sample selection in qualitative research is typically nonrandom and smaller than it would be in quantitative research.

Finally, it is important to note that qualitative research is done in the field as opposed to the laboratory, and that the researcher spends a substantial amount of time studying the phenomenon in its natural setting. This is quite different from quantitative research, in which the investigator avoids spending time in the field in an effort to minimize a disruption of the independent and dependent variables in the experiment.

<u>Biographical</u>

At this point it is necessary to situate the research with the researcher and discuss biases that have existed throughout the duration of this study. I currently serve as an Iowa public school superintendent in a district with an enrollment of fewer than 1,000 students, and as such our district had the opportunity to compete for a grant to implement teacher leadership and compensation during the first wave of the implementation. Like many of my colleagues, I chose to develop what is referred to in the guidance (Iowa Department of Education, 2013) as the "comparable mode." On March 3, 2014, our school district was informed that we were one of 39 districts statewide that had been selected to participate in the first year of the rollout. Due to the competitive nature of the planning process, as we roll out along with our friends and colleagues from neighboring school districts, the natural tendency may be to make unfair comparisons between plans in the participant district and my own home school district, thus coloring the results of this study. Indeed, while the data collection was underway I found myself wondering how I

might approach a similar problem or scenario in my own district. In other cases, I admit that I thought to myself, that is not the way I would have done that.

Further, I already have admitted a bias about the power of teacher leaders to positively impact instruction and thereby have a role in significant gains in student achievement, particularly through the utilization of instructional coaches as teacher instructional leaders. This is because I come to administration with a background in music education. When becoming a school principal and assuming the mantle of "instructional leader," I quickly discovered that I was not equipped to lead instruction in core content areas (i.e., math, reading, science). While I could study instructional strategies and lead professional development in these areas, it did not erase the fact that there were those on my faculty who were far superior at and more capable of leading professional development in these areas than I. No matter what I did, there would always be an issue of credibility because of my lack of experience in teaching these content areas. Because of this, I am a very strong believer in distributed leadership theory (Spillane et al., 2004). Because of this bias, I may be led to positive conclusions about the findings of this research that are not necessarily justified. For this reason, I will utilize several approaches to validate the accuracy of the data, which will be explained in further detail in sections that follow.

<div align="center">Research Approach</div>

A single school district was selected to be the case under scrutiny, where key informants were subsequently interviewed. I shift focus now to the qualitative research methodology that is the case study. Merriam (2009) defined the case study as an in-depth

analysis of a bounded system. A case study, then, may be a classroom in a particular school, or the school itself. It may also be a particular teacher in that school or a particular group of students. The point is that the case study is a bounded system, where there are boundaries around the case. The bounded system in this study is the school district in the months of August and September, 2014, with some follow-up investigation through the middle of October 2014. The discussion that follows will draw from the scholarly work of Merriam.

This idea of boundaries, then, has to be the most important component of the case. If there is no end to the number of observations that can take place or the number of interviews that can be conducted, a situation is unlikely to qualify as a case. To be termed a case study, it must be one particular program or one particular group of learners in a classroom. The particular program or phenomenon to be studied in our case was the rollout of the teacher leadership and compensation system, specifically focusing on the first two months of the implementation. The inquiry examined the challenges, celebrations, and modifications that may or may not be necessary as the teacher leadership and compensation system is integrated into the existing structure of the school district. This inquiry will also utilize a mixed data collection methodology, as key informants were interviewed and the teacher leadership and compensation planning documents were also scrutinized.

<center>Research Design: Key Informant Interviewing</center>

Interviewing is a common thread throughout most types of qualitative research. According to Merriam (2009), there are three ways to conduct interviews: highly

structured and standardized, semistructured, or unstructured (which is also known as an informal interview). In a structured interview, the researcher relies on a standard set of questions that is asked of every participant, in the same order. There is no deviation from the interview guide in this type of data collection, which is used when nothing should be left to chance (Fontana & Frey, 2008). In a semistructured interview, the interview guide still has specific questions that must be answered, but the questions may or may not be followed in the same order for each participant, and there is room for follow-up questions that may not be included in the guide. An unstructured interview is just that: the interview guide may contain just a few ideas or starter questions and is supposed to feel more like a conversation. Fontana and Frey (2008) point out that unstructured interviewing provides a greater depth than other types of interviewing, specifically because of its qualitative nature. For the purposes of this inquiry, a tailored interview guide was designed for each of the key informants in the study (Appendix B). The responsive interview method was used, and each key informant was interviewed twice. With this method, there is a constant dialogue with "conversational partners" using a series of questions designed to tour, probe, and follow up (Rubin & Rubin, 2005). Following the first round of interviews and the initial analysis of the data, the interview guide was adjusted and modified to account for a more tailored approach for each participant (Appendix C).

The key informants interviewed included the superintendent of schools, one building principal, a teacher leader, and a regular classroom teacher.

Data Collection Procedures

A separate conversation protocol was developed for each of the key informants that asked questions specific to their role in the teacher leadership and compensation plan (Appendices B & C). During the course of all interviews, each participant was audio-recorded using a primary and secondary recording device. Following the interview, a third party was contracted to prepare transcripts of the interview. Also during the interview, field notes were taken. These notes were compared against transcripts to ensure accuracy and develop follow-up questions.

Another type of data collection that is sometimes used in qualitative research is document and artifact collection. Although more commonly used for historical research, it does have applicability in qualitative studies. There are many types of documents that can be used in qualitative research, including public records, personal documents, popular culture documents, visual documents, physical materials/artifacts, and researcher-generated documents (Merriam, 2009). In this case, the planning documents for the selected districts' teacher leadership and compensation system were considered a key data artifact.

Merriam (2009) points out that using documents as a data collection method is not much different from using interviews or conducting observations. Regardless of what method of data collection is used, the researcher is guided by questions that need to be answered. As is the case in observation and interviewing, data collection through document collection and examination allows for the "accidental uncovering of valuable

data" (p. 150). A primary goal of this study was to determine the extent to which the planning documents match the early implementation of the leadership system.

<div align="center">Sampling Plan Participants and Criteria for Selection</div>

The sampling plan was deliberate and purposeful. Since this researcher is most interested in small schools, I chose to focus on a school with an overall enrollment of fewer than 1,000 students. A total of 146 school districts in Iowa applied for funding during the first round of implementation. Of those 146, only 39 schools were selected. By virtue of a small group of school districts being selected for the first round, the pool size was severely limited. Further, it is worth noting that of the 39 school districts selected, only 11 met the size requirement of this study. The size of school district was the primary criterion for selection. A deliberate approach was taken: a call to the superintendent of the school district selected, based on proximity to the researcher's home, to see if they would like to participate in the study. If a school district did not wish to participate, the process was repeated until a school district interested in participating in the study was selected.

<div align="center">Sampling Concerns Addressed</div>

Because of the small number of schools initially selected in the implementation, and the even smaller number of schools that met the enrollment criteria, there was a concern about protecting the confidentiality of the participating school district. In order to protect this confidentiality, the school district, along with the participants, were given pseudonyms. The fictionalized school district is known as the "Rosewood Community School District."

Interview Protocol

The intent of this process was to uncover and learn about the planning and implementation of the teacher leadership and compensation plan from the perspective of key informants. A semistructured protocol was employed (Appendices B & C), and the following procedures were used:

1. All participants were given a signed informed consent form (Appendix A) explaining the purpose of the study. The rights of each participant were discussed along with the risks associated with the study and the participant's right to withdraw (Rubin & Rubin, 2005).

2. The interview occurred in a place of the participant's choosing in order to make him or her feel comfortable and at ease. Each interview was conducted at the school building where the participant was employed.

3. All of the materials necessary for the success of the interview were brought along. This included an interview guide, two digital recorders, and a notepad for taking field notes. Prior to recording the interview, I made sure that the participant was aware of the recorder and received consent to recording of the interview prior to starting the device.

4. Before the interview, time was spent in casual conversation. I introduced myself and the purpose of the interview. I explained the nature of the questions to be asked and the purpose of those questions. After a few moments of this preliminary conversation, I asked for and received permission to turn on the recording device, as recommended by Rubin and Rubin (2005). During the second interview, the beginning of the

interview was again spent in casual conversation, discussing a multitude of mundane topics. Again, before starting the recorder, I asked for and received permission to record the conversation.

5. After the preliminaries, I turned on the recorder and began the interview. A backup recorder was brought along in case of malfunction, and I took notes during the interview. The primary recorder functioned as designed and the backup was not needed.

6. At the conclusion of the interview, I turned off the recorder and thanked the participant for their time. I informed them that if there were any follow-up questions, I would be sure to call. Finally, I shared that if they had any questions or concerns, they were encouraged to call me. I gave them my business card and email address.

7. The digitized audio recordings were transcribed into a Microsoft Word format and sent to participants to check for accuracy prior to coding.

8. Following the interview data collection, it was necessary in some instances to reach out to a participant to follow up with a clarifying question or ask for an additional piece of information. While an in-person conversation and interview may have been a better option, economically it made more sense to follow up with a phone call or quick email.

Key Informant 1—the Superintendent

The first interview was with the superintendent, divided into three parts. The first part gleaned the educational background and general philosophy of the superintendent. It uncovered some key basics about the development of the plan and why the decision was

made to move forward with an application during the first year. The second section of the

interview discussed instructional leadership. Specifically, I examined what the

superintendent defined as instructional leadership and what barriers, if any, exist in

serving as instructional leaders. The discussion moved to how instructional leadership is

changing as a result of the implementation of teacher leadership and how the building

principal is navigating new and evolving relationships with teacher leaders.

The third and final part of the interview examined the alignment of the teacher

leadership and compensation plan within the realities of implementation. Specific

attention and questioning was provided regarding each section of the plan. For example,

some questions asked what modifications, if any, had been necessary during the

implementation phase, how the selection process played out, and the impact on

professional development. The interview concluded with a discussion of how the district

is monitoring teacher leaders for their impact on teaching and learning.

<u>Key Informant 2—the Principal</u>

As the role of principal as instructional leader is likely to evolve, particularly in

how they go about organizing their work day, principals are a critical component in the

success of the teacher leadership system. Once again, the interview of this key informant

used an interview guide divided into three parts: background and educational philosophy,

instructional leadership, and evolution and implementation of the plan. During this

section, I looked for validating markers that aligned with information learned from the

superintendent. I was also very interested to hear what type of role the principal played in

the development of the plan. This was done to discover if the principal's voice was heard in the planning process.

As with the superintendent interview, the second section of the interview was used to uncover the principal's definition of instructional leadership and how it has changed as a result of the teacher leadership system. I listened closely to discover how this possible change in practice is of concern to the principal and whether it is impacting their ability to fully implement and distribute leadership to teacher leaders. Finally, the third section of the interview considered the evolution and implementation of the plan. Depending on the principal's involvement, I was unsure how much information about the evolution of the plan the principal may have had, but they should have been able to accurately articulate the implementation of the plan.

<div align="center">Key Informant 3—the Teacher Leader</div>

The interview of a teacher leader was a critical component in the successful execution of this study. Once again, the interview guide (Appendices B & C) was broken into three sections and served as the template during this interview. The first section mirrored those of the first two interview participants, gathering background information on the subject and general overall philosophies. A departure from the other interviews was a direct question about the reasons why the teacher chose to become a teacher leader.

Sections 2 and 3 were different in that I was trying to discern the type of tasks that the teacher leader is performing, along with gaining a better understanding of the relationships that exist between the teacher leader, building principal, and teacher practitioner. Finally, the interview wrapped up with a question about the future of teacher

leadership, specifically as it relates to the teacher leader. My intention here was to discover if the teacher leader's vision of leadership matches the reality in which they currently find themselves.

<div align="center">Key Informant 4—the Teacher Practitioner</div>

As a final component of the data collection and interviewing, it made sense to interview a teacher practitioner, or one who was not directly involved as a teacher leader. While not necessarily looking for a teacher who has been resistant to teacher leadership, it would have been interesting to at least meet with one who may not have been as involved in the conceptualization of the teacher leadership and compensation planning. In this case, the teacher selected for the interview was a novice teacher during her second year of practice. Once again, a three-part interview guide and protocol was followed that resembled those in previous interviews (Appendices B & C). The first section of the interview included a question designed to gauge the general working knowledge the practitioner has of the teacher leadership system currently being implemented in the district.

Sections 2 and 3 of the interview dealt directly with the impact that the teacher leader is having on the system and on the teachers. I was interested in hearing about how the teacher leader and teacher practitioner interact and the perceived value that the teacher leader brings to the teacher practitioner.

<div align="center">Data Analysis Procedures</div>

Merriam (2009) provided sound advice when discussing the analysis of qualitative data. In accord with the observation that most qualitative research is based on

interviews (Denzin & Lincoln, 2008), large quantities of data were generated through this inquiry. To avoid a situation where the researcher is flooded in data overload, where it may be all but impossible to come up with coherent findings, Merriam (2009) suggested that data analysis should be completed simultaneously with data collection. In fact, she admitted that, while much of qualitative research has room for interpretation, "data analysis is one of the few facets, perhaps the only facet of doing qualitative research, in which there is a preferred way" (p. 171).

Because of the sheer amount of data collected in qualitative research, Merriam (2009) suggested that the analysis of those data is the most difficult part of the entire process. She stated that while the constant comparative method of data analysis is most commonly used when developing a grounded theory, it has been widely used across many genres of qualitative research. Regardless, the method of analysis must and will be organized in a way that makes data easily retrievable and manipulable (Marshall & Rossman, 1989). The data was transcribed by a third party as quickly as possible following its collection. In this case, the turnaround from recordings to interview was less than a week. Following that collection, as Rubin and Rubin (2005) suggested, I read the transcriptions along with the recording to fill in any inaudible sections and in an effort to provide additional context.

Again, realizing the vastness of the data, it was important to develop categories in which to organize and code those data. These categories were developed by reading the transcripts; developing a coding system and applying, changing, and recategorizing the data into the codes. Marshall and Rossman (1989) discussed how categories form sets,

which are collections of categories. It is important to bear in mind that there may be more than one category to describe a specific data point. Throughout this systematic coding process, I was able to bring together passages from similar topics. In the early stages of analysis, recognizing these themes, concepts, and events led to further reorganizing of concepts, themes, etc., as recognized by Rubin and Rubin (2005).

The goal of the data analysis was to make sense out of the data, in essence to answer the research question. In constant comparison, the task is to "compare one unit of information with the next in looking for recurring regularities in the data" (Merriam, 2008, p. 177). Then the researcher goes back, reflects, and begins anew, constantly comparing the data set back to the research questions, all the while referring back and forth in the data. During the analysis of the data, I also allowed the literature to suggest themes, while being careful not to rely too heavily lest this color the analysis (Rubin & Rubin, 2005).

<center>Objectivity and Subjectivity</center>

In quantitative research, we are concerned with validity and reliability. Does the test or research do a proper and adequate job of controlling variables? Have we considered all of the unknown factors? Have we accounted for everything within our experiment? Can we replicate the experiment and expect similar results? These are the questions that lend credibility to quantitative research. It is important that we are able to trust research results because researchers intervene in people's lives (Merriam, 2009). Without this trust, it may lead to participants being unwilling to partake in future research.

However, in qualitative fields, researchers are in the natural setting and thus know it is impossible to control for all the variables. They are the primary data collection instrument, and in fact do have biases (Merriam, 2009). Because of this, other methodologies are used to determine if the findings are objective and subjective. Eisner (1991) indicated that three features must be present to determine trustworthiness: coherence (does the story make sense), consensus (do other investigators concur with the findings), and instrument utility (is there a usefulness of comprehension).

Merriam (2009) suggested that triangulation is the most well-known strategy to increase the validity of a study. Denzin (as cited in Merriam, 2009) stated that there are four basic types of triangulation: multiple methods, multiple sources of data, multiple investigators, and multiple theories to confirm findings.

Using member checks is another way to ensure validity in findings and was the primary way to ensure data were accurate. After interviewing subjects, I was able to solicit feedback from those interviewed and asked if they agreed with my initial findings, as suggested by Merriam (2009). Merriam also indicated that adequate engagement in data collection is another strategy that can be employed; therefore, when I began to hear the same themes over and over again, I realized that I had reached saturation with the data. Indeed, Merriam suggested a number of strategies that can be used to ensure validity or objectivity in the findings, including looking for data that supports alternative explanations, researcher's position (or reflexivity), and peer examination or review. These strategies were employed by relying on the advice and counsel of my dissertation committee and in particular, my chair.

When it comes to reliability in the social sciences, "it is more problematic because human behavior is never static, nor is what many experience necessarily more reliable than what one person experiences" (Merriam, 2009, p. 221). Merriam stated that it is more important for the qualitative researcher to determine if the results are consistent with the data that is collected. With that, another method that can be used is commonly referred to as an audit trail. Merriam described the audit trail as a log that shows how the researcher reached their conclusions. It typically describes in detail how data were collected and how decisions were made throughout the inquiry. Throughout the collection of data, I was able to jot down notes and reflect on the analysis of these data.

<u>Ethics, Potential Shortcomings, and Benefits</u>

While the ability to generalize can always be an "issue" in qualitative research, it is even more so with a case study, because of the simple fact that the focus is on a single bound unit of study. Fox and Harding (2005) provided a classic example of qualitative case studies in their study of school shootings. In their example, the cases consisted of two schools that had experienced a shooting at the hands of a student. The objective of the study was to understand the causes of each shooting, suggest measures for preventing future violence, and to understand how the communities were impacted as a result of the shooting. The cases were of similar nature in that they had to "occur at a public school, the shooter was a student or former student, there were multiple victims, and at least some of the victims were chosen for their symbolic nature" (p. 73).

Furthermore, Fox and Harding (2005) chose to utilize mixed data collection methodology including interviews, observations, and review of records. These

methodologies are not uncommon in case study research. The two cases were compared and conclusions were drawn based on similarities between the two school shootings. In this case, the two bounded systems were in fact the schools where the shootings took place.

There are several limitations to this research. First, because it is a case study, the ability to generalize the findings to other settings should be viewed with caution. In addition, this study considered the implementation of the teacher leadership and compensation system in a very short time frame—that is, during the first two months of implementation. Because of this, it is difficult to infer the overall success of the district's teacher leadership and compensation plan.

However, the benefits from this study will prove valuable to other districts as they implement plans in years 2 and 3 of the scale-up of House File 215. There is no doubt that those districts not implementing at this time will be closely watching those districts that are implementing to see what lessons might be learned. Of particular interest will be at least an answer to the question "How did we get started?" This research will be able to answer that question.

Finally, the issue of potential bias and coloring of data must be considered. Since this researcher's own district was selected as one of the early implementers, it has been critical to not let the experiences in this district color the data collection from the subject district. A reflective journal throughout the data collection process should help to alleviate those concerns.

CHAPTER 4

FINDINGS

Rosewood Community School District

The participant school district, "Rosewood Community School District," in this study has an overall enrollment of approximately 900 students and a poverty rate of 40.75%. The district is considered rural and is situated within 20 miles of a major population center. The district incorporates a geographic boundary of 167 square miles. Located within the boundaries of Rosewood are three towns with a school building in each town. The elementary school is located in Sunbury, the middle school in Ashton, and the high school is in the town of Gallon. Prior to the introduction of the teacher leadership plan, the leadership structure consisted of a superintendent and three building principals. The district describes its teacher leadership system as an expansion of practices previously put into place; in other words, a revitalization of a teacher leadership system that had gone dormant due to budgetary difficulties. A teacher leadership role titled "emeritus teacher" had already existed in the district, as had the role of mentor teacher. The district also previously employed teacher leaders participating in roles with a main responsibility of coordinating and aligning curriculum vertically; however, those positions were eliminated during a recent budget-cutting cycle.

The first section of this chapter will describe the actual teacher leadership and compensation plan as submitted and approved for grant funding by the Iowa Department of Education. This plan was obtained by asking by asking the superintendent of the Rosewood Community School District to email it to the researcher. It is also available on

the Iowa Department of Education website. The second section of this chapter will be the data collection from the four key informants, who were interviewed a total of two times over a one month period. I begin with a description of the participants selected for interview.

<div align="center">Superintendent Katy Siler</div>

Superintendent of Schools Katy Siler has been with the Rosewood Community School District for three years. Prior to her appointment at Rosewood, she served as superintendent in two other Iowa school districts. Her career as a classroom teacher included six years working as a third-grade teacher before taking a break to raise a family. Following that, Katy returned to the classroom and spent time working in a kindergarten preparation program, writing curriculum, and working in the area education agency. At the urging of her AEA colleagues, she completed her administrative preparation work and became a K-2 principal. After serving as a principal in two separate school districts, she became a superintendent of a very small school, serving a total of 330 students. Following that appointment, she served in a larger school district of approximately 1,300 students. Following a recommendation to close a school in that school district, Superintendent Siler moved to Rosewood. In total, Katy has served as a superintendent for seven years.

<div align="center">Principal Claire Miner</div>

After a 20-year career as a classroom practitioner, Claire Miner decided to become a principal, realizing a long-term career goal. While midway through her classroom teaching career, she decided to embark on the process of receiving national

board certification. Following that accomplishment and feeling comfortable in her district, and discovering that she wanted to open more doors of opportunity for herself, she decided to obtain a master's degree in educational leadership. Following the completion of that degree she became assistant principal for one year in a neighboring district before assuming the role of elementary principal at Rosewood Elementary School. At this writing, Principal Miner is beginning her fourth year at Rosewood, bringing her total administrative experience to five years.

<div align="center">Master Teacher Lauren Cooper</div>

In 2006, Lauren graduated from a local teacher preparation program and began her career as a sixth-grade literacy teacher. She was in that position for one year before taking advantage of an opportunity to move to second grade. After serving two years in that district, Lauren moved home and secured a position in Rosewood, a district that was adjacent to her hometown. For five years, she worked as a third-grade teacher in Rosewood until obtaining a position teaching seventh-grade language arts in her hometown school district during the 2013-2014 school year. Interestingly, when the Rosewood Community School District was selected to become one of the first districts to implement a teacher leadership and compensation system, Lauren was recruited by Principal Miner to return as a teacher leader. Although not involved in the planning of the teacher leadership system now in place at Rosewood, Lauren offers a unique perspective. Now in her ninth year as an educator, Lauren has recently begun a master's program so she can one day be a building principal.

Lauren's eligibility to become a teacher leader in Rosewood was made possible because the teacher leadership and compensation law requires two explicit components that are spelled out in the code. First, the teacher must have a minimum of three years of overall teaching experience. Second, the teacher must have at least one year of experience in the district of employment. The fact that Lauren had left the district the year prior was irrelevant; there is no requirement that the teacher leader be a current teacher in the district, just that they have at least one year of experience in that district.

<u>Teacher Gwen Moran</u>

As a second-year educator, Gwen is still practicing under her initial license and is considered a novice educator. A native Iowan, she grew up a mere 35 minutes from Rosewood. She began her post-secondary journey at a local community college before transferring out of state to participate in athletics. While not directly involved in the planning of the teacher leadership system, Gwen has had the perspective of a new teacher on the implementation of the plan. She is currently assigned to teach third grade. As a new member of the profession, Gwen participates in the district's mentoring and induction program.

<u>Rosewood Community School District Teacher Leadership Plan</u>

Rosewood Community School District elected to develop a plan based on the comparable model. This decision was made in an effort to provide the district with the maximum amount of flexibility in the development of teacher leadership positions and to create a plan that best meets the needs of the school district while fulfilling the district's vision for its plan. The teacher leader roles that have been created include master, model,

mentor, and emeritus. Because of these unique roles and the fact that the master teacher is

the only position that is considered full release from classroom teaching duties, the plan

is considered "model three," or the comparable model. Teachers who are appointed to the

roles of model or mentor teacher have primary responsibilities in the classroom, whereas

emeritus teachers are those who have entered retirement.

Prior to the implementation of this new leadership plan, Rosewood had invested

in teacher leadership. The previous plan was implemented under a prior administration

and had been in place for approximately a decade. A group of teacher leaders were hired

to coordinate curriculum in the content areas of math, science, social studies, and literacy.

However, other than this approval of these coordinators working on vertical alignment

once per quarter, Superintendent Siler could not see the value of this system. Facing a

budget reduction of almost $350,000 her first year, it was decided to eliminate these

teacher leaders. To shore up this missing leadership component, the district decided to

hire two emeritus teachers who would help with this work. These two emeritus teachers

were hired for a maximum of 60 contract days. The emeritus teachers were intended as a

stopgap measure until the district was able to successfully plan for and implement a

teacher leadership system under the new teacher leadership and compensation grant

process. At the time, the district was making budget reduction decisions that led to the

elimination of the current teacher leadership system; the Iowa Legislature, at the urging

of Governor Branstad, was beginning the debate for what ultimately would become

House File 215. According to Superintendent Siler:

> The first year they had what they called curriculum coordinators—one in math,
> one in science, one in social studies, and one in literacy. They were paying them

each over $6,000. I really didn't see what they were doing too much, other than leading some vertical groups in their particular content area on our in-service days. That was only maybe once a quarter. They met with us as a district leadership team meeting, but I didn't feel we were getting anywhere. It was a group of people that most all of them coached. So they didn't want to meet after school. In the morning, you can't meet any more than maybe 7:00 to 8:00 because we're sitting in a district where they have to travel back to their building. So even though the meetings were in the center of the district, they still had to be over so they could be back in time. They didn't want to take time during the day to get subs and have their meetings. We also encountered that there had to be close to $350,000 that needed to be reduced that year. We didn't reduce all of it and we got static from the teachers over it. But one of the reductions was curriculum coordinators. I said, "There's talk right now in the state department that we will be able to write a grant and have teacher leaders back. So until then, where it's a specific plan, we'll find someone else to get by until we can get that grant." So we went to teacher emeritus. We had two retired teachers who are fantastic. They are very well respected. They're very good at what they do. They knew everybody. They were welcomed with open arms. They went in and there was one for K-6 and one for 7-12. They helped out. Then the grant came. So that's the reason why. We took out our curriculum coordinators that weren't really producing as much as they should and they didn't have the time with coaching to do more. So taking them out and bringing them back in whenever the state came through with the grant.

Superintendent Siler's remarks suggest that while there was in fact a teacher leadership plan in the district, it was not living up to the original promise or vision. The main focus of these teacher leaders seemed to be to ensure vertical alignment of the curriculum, and as such, very few of the tasks that these leaders were performing were designed to develop the skill level of instructors (Gigante & Firestone, 2007). That, coupled with the fact that time was a precious commodity, made it difficult for these teacher leaders to complete the tasks assigned to them. With a district that was geographically spread out among many small towns, and the teacher leaders also serving as athletic coaches, collaboration was difficult. This perceived deficiency in the current system was all the more exacerbated when the need to cut the budget made it questionable to continue a

program that was not meeting the expectations of the administration. The promise to

revisit the idea of teacher leadership and build a system to truly meet the needs of the

Rosewood Community School District when teacher leadership and compensation

became a reality made the decision to plan for a system in the first wave a reality.

Principal Miner agreed and shared that prior to the budget cuts that resulted in the

elimination of the original system, teacher leadership had been part of the Rosewood

Community School District for at least a decade. Started under the previous

administration, these leaders had little release time unless they were meeting as part of

the district leadership team. The district certainly valued the concept of teacher leadership

and fully believed that there was a way to expand and improve on the previous system.

Yet, in the end, financial considerations made necessary the decision to cut the first

system. At the same time, it caused some strife with faculty who had previously served in

those roles. Principal Claire Miner:

> We had teachers that were leaders of our building. But we were paying quite a bit
> of money out of our pocket for that and we were trying to find ways we could cut
> down. That was difficult for a lot of our staff because they had been teacher
> leaders in our district for a decade. Not only were they losing their teacher
> leadership role, they were also losing the compensation. So that was a really hard
> transition for us to go through.

It is also worth noting that when the teacher leadership and compensation system finally

was beginning to be realized in Rosewood, none of the teacher leaders that had

previously served in the curriculum coordinator roles chose to apply for leadership

positions.

Planning

The district engaged in a robust planning regimen, with multiple stakeholders. In total, the planning committee had 18 members, including parents, administrators, emeritus teachers, school board, and central office administrators. In addition to this, the district purposely included on the committee teachers who were members of the teachers' collective bargaining team. According to Superintendent Siler, this was done so they were "right in it from the ground floor of what we were putting together and why." A deliberate effort was also made to include representatives from each of the towns that made up the school district. Each meeting was planned and facilitated by the superintendent of schools. These multiple stakeholders participated in numerous planning activities that included visits to school districts that were utilizing teacher leaders, statewide grant writing workshops, and multiple meetings. The planning process for Rosewood began in November of 2013 and in general consisted of two meetings per month. Those meetings were scheduled as half-day sessions, and as the deadline for submission came closer, the frequency of the meetings increased. As the final deadline approached, Superintendent Siler found herself calling principals for final input and feedback before submission.

The committee was divided into several subcommittees, including vision and goals, teacher leadership roles, job descriptions with compensation, selection criteria, and process. The establishment of subcommittees helped distribute the workload. However, at multiple stages during the grant writing process, the full committee needed to reconvene

in order to share information and ideas from other subcommittee work. By January, all subcommittees reconvened to complete the final grant writing process.

The planning committee was made up of representative factions of various stakeholder groups within the district. In addition, a deliberate effort was made to share information and build collective support for the development of a teacher leadership plan among all stakeholders, including teachers, parents, community members, and school board members. Strong support for a teacher leadership plan was noted for each of the stakeholder groups.

<u>Vision</u>

The overarching vision of teacher leadership for the Rosewood Community School District is to "instill a passion for learning, a desire to improve, and an ambition to succeed at high levels" (Teacher Leadership Plan, Rosewood Community School District). In addition, the vision also articulates an added emphasis that Rosewood has placed on early reading. Strengthening reading instruction was a key component of the professional development plan for the 2013-2014 school year. Because of this, the vision for teacher leadership was easily connected to district initiatives. In order to bring this vision to fruition, the district plans for the recruitment and promotion of highly effective teachers. The belief is that these highly effective teachers will be able to model, train, and mentor new teachers to the field along with career-level teachers. This training, then, will elevate the instruction and capacity for effective teaching practices in the district. It is the hope that this in turn will retain those new to the profession and ultimately inspire these teachers to become teacher leaders in the district, because, as Rosewood's teacher

leadership plan suggests, "Highly effective teachers will have opportunities to grow, refine, and share their expertise with students and teachers to inspire and prepare all learners to achieve."

Further, it is suggested that with the guidance of teacher leaders, new professionals will, in turn, become teacher leaders: "The master, model, and mentor teachers will provide support and guidance to the new professionals to become a mentor/model teacher."

The district's plan acknowledges the cyclical nature of the teacher leadership plan and the hope that new and career teachers will one day become leaders: "This climate of continuous learning and improving will establish the stage for the quality teachers to move to their next level of accomplishment."

The vision for teacher leadership in the Rosewood Community School District also appears to embrace the idea of collaboration. The collaboration envisioned is among teacher leaders and administrators themselves, as well as collaborative relationships between different groups of teacher leaders and new teachers. In addition to that, collaboration exists in the planning of professional development and delivering instruction in a collaborative environment. In fact, the whole concept of collaboration appears to be a key feature of the functioning and thus, vision, of the plan. In the two-page description of the vision for the plan, the words "collaboration" or "collaborating" appear 10 times. In addition to that, in order to create time for teachers and teacher leaders to collaborate, the vision deliberately includes phraseology that principals will

create instructional schedules conducive to collaborative efforts. Further, the concept of

collaboration is emphasized in bulleted vision or goal statements:

> Through creative scheduling and the use of technology, time will be available within the structure of the day to collaborate, share, observe, co-teach, and provide feedback on a weekly basis. A collaborative effort was made to create common planning time, cluster group time, and time to implement the new strategies and get feedback from the leaders at all levels. All levels provided time for cluster groups as well as professional learning communities weekly.

The vision statement concludes with a bold statement that the district will

"Improve student achievement by strengthening instruction through collaboration and

professional development."

The improved collaboration is something that has been noted by Principal Miner

as well. In that past, she felt as though there was no one to collaborate with, and now all

of a sudden there is a master teacher available.

> One of the biggest things, and it's a positive, is that I have somebody to collaborate with. Not only am I there at the cluster meetings, but at least two hours a week I'm sitting down and meeting with my master teacher. We've actually scheduled it in our calendar.

Connection to District Initiatives

A key component to Rosewood Community School District's plan is a deliberate

connection to key district initiatives such as CRISS (Creating Independence through

Student-owned Strategies). With these strategies, "the master teacher will teach research-

based strategies that will need to be field tested by the master teacher so they have the

exact experience with the strategy before teaching it to others." Master teacher Lauren

Cooper shared the following:

> But, here's something that is interesting to this program. Everything has to be field tested. If I want to teach them a reading comprehension strategy and model it

to them during new learning, it has to be field tested. I have to have the data that shows it works with our kids to make it valid in our schools. So it has to be research based. I have to go into classrooms and field test it. Then I'll teach it to them.

As revealed in the vision statement, Rosewood places high priority on reading instruction and professional development that is targeted to instructional strategies designed to increase student achievement. This is evidenced by the reading initiatives that are currently underway in the district. For example, the district is utilizing a strategy known as RATE (Read, Annotate, Think, Encode). Particularly useful in the high school, "all three teacher leader roles in that building will teach and support RATE" (Teacher Leadership Plan, Rosewood Community School District). Collaborating for Kids (C4K) is designed to ensure proficiency of all third-grade students by the time they complete that grade. Rosewood is invested in this work, even though it is a statewide movement. It is their belief that mentor teachers will provide support to first-year teachers. Their teacher leadership plan describes it in this way:

> Mentor teachers would provide direct support primarily to first-year teachers to assist in analyzing data. Buildings participating in the C4K initiative have been training in the specific use of FAST formative assessment. The mentor would assist in the implementation of practices or teaching strategies to increase student learning.

Rosewood is also engaged in the MTSS (Multi-Tiered System of Supports) initiative, which relies on the ability of staff to analyze student data and then make instructional decisions for students based on those analyses. The connection to this analysis is described in their plan:

> Having the teacher leaders in all three buildings to support all teachers in implementing the Iowa Core with MTSS will help Rosewood Schools reach their reading goals and PLC goals. Implementation of the Iowa MTSS framework will

be brought to reality in the Rosewood Community School District through our TLC teacher leaders. They will be training other teachers and sharing with new professionals and career teachers to improve the instruction for our Rosewood students.

There is a deliberate connection in the Rosewood plan to their work with the professional learning community, as the teacher leaders will be tasked to ensure that the cyclical notion of the PLC is implemented with fidelity. To achieve that goal, Rosewood describes a system where the mentor teachers are members of the PLC along with model teachers who are the leaders of the PLC. Master teachers, then, hold the responsibility of coordinating the PLC groups within each school building. In addition to the PLC group, which is designed and modeled after the DuFour (2006) model, Rosewood has an additional collaborative group that it refers to as "cluster grouping." The cluster group is designed to function as a small training group of teachers where they will learn new strategies and move teachers to new and innovative practices:

> The consistent weekly training of teachers during the school day by the master teacher will encourage the new and career teachers to move beyond minimal gains and thrive deeply to expand the breadth and depth of the training and supports they are providing.

As a result of this, all three levels of teacher leadership—mentor, model, and master—are expected to work together in a collaborative manner.

Improving Entry into the Profession

Rosewood Community Schools approached improvement of the induction program for new educators by first collecting data from their first- and second-year teachers, their mentors, and the district's mentor coordinator. The data was a mixture of questions based on a Likert scale, and at least one question that appeared to be an open-

ended response. The survey tool used by the district is not available for examination as a part of this study. The salient point from this discussion, however, is that the district took deliberate aim to ensure feedback from the group of educators most closely aligned with those new to the profession. They found that 38% of mentors "somewhat agreed" that new professionals were better prepared to meet the demands of a classroom teachers; 14% indicated that the mentoring program needed more training and classroom support for new professionals; 33% of new teachers indicated that they needed more modeling of strategies; 33% indicated they would like more time at monthly district meetings; and 25% indicated that mentors would "very much" like more time with their new professionals.

Based on this data, Rosewood concluded that first-year teachers need more time with their mentor teacher for the mentor to model lessons and strategies, observe practice of new teachers, and provide quick feedback. To meet this need, Rosewood elected to expand the number of teacher leaders available to the new teachers with the role of model teacher. By adding model teachers to the faculty, the district believes this will enable the mentor teacher to have more time to work with the new teacher. In addition, new professionals would not only have dedicated time to work with their mentor teacher, but have access to the model teacher.

To address the issue of time, the building principal is charged with the creation of scheduling mechanisms that provide additional opportunities for the mentor and new teacher to collaborate. Additionally, the master teacher is made available to coordinate

activities of the model and mentor teacher that are specific to the needs of those teachers new to the Rosewood Community School District.

Some modifications of the instructional schedule were necessary to accommodate the professional learning that was now being embedded into the regular day. This enabled the formation of the cluster groups, which are the primary vehicle in which professional development is delivered. Principal Miner shares how the schedule was developed and refined:

> Their concern was time. What I arranged for them was that they always had their early-out Tuesdays to meet in PLCs. But then I put two specials back to back and that team had a good hour during the day once a cycle. So it was once every six days that they could meet.

The early-out Tuesdays, then, are designed for teachers to meet in their PLC among other meetings that are scheduled during this early dismissal. The back-to-back specials that are embedded into the regular instructional schedule are now utilized for the cluster groups to meet for professional development at the direction of the master teacher.

Teacher Leadership Roles

The plan employed by the Rosewood Community School District utilizes a teacher leadership system that identifies four key leadership roles: mentor, model, master, and emeritus. Prior to the implementation of this system, the district already employed a teacher leadership system that included the roles of mentor and emeritus. These roles existed to fulfill a goal of improving instruction to increase student achievement. This system expands on that model and aims to revitalize a system that was largely abandoned after the budget cuts the year prior.

Mentor teachers. This role of teacher leader has primary responsibilities as a practitioner, serving as a regular classroom teacher 95% of the time. The remaining 5% of this leader's time is devoted to duties specific to their role as mentor. Mentor teachers fall under the jurisdiction of the master contract, but the contract for the mentor teacher features "up to 4 additional days" (Teacher Leadership Plan, Rosewood Community School District). Rosewood anticipated identifying six mentor teachers and deploying them to the buildings based on the needs of new professionals. The responsibilities outlined for this role are quantified and include a number of collaborative meetings with other teacher leaders and new practitioners. For example, "Meet with master teacher, model teacher, and new professionals for 1 day before school starts. Meet with new professionals district wide for two hours per month" (Teacher Leadership Plan, Rosewood Community School District). Those meetings will include such tasks as observing evidence-based instructional practices of the new professional and creating a reflective feedback loop with the practitioner.

Model teachers. Structured in a similar way to the role of mentor teachers, this teacher leader role also includes primary responsibilities as a practitioner, with 85% of their time being spent engaged in student instruction and the remaining 15% devoted to leadership responsibilities. Again, these teachers are governed by the master contract, but have responsibilities that make it necessary to add "up to 10 days" (Teacher Leadership Plan, Rosewood Community School District). Their plan calls for the identification of nine model teachers, divided among the three school buildings. In addition to the

collaborative meetings that are described in the mentor teacher section above, the model

teachers have the following responsibilities:

1. Conduct two observations a week, with follow-up conferences. These observations
   will be of evidence-based instructional practices and can be for all teachers.

2. Model exceptional teaching practices for all teachers.

3. Professional Learning Communities (PLC) leader to lead discussion of best teaching
   practices and analysis of student data with their PLC (Teacher Leadership Plan,
   Rosewood Community School District)

Master teachers. This type of leadership position in the district represents a break

from the traditional role of teacher as a practitioner. Whereas the model and mentor

teacher(s) have primary responsibilities for students in the classroom, the opposite is the

case for master teachers, with only 5% of their time spent in student instruction, and 95%

of their time spent performing duties related to leadership responsibilities. While still

under the jurisdiction of the master contract, those performing this role have extended

contracts of up to 20 additional days. Rosewood's plan calls for placement of three

master teachers, or one in each of its school buildings. The role for this leader differs

from that of the model and mentor teachers and includes more work planning, organizing,

and facilitating work of teachers and of other teacher leaders. Rosewood's plan describes

it in this way:

> The master teacher will facilitate a monthly two-hour meeting of professional
> development for new teachers . . . plan, organize, and co-facilitate the cluster
> groups of teachers . . . plan and write minutes of the district leadership team . . .
> facilitate the writing of the district's professional development plan.

This is in addition to the roles of facilitation, which could be described as teacher

leadership roles that are supportive in nature (Gigante & Firestone, 2007). Yet, the role of

the master teacher does have a number of roles that can be considered developmental in

nature:

> Keep abreast of research-based strategies . . . conduct at least 14 observations and
> follow-up conferences a week . . . support and coach teachers with their
> Individual Career Plans each quarter . . . attend conferences and other professional
> development that will advance instruction and raise student achievement in
> curricular areas.

Teacher emeritus. This is a role that was already in existence at the time this new

system of leadership was being implemented, and as the title suggests, is reserved for

those practitioners who have retired from service. The implementation of emeritus

teachers was intended as a stopgap measure after the district eliminated the original

teacher leaders during the previous budget-cutting cycle. The plan does not identify with

specificity the number of emeritus teachers who will be employed, but does articulate that

their workload will not exceed 60 days of service. As a part-time position, the role of

emeritus is designed to be flexible and to assist with the implementation of professional

development. This role does not include any teaching duties and delegates 100% of their

time to a supportive leadership role. In addition to helping facilitate professional

development with the district leadership team and administrators, the emeritus also acts

as a resource for locating and presenting best practices for instruction.

All of the roles in the Rosewood Community School District are designed to

scaffold together into an interdependent system of accountability. This is evidenced by

the heavy reliance on a highly collaborative model of cooperation, as described by their

plan:

> In Rosewood's proposed TLC plan, the mentor leaders, model leaders, master
> leaders, and our teacher emeriti will act unified and consistently in the instruction
> of our new professionals and career teachers. These groups are able to do this
> since many of their duties mentioned above are conducted jointly with
> collaborative meeting. . . . The fact that the mentor leaders, model leaders, master
> leaders, and teacher emeriti collaborate for several meetings a month to keep their
> focus as one.

Selection of Teacher Leaders

The selection of teacher leaders to Rosewood Community School District is

accomplished by a selection committee process. That committee comprises three

principals and three teachers, each representing one of the three buildings in the school

district. After screening, interviewing, and observing candidates for teacher leadership

positions, the selection committee forwards the successful candidates to the

superintendent for appointment.

A robust application process requires candidates for leadership positions to

present several artifacts to the selection committee, including two letters of

recommendation, a letter of application, resume, the last three years of the candidate's

Individual Career Development Plan, the most recent evaluation, an essay that explains

the candidate's effective teaching practice, and an essay that explains the candidate's

commitment to continuous professional development. While a rubric is not provided to

score the essays, exemplars are provided that suggest the importance of both teacher

effectiveness and professional development. In the area of teacher effectiveness, evidence

of well-designed lessons, engagement of students, responsive and flexible teaching

strategies are employed, clear student assessment is monitored, communication is clear, and there is evidence of strong questioning and discussion techniques. Each of these aforementioned areas was in boldface type with additional examples under them. In the area of professional development, emphasis is placed on professional development experience; for example, the "candidate's history is laden with continuous professional development, such as webinars, online courses, AEA workshops, etc." (Teacher Leadership Plan, Rosewood Community School District). Finally, "characteristics of professional development" was an area of importance to the selection committee, asking for candidates to describe their ability to use and analyze data and be a reflective practitioner.

Strengthening Professional Development

In Rosewood's plan, a direct connection is made between how the role of the teacher leader directly relates to a stronger professional development plan. For example, the mentor teacher, model teacher, and master teacher collaborate on matters of professional development. However, the primary responsibility for planning professional development for new professionals falls to the mentor teacher:

> The mentor plans the professional development for the new professionals. This involves the collaboration of the master teacher, the model teacher, and the mentor teacher on a monthly basis. This is important to have all three teacher leader positions meeting together so their annual goal and focus is repeatedly discussed at their monthly meetings for planning the professional development meetings for the new professionals.

As leaders of the PLC groups, model teachers are responsible for providing guidance to teachers in the application of research-based instructional strategies designed to meet the needs of a diverse group of learners. This is accomplished through a blend of modeling,

observation, feedback, and conferencing. Once again we are reminded of the

collaborative relationship that exists between the mentor teacher and the model teacher,

particularly as it pertains to the induction of new practitioners. In addition to

responsibilities to the new teachers, the plan also describes the way model teachers are

also responsible for the development of career teachers:

> The model teacher leader has more time than the mentor teacher, and therefore, has additional time as they serve the new professional and the *career teacher*. The model teacher will also assist the master teacher in helping *all* teachers implement the teaching strategies in the classroom." *(Emphasis added.)*

Master teachers, then, bear the responsibility for handling the main training regimen for

the teacher leadership team. As a full-time teacher leader with very limited classroom

teaching responsibilities, the master teacher meets with other master teachers, teacher

emeriti, and administration to plan and develop the professional development for the

entire school district. In addition, it appears as though the master teacher serves as the

facilitator of this professional development in each building and holds the responsibility

for ensuring that the pertinent reports and documents are completed.

Emeritus teachers are responsible for ensuring curriculum alignment with the

Iowa Core, which was a primary responsibility of these teacher leaders prior to this

leadership plan. To help in this work, these teachers coordinate their role with that of the

master teacher at the district leadership team meeting. In addition, emeritus teachers are

expected to attend teachers' PLC groups and discuss student data along with research-

based instructional strategies.

Following this description of how Rosewood intends to strengthen professional development, the plan then moved into a brief articulation of how each teacher leader component relates to the Iowa Professional Development Model:

1. Mentor and model teachers will work in PLC groups to establish new learning strategies to reach the goals established from analysis of the data.

2. Model and master teachers will study the data, determine student needs, and assign new strategies.

3. Master teachers working with the district leadership team will plan and select content and key learning to be taught in the "cluster group."

4. The master teacher delivers the content (theory). Master, model, or mentor will demonstrate or model the new strategy. Following, the new professional or career teacher will be provided time for training in their cluster groups.

Monitoring and Impact

Rosewood has deliberately taken steps to develop a system of measuring the impact of the teacher leadership plan by ensuring connectivity to the vision for teacher leadership that has been the hallmark of the entire plan. In an effort to measure the short-term impact, the district plans to administer three different surveys at the midpoint of the school year to those who are new to the profession, career teachers, and teacher leaders. It appears as though each group will have a survey tailored specifically to that particular constituency group. New teachers will be asked questions designed to identify needs and supports that are still needed to ensure a successful completion of the first year in the profession; career teachers are specifically asked about the impact and effectiveness of

professional development; and master teachers will be asked to respond to changes they observe in classroom practice. As a measure of quantitative data, student achievement will also be evaluated. In addition to these three groups of stakeholders, an effort will also be made to survey students in grades four through 12 to determine if there has been a change in the delivery of instruction; administrators will be asked to gauge the impact teacher leadership and compensation and the schedule; and finally, parents and community members will be asked "more specific questions."

To measure the long-term impact of teacher leadership, Rosewood intends to look at each teacher's individual career development plans, achievement data, curriculum gap data, and technology integration data. This data collection will occur quarterly and consist of administrators observing classrooms and cluster groups. In addition to this observation, all teachers will be surveyed quarterly and be expected to comment on specific areas where improvement is needed. Monitoring of the implementation is expected monthly and will be done through the leadership team and a consultant from the AEA.

Sustainability

Rosewood points out that prior to the implementation of this plan, the concept of teacher leadership was not new to the district. The district had previously employed teacher leaders, serving in such roles as curriculum coordinators and mentors. It is important for them to note that because of this, regular classroom teachers were accustomed to teacher leadership, although admittedly it was not as tightly structured as this plan. This plan gives them the opportunity to strengthen and expand their teacher

leadership capacity. The belief, then, is that because of additional funding, a faculty that has already bought in to teacher leadership, strong support from building administrators, and support from teachers in the high 80s and low 90s at each of the attendance centers, the plan is already on the right track for sustainability.

To help the district ensure continued viability and sustainability of the system, each stakeholder group has a key component to see to, in an effort to create interdependent accountability. The school board has assigned a member to be an active member of the teacher leadership and compensation committee. While supportive of teacher leadership in the past, the board of directors recognized the drawbacks of the system that was previously in place. In addition to the role of the school board, building administrators have multiple responsibilities to ensure the success of the plan, but among the top responsibilities is the creation of instructional schedules conducive to the implementation of teacher leadership. Furthermore, they hold a key responsibility in the observation of teacher leaders. To hold the entire system accountable, the superintendent has the responsibility of meeting with the building principals monthly, in addition to completing walk-though observations in the buildings.

The district calendar has been designed to ensure successful implementation by providing time for teachers to work together and for continued professional development throughout the school year. A Tuesday early dismissal is on the calendar each week to provide for teachers to work in their PLC groups, to meet with emeritus teachers for the purpose of curriculum alignment, and to attend to other professional development activities.

Progress of the implementation will be communicated on the district website and will be linked to the professional development activities of the district.

Rosewood recognizes the fact that the key to a successful and long-term implementation of teacher leadership will also depend on the quality of professional development for those assuming teacher leadership roles. Because of this, the district has elected to partner with the National Institute for Excellence in Teaching to provide specific training, and also has made plans to partner with the local area education agency for continuous training for teacher leaders.

Financial Considerations

Rosewood was awarded $188,164 from the Iowa Department of Education to implement its teacher leadership system. This sum was arrived at by using Line 7 of the certified enrollment report from October of 2013. Of those monies, the district anticipates an expenditure of $68,200 to fund the teacher leadership positions, which consist of master, model, and mentor teachers. After the appointment of the teacher leaders, Rosewood anticipates the need to fill three vacancies that had previously been filled by master teachers (master teachers are prior practitioners who are no longer assigned to the classroom). To replace these teachers, they have budgeted $114,550. Admittedly, this will not be enough to cover the entire cost of this line item; the district intends to pay for the balance of this through the general program cost. "The Rosewood Community School District is willing to fund additional costs with their regular program costs because we are so dedicated to having this particular TLC plan of teacher leaders in our school."

An additional point of note is that Rosewood has a large number of students who open enroll into the school district. However, unless those districts (who send open enrolled students to Rosewood) have teacher leadership plans of their own, Rosewood will not have access to these monies. They believe that once those districts are awarded teacher leadership grants in years 2 and 3, thus bringing teacher leadership systems online, they will be able to recover some of those costs. The bright spot in the financial landscape for Rosewood, however, is that the district that sends the largest number of open enrollment students to the school is also able to secure a teacher leadership grant. This equates to a $77,000 revenue gain for the purposes of implementing teacher leadership in Rosewood. While it definitely takes the pressure off, as more districts implement in years 2 and 3, the pressure will continue to be relieved.

The emeritus leadership position is also not funded through the teacher leadership grant. Instead, these two part-time positions will continue to be funded by the Iowa Core Curriculum fund.

<u>Early Implementation of Rosewood's Teacher Leadership System</u>

Rosewood Community School District was notified on March 3, 2014, that its grant application to implement a teacher leadership and compensation system for the 2014-2015 school year was approved. Rosewood joined 38 other school districts as Wave One schools implementing these systems in Iowa during the 2014-2015 school year. From early March until early August, implementation plans were set into motion. With only six months to plan, the first task was to appoint teachers to leadership positions.

School started in the Rosewood Community School District on August 20, 2014. The data for this study was collected within the first month of implementation, on September 12 and again on September 26. The purpose was to align implementation with planning, to discover early implementation successes, and to determine how the early implementation was unfolding.

<u>Appointment of Teacher Leaders</u>

School began for the Rosewood Community School District on August 20, 2014. While it is in the early implementation stages of its plan, there are several key findings to report. The first is that the district was able to fill all of the teacher leadership positions that were described in the plan, with the exception of one model teacher. When asked why this might have been the case, Superintendent Siler offered the following explanation:

> Lack of people wanting to step up. They didn't mind being a mentor. The principal explained it to me that nobody in his building really wants the others to feel that they're any better than them. There was that concern that they might think that if they applied to be a model or master that they would think they were a little bit better than the others.

Further, recall that the Rosewood Community School District had previously identified and implemented a teacher leadership system in its schools, but those positions were previously eliminated as part of a budget-cutting measure. None of those teachers who had previously served as teacher leaders chose to apply for roles as teacher leaders under the new plan. When asked to explain, Superintendent Siler remarked:

> They were full-time teachers, coaches. How in the world could they really be a curriculum coordinator? I think that's why a lot of them did not apply. They saw an actual job description now, that came when we wrote the grant. They couldn't do it if they wanted to coach.

Principal Miner recalls that the previous teacher leadership plan had been in the

Rosewood school district for well over a decade. There might have been some hard

feelings, because those positions had previously been eliminated due to budget cuts:

> We had teachers that were leaders of our building. But we were paying quite a bit
> of money out of our pocket for that and we were trying to find ways we could cut
> down. One of the ways that we decided was to take that away and put in teacher
> emeritus, which would save us some money but still cover what our needs were.
> That was difficult for a lot of our staff because they had been teacher leaders in
> our district for a decade. Not only were they losing their teacher leadership role,
> they were also losing the compensation. So that was a really hard transition for us
> to go through.

On the other hand, it could be that some teachers did not apply because they already had

preconceived notions about who would fill those positions. In that case, there might have

been a feeling that they did not want to create any hard feelings or ill will toward other

members of the faculty. Principal Miner recalls some early conversations with teachers:

> I had a couple people who talked to me about going for that master leader, but
> once they found out, "that person is going to apply for it. I don't want to step on
> their toes and they'd be really good." So she is really the only one who applied for
> my master teacher.

On the appointment of teacher leaders, the legislation is clear and without waivers.

Simply put, in order to meet the minimum qualifications in the eyes of the law, teacher

leader candidates must have at least three years of teaching experience and one year of

experience in the district to be considered for leadership roles. Master teacher Lauren

Cooper had left Rosewood Community Schools during the 2013-2014 school year for a

position in her hometown district. However, since she met the threshold of at least one

year of experience in the district, she was qualified to serve in this capacity. Interestingly,

she did not actively seek the position at Rosewood, but was instead recruited by Principal

Miner. According to master teacher Cooper:

> What had happened is I was teaching seventh grade and I get a call from my old principal, Claire Miner. She said, "You really need to apply for this. I think you'd be a good fit." I just got all my stuff together and within a night I have everything and sent it. I think I put all the principals and superintendents on it. "Here's the information I have. Do with it what you want." So then I had an interview within a week. The big thing is that nobody wanted this job.

When pressed about this idea that no one wanted the job, Cooper stated:

> I think people think that in education things come and go. It's funded by a grant. It's a risky thing to take. For me it is risky to do this, but if it's building . . . I feel like I'm going to get a lot of experience either way. There's a lot of seniority here. And you have really new young people. There are probably five new teachers and the rest of them are all older than me.

It is interesting to note that Lauren had previously left the district to teach in the district

that she attended as a youngster, which happened to be a school district adjacent to

Rosewood. Then, when it became apparent that Rosewood would be awarded the teacher

leadership position, Mrs. Cooper applied, with the encouragement of Principal Miner.

When asked about this, she stated that they needed someone for the position, and that it

seemed like the next logical step in her career. Lauren made it clear that she has

aspirations of one day becoming a principal:

> I just thought it was the next logical step. . . . I took the job. . . . I feel like this experience right now is opening my eyes to what is the reality of a principal's life. As a teacher you don't know what reality is. You think you know what they're doing, but you don't. There are so many fires that a principal has to put out in a day that people don't realize what they're really doing.

Principal Miner recalls that upon discovering they were going to be one teacher short, it

made sense to contact Lauren Cooper. Although Cooper had left the district the prior year

to take a position in her hometown, she would be eligible under the legislation because

she had the requisite number of years of experience. Although no longer employed at

Rosewood, and with at least one year of experience there, it made for a perfect match.

Principal Miner shares:

> When this all came up, we were short one master teacher. The master teacher
> requirement is that they had to have three or five years of teaching experience,
> and one has to be within your district. I said, "I have the perfect person." She's
> one I've been talking about the administrative path. She had been thinking about
> that already. So I called her and said, "This is a shot in the dark. I know you've
> been working to get in Oakdale (district). But this is a perfect position for you." I
> thought there was no way she would do it. She took the bait right away and she
> started doing all this research. She's now at the middle school as their master
> teacher. It was perfect. So I lost her but I got her back.

Yet, according to teacher Gwen Moran, it might not be as simple as trends in education or

a lack of people wanting to step into leadership positions. It might simply be that some

teachers feel they entered education to teach and work with children. For some, it is much

more personal. While Gwen thinks that someday she might be interested in pursuing a

position as a model teacher, beyond that (for example, serving as a master teacher) is not

something she would readily pursue. When asked why, she simply stated, "Because

you're out of the classroom." She also tells about the feelings of the master teacher at the

high school upon leaving the classroom. "She was pretty emotional about leaving the

classroom. So I think for some of them it was hard."

Training of Teacher Leaders

The teachers who have assumed leadership roles in Rosewood have not

previously served as teacher leaders. Naturally, then, they have not had the requisite

training to prepare them for their new roles. While much of the training regimen has been

occurring at the same time as the implementation of the plan, Lauren Cooper has found

the training to be exceptional. It included a description of a rubric that teacher leaders are using to frame their observational work with teachers. The training was made available to the principal, master teachers, and model teachers. This training included a series of learning opportunities over a five-week period during the summer to ramp up the program, followed by a three-day primer in October. The main objective of the training was to gain familiarity with the observational scoring rubric and obtain inter-rater reliability on the observations that would be one of the primary tasks of the teacher leaders. The data gleaned from the observation will be used to develop a professional development training regimen for the faculty.

In addition, the teacher leaders and principals have plans to attend training at the local area education agency later in the school year. This training will include topics such as effective coaching practices and fierce conversations. One challenge that Lauren shared is that while it is interesting and important to engage in this training, it does make it more difficult to schedule around the other meetings that are necessary in her role as master teacher.

Interestingly, when Lauren Cooper was appointed as a master teacher, she saw it as the next natural step in her quest to become a principal. Yet, she felt that she needed additional credibility in the position, since she does not yet have her master's degree. Brand new to the graduate program at Caldonia State University, she just recently began her coursework. Laruen put it like this: "I feel like I need credibility because I don't have my master's. I have some grad credits. I'm starting the ed leadership program at Caldonia State University. I just started a week and a half ago." Lauren feels that the training she is

getting in her master's program is perhaps the most applicable. As someone who is motivated, it was important not only that she does a good job, but that she has credibility and is taken seriously by her peers in the classroom. She stated, "So then I got this job and I'm thinking I need credibility. So I feel like getting my master's in that area will give me more credibility than what I have. But my real credibility is that I can teach in a classroom and I don't care if it's seventh-grade math." When asked if she feels that she is not taken seriously, she responded with a resounding, "No. Because I have high expectations and they know it. I'm known for my behavior management."

<u>Tasks of Teacher Leaders</u>

If you were to walk up to teacher Gwen Moran on the street and ask what a teacher leader does, she would tell you that a teacher leader is "a person in our school district who is working to bring the level of our teaching up." That statement seems to encapsulate the work of teacher leaders in the Rosewood Community School District. They are able to fulfill this role through a series of classroom observations and providing training through the cluster groups.

The school district offers an early release every Tuesday. This time is scheduled for teacher collaboration in PLC groups, vertical alignment of the curriculum, and technology. Last year the PLC groups met every six days, which was part of the regular specials cycle. Since PLC is now meeting during the Tuesday early-out, the frequency has changed because of other district initiatives that must be addressed. This change in schedule was designed to accommodate the professional learning that now occurs in lieu of the PLC meeting each six-day cycle. The PLC that now meets on the early dismissal

Tuesdays is able to meet only once or twice a month because of other initiatives that need

to be addressed during this time.

Teacher Gwen Moran shared that instead of the PLC meeting during the six-day

cycle, it has been replaced by a professional development opportunity led by the master

teacher that is referred to as a "cluster group"; the opportunity is roughly 50 minutes in

length. The idea behind the cluster group is to embed professional development into the

regular instructional day, thus making it more likely to become a part of practice. The key

for master teacher Lauren Cooper is to ensure that professional development is

meaningful and of high quality. Her goal is to incorporate and model good teaching

techniques during these cluster groups. She explains the process and procedures of cluster

group learning in this way:

> You need to identify the need. Right now our need is to learn the rubric because
> they're going to be observed on it so they need to know what it means. After that
> there's new learning. So their new learning is using standards and objectives in
> their lessons. After that they are supposed to get time to create during that 50
> minutes they're with me. So this is the piece that we never get in PD. We tell you
> what to do, but nobody gives you time to do anything. So right now there's
> identify the need, new learning, and then create. This last one is the application
> piece, and this is what they do on their own. Then after my cluster time they will
> go and reflect on it back with me. I said that wrong. They'll apply it and then
> they'll reflect when they come back at the next meeting.

When asked what exactly a cluster group was, teacher Gwen Moran suggested that, while

cluster grouping is similar in nature to the work of a PLC, it is better described as a

"marriage" between the two concepts. In addition, the cluster group includes the master

teacher and the principal, whereas the PLC group has traditionally only included the

teachers at that particular grade level.

> Clusters involve our master teacher and our principal. In clusters I think it's more about looking at data, figuring out what we need to work on and how we're going to work on it, whereas PLCs is more focused on just collaborating with planning and that type of thing.

Principal Claire Miner shared that while the district had been a PLC school at the elementary school for three years, the one piece that they were missing was the strategy. She felt that the school was doing a good job of analyzing the data and determining what the strengths and weaknesses of students were, but the real struggle was the professional development that answered the question "What can we do to help these kids?" When asked to describe this idea of cluster meetings, Claire shared the following:

> Right now we're working on depth of knowledge and the "I can" statements. We have the teachers step back and look at some of that. For instance, her main goal last time was to get teachers familiar with the four domains, which is planning, instruction, environment, and professionalism. Her goal on the last one was to get them familiar with these domains as well as the descriptors of it. She modeled them an example and also took them through. Like "Think about environment. What is one thing you do in your classroom that shows the kids or gives evidence of the environment piece here?" Then she took them through as far as "Now give us the evidence. What evidence do you have?" Then we go ahead and share all that. So we give them the knowledge that they need and then we say, "Okay, now this is what we're coming in right now to look for in the classroom, just environment." So now the teachers understand what we're looking for so we can go in and do that observation. She has her whole game plan laid out. She does a really good job. She had them do a reflection piece.

The idea, then, according to Principal Claire Miner, is to get the teachers to reflect. In her opinion, that has been something that has been missing in professional development at Rosewood. It is through that reflection and through learning strategies in the cluster meeting that teachers should be able to improve instructional practice. The follow-up, then, comes from the peer coaching that is instigated through the formal observation. "This is true professional development as it should be," according to Principal Miner.

The superintendent sees the value in ensuring that the master teacher focuses on the development of the teacher through professional development, or the cluster groups. This is one of the primary reasons they designed the plan, so that the master teacher is a full-time release teacher. Superintendent Siler offered the following regarding the function of these cluster groups:

> That team is so important. Every one of them is clicking. They're doing a beautiful job. I see a real eagerness of them working together and sharing with me what they've done. There's excitement and enthusiasm with it. I have not seen that in the past. Just this morning I visited with one principal and he said, "This is the greatest thing we're doing through our cluster groups with the master teacher. She's doing a beautiful job. This and this is happening.

The professional development loop is completed through a consistent and continuous system of formal observations in the district. Along with modeling effective teaching strategies and serving as the leader of the PLC groups, this is a primary responsibility of those who serve in the role of model teacher. In addition to model teachers, master teachers and building principals also carry some responsibility for observing practicing teachers. Principal Miner made sure to point out that the purpose of these observations is not to evaluate teachers, but rather to serve more in a coaching capacity.

A key component of the teacher leadership system at Rosewood includes observation of teachers in practice. The district has been very careful to ensure with practitioners that they are not evaluating; there is a component of the observation that includes providing feedback to the teachers on strengths of their instruction and areas where improvements can be made. These areas of improvement ultimately will become the nexus of the training for the cluster groups. Because of the large number of observations the district intends to conduct, this task is shared among building principals,

master teachers, and model teachers. At this point in the implementation, the teacher

leadership team is focused mainly on learning the strategies that are going to create an

environment where the data that is collected in the observations is valid and reliable. In

order to create this reliability, the teacher leaders are observing classrooms in teams,

which has had a tendency to create some stress on the teachers. Principal Miner shared

the following exchange she had with a teacher recently:

> Right now we're doing two at a time. We're telling the teachers, "Right now,
> when we come in it's really not about you, it's about us. We've got to learn what
> we're doing and we're just learning right now. We're looking at environment,
> we're not really looking at your instruction practices and strategies and stuff so
> we're really staying focused in a certain area.

The other important item that was shared by the principal was how important it is to

reinforce the fact that the observation is not an evaluation, even though the scoring rubric

describes it as an evaluation. Although they are clear that the observation is not intended

to be used as an evaluative tool, it is still creating some anxiety for some staff members.

Again, Principal Clair Miner:

> I had a teacher come up, just joking around this morning, "I'm just panicked
> about this. I couldn't sleep last night." I'm like, "We've told you how many times
> it's really not even about you." I feel like we have a very receptive staff here. She
> wasn't really concerned, but still worked up.

Challenges of Being a Teacher Leader

The idea of leaving the classroom was difficult for some of the teacher leaders.

For the most part, these teachers went to school in order to become a teacher and work

with students. Their passion is in the work with students and in teaching. Leaving the

confines of the classroom was a bit of a struggle. For teacher leaders, particularly the

master teacher, this represents a significant second-order change. Teacher Gwen Moran is

unsure that she would ever want to be a master teacher, but if the opportunity to become a

model teacher came up, she might be more open to taking this under consideration. When

asked why she would not want to be a master teacher, she answered quite honestly,

"Because you're out of the classroom." She went on to share that it was difficult for one

of the master teachers to leave the classroom and that they were pretty emotional.

Principal Claire Miner validated this point as well, sharing that it was "hard for her to

leave the classroom, but she has put her whole heart and soul into this whole process."

Also noted is the change in autonomy for teacher leaders. As classroom teachers,

they were driven by a classroom schedule that dictated every minute of their day. Now

that there is no longer a schedule to help plan and organize the day, it has taken some

getting used to. Master teacher Lauren Cooper shared:

> It was funny. The first day I worked I tried to make myself a schedule because I
> haven't had a day in my life since I was 4 that I haven't been scheduled. Going to
> school, everything is scheduled. College is scheduled. My first job was in the
> school, so it's all scheduled. I was trying to think about how I was going to use
> my time and how I was going to be efficient.

In an effort to try and organize herself, Lauren attempted to recreate a schedule. She has

since come to the realization that it is not possible to keep the kind of schedule that was

common when in the classroom. Now, when asked about that schedule, she states, "It just

depends on the day if I have meetings or not. Some days are busier than others." Lauren

further indicates that her schedule has to be somewhat fluid depending on the needs of

the teachers:

> There's unannounced things or somebody wants to talk to you or you get caught
> talking to someone for a long time and you feel like you're not productive. They
> might need someone to listen to them and that's why I'm there talking to them.

Even though I might be stuck for 45 minutes talking a teacher, they need me to talk to them. It's different. It's completely different.

Differences in the Role of the Principal

From the perspective of the building principal, a lot has changed with regard to the implementation of teacher leadership. One of the key findings that continued to surface included the idea that the building principal is able to collaborate with a teacher leader. Prior to the advent of teacher leadership, the building principal felt somewhat isolated and without enough help to serve as an instructional leader. Further, the principal suggested that the master and mentor teachers might very well be her number one supporters. This year she feels that the leadership group really is a team that is designed to provide supports to teachers in the classroom. In addition, she has been able to distribute some of those tasks to teacher leaders that in the past had been the sole responsibility of the principal. Principal Miner shared the following change in her role:

It was me doing everything by myself last year. Between managing the building and being the instructional leader and being out there to support the students and staff. We have a lot of family issues. I spent an hour on the phone trying to work with a mom who doesn't have a vehicle. They're open enrolled and don't have any way to get their kids to school. This year I have a team and it's more collaboration. Again, it's more time invested in the beginning, but hopefully the dividends will pay off.

In addition to this, Principal Miner feels that there is a lot more time invested up front. Accordingly, she feels that her workload has definitely increased, yet feels that it is well worth the effort. She believes that eventually the investment in time will pay off, ultimately taking some of the other things off her plate:

Right now it's more time invested, but hopefully it'll come back and help me more. I am trying to find the balance between managing a building to being an instructional leader to being the support to get this other instructional leadership

> piece built. That's the teacher leadership team. Once that teacher leadership team gets built and it's solid . . . I don't know how much it's really going to take off my plate, but is it going to help our students' achievement scores? Absolutely. It's gonna be huge.

But until that time comes, the time investment up front is substantial. Principal Miner indicated that she is spending 15 to 20 more hours per week than she did last year on teacher leadership issues. She insists on attending all the cluster group meetings, and in addition, she spends an extra two to three hours per week just working with the master teacher. During my recent conversation with Superintendent Siler, she shared the following:

> I said that I'm not doing very well with it. I mean, I'm doing very well with my time that I'm spending with clusters. But I'm not managing at home very well. I said, "I've got a family. I don't know if I had little ones at home how I'd do it." Mine are involved with activities and they're not home half the time anyway, but I spent hours and hours at home every night trying to get caught up on things that I couldn't get done during the day.

Resistance to Teacher Leaders

While there has been some resistance, all of the participants describe it as only a minor factor in the implementation of their plan. All were quick to point to the positive survey results from the teachers during the planning process: the staff was overwhelmingly in favor of implementing the system. Principal Miner was able to sum up the resistance by quoting from a recent conversation with a teacher:

> "This is all great in theory, but is it really going to have the impact that we want in reality? Is this just one more thing that we have to do and in time it will pass too?" Those were the fears and those are very legitimate fears, so we acknowledged that. That was my first role at the first cluster meeting, to talk about the data and talk about their hopes and fears and to verify that those are legitimate fears and they are right on track to feel that way. That's a normal way to feel and I would feel the same way, because how many times have we seen things come and go? We said, "Based off what we see in the cluster meetings and

> the support that you get in three to four months, it'll be interesting to see where your fears are at that point and if we're achieving that hope that you have."

Master Teacher Lauren Cooper sees some of this as well. On one hand they will indicate that this is the best thing they have ever had, but yet there is trepidation. Veteran teachers claim they have seen great things come through and now they have subsided. They just do not know if it will last.

Classroom teacher Gwen Moran confirmed the fact that resistance has been minimal in the district, again pointing to the surveys that were done in advance of the decision to move forward with planning the system. She stated, "I think it was unanimous that we were interested in it." In a general sense, Gwen feels that people have been pretty supportive of teacher leadership.

> I haven't heard anybody say something like, "Wow, I'm not wanting them to be in my room" or anything like that. We talked about it at our meetings like, "Okay, she's going into your room tomorrow" and then those people just talk and figure it out. It doesn't seem like there's different levels of people. It doesn't feel like that at all. It just feels like "This is my job, this is what I'm doing, this is my role."

Yet, there may be some resistance on the horizon. Principal Miner indicated how important it is that the master teacher and principal continue to ensure they are on the same team and convey the same message. When a recent group of teachers suggested they use some of their cluster time to analyze student achievement data and develop intervention strategies, a unified message was important. By staying true to the vision, it created some friction in the staff. It is almost as if some teachers may be unable to see the vision, but instead see this as just "another thing they must do." Principal Miner:

> Yesterday was the first day that I saw a lot of resistance. I see it because we're not a year from now. Right now, that's just where we're at with it. I don't know what more we can really do. I'm kind of at that stuck point right now because how do

you get them to really understand how this is going to benefit them when they just see it as one more thing to do?

Some of the teachers do feel like they have a lot going on right now. They are having a hard time understanding the relationship between the PLC groups and how that relates to the cluster groups. One teacher remarked on this feeling to the principal, stating, "I don't know when I have time to meet with my grade level with this outside of our cluster time because I've got this after school and this after school."

Superintendent Siler echoed this sentiment. While the resistance to teacher leadership remains low, there is a small population of teachers who feel that they have lost some prep time because that time has now been reallocated. Some master teachers have reported hearing this comment from some teachers. This time is now used for professional development, and such resistance is compounded by a feeling that additional work has been added to their scope of responsibilities. Superintendent Siler:

> So the roadblock would be . . . what I got wind of is some teachers were in one building in particular, and I think maybe in all three, they are losing one prep time a week because it's used for their cluster group. That concerns all of them. It'll affect the attitude. Then they said, "But we got work we have to do with this. Homework with the cluster group. We never had that other years." So not only now are we taking some prep time away, but we're adding more professional development homework.

There is a sense of loss among some teachers. Teacher Gwen Moran remarked that she misses the consistency of the PLC time and appreciates having this time every week within the confines of the school day where she can collaborate with her colleagues.

Strengths and Weaknesses of the Teacher Leadership Plan

A primary strength of the teacher leadership plan right now has to be the perception that the right people are in these positions. They are for the most part veteran

teachers who have developed a trusting relationship with their colleagues over multiple years.

All participants also felt that the training received in preparation for the teacher leadership system was excellent. There was a feeling that they had a specific template with which to begin their work, avoiding the process of figuring out what it was they needed to tackle first. It also appears that there is a general sense that everyone wants to see the plan succeed and that they have opportunities to try new things.

Superintendent Siler believes that one of the strengths of the teacher leadership system is that professional development is led by teachers now more than ever. It is consistent and happening every single week. The teachers are spending much more time talking about curriculum, instructional skills, and how they can go about making improvements.

Although Principal Miner noted that she was continually meeting with teacher leaders, she suggested that even more time is necessary to meet with these leaders, and that finding a time to meet with everyone continues to be a problem. Part of this is chalked up to the fact that some teacher leaders continue to have coaching duties, thus making it challenging to find time outside the normal work day to meet and collaborate.

Changes in Teacher Leadership Since Inception of the System

Since its inception, Rosewood has only had to make two minor adjustments to its leadership system. The first was a decision to increase the stipend of the model teacher by $1,000. After realizing the district would be able to capture revenue from a neighboring school district that was also participating in teacher leadership, it made sense to make this

adjustment. However, this decision was made not out of a realization more revenue was available, but rather a recognition that those teacher leaders would have high expectations and a lot on their plate.

The other change that was made to the plan was the reduction in the number of observations of classroom teachers each teacher leader would complete per week. Originally they had anticipated 15 to 20 per week, but recognized this was not going to be feasible because of the other tasks that teacher leaders would be responsible for. According to the superintendent:

> It'll take probably two to three hours just to try to do the observation pre-post and writing it all up. It's very involved. So the first thing they did is ask, "Are we really going to do 14 observations in a week?" I said, "That's what the planning committee set up. What do you think you can do?" So we did change them.

Finally, there seems to be a misunderstanding among many that the teacher leadership system is only going to be in existence for three years and then it will go away. Several of the participants wondered what would happen after three years when the money ran out. As I closed the interview with teacher Gwen Moran, she asked me the following question: "I'm interested to see . . . here's my one question about the teacher leadership thing. From my understanding, the grant is three years. After the three years, they want to have every school in Iowa in it. What happens when that third year is over?" Teacher leader Lauren Cooper suggested that part of the reason that they were unable to fill the positions as they had originally anticipated might have had something to do with the fact that this was a grant. She stated:

> I think people think that in education things come and go. It's funded by a grant. It's a risky thing to take. For me it is risky to do this, but if it's building . . . I feel like I'm going to get a lot of experience either way. There's a lot of seniority here.

> And you have really new young people. There are probably five new teachers and the rest of them are all older than me.

During a brief conversation with a master teacher who was not one of the interview participants, the same sentiments were shared. A feeling that this will all go away after three years has been prevalent among all participants, including Principal Miner, who seemed genuinely surprised when it was shared that the funding for the teacher leadership would be rolled into the funding formula after the first year.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSIONS

This inquiry aimed to answer one simple question: Does the panacea of the teacher leadership and compensation system planned for in the fall of 2013 match the reality of implementation in the fall of 2014? The study consisted of a single-subject case study of one of the first 39 school districts in Iowa selected by the Iowa Department of Education to implement a teacher leadership and compensation system, as written into the law known as Iowa House File 215. Specifically, this researcher was most interested in how the implementation was progressing in the very early stages. Therefore, the study examined only early implementation through the month of September. The purpose of this study is to provide information for the legislature as they consider future amendments to the teacher leadership and compensation system, and to Iowa school districts who are planning to implement their own systems in either wave two of the funding, set for the 2015-2016 school year, or wave three, which will occur during the 2016-2017 school year.

This study began by first examining the plan as it was conceptualized and approved by the Iowa Department of Education. Then a series of interviews were conducted to see how the plan was being implemented, what the perceived strengths of the plan were, what weaknesses were found, and finally what changes needed to be made in order to successfully implement the plan. As a result of this work, several key conclusions can be drawn.

The Workload of the Principal Has Increased

Perhaps the most surprising finding is that the workload of the principal has increased significantly. This seems to contradict the findings of Marks and Printy (2003) that suggested principals can benefit from distributing formalized leadership roles to teachers. Yet, it could be that the principal has realized that in order for the teacher leadership system to be fully embraced and successfully implemented in the Rosewood Community School District, it is necessary for the principal to be actively engaged in, and supportive of, the teacher leadership system in the school. In addition to this, it may suggest that the role of principal is being re-framed with a greater emphasis on providing instructional leadership instead of managerial leadership. While Queen and Queen (2005) suggested that the role of the building principal may be an undoable position, Bean et al. (2010) reminded us that the success of teacher leadership in a school hinges on the support of the building principal.

There seems to be no doubt that Principal Claire Miner is very supportive of teacher leadership in her school. She has taken great pains to ensure that ample time is provided in which to meet with her master teacher. In fact, she made a point to state that they met twice a week at a minimum, and that this time is scheduled into their calendars. Furthermore, Principal Miner has made attendance at each of the cluster groups a priority. She has taken the training quite literally in this regard, stating that it is important for her to be involved in each of these groups. She said, "I have been going to all the cluster meetings unless there's been something that has had to pull me out. Then my

master teacher takes over. But other than that, every 2:40 to 3:40 or 4:00 I'm involved with that cluster. I am a member of that team every single day."

While noble and worthy, it may not be feasible or even helpful for the principal to continue this type of self-imposed pressure. At a recent meeting, Principal Miner shared her feelings regarding the workload with Superintendent Siler, and the superintendent confirmed that it was not necessary for the principal to attend every cluster meeting from beginning to end, and instead suggested attending only a few clusters each week and perhaps rotating through the groups.

Regardless of whether or not Principal Miner continues to diligently meet with and participate in every cluster group each week, she sees no signs of altering the two- to three-hour weekly meeting with the master teacher. According to her, that is a critical conversation necessary to ensure the implementation of the teacher leadership system. This suggests that the principal is very supportive of the teacher leadership system in the Rosewood Community School District and is willing to put in the necessary work to ensure that it is successfully implemented in a way that results in improved student outcomes.

As the system continues to develop, it is likely that the workload of the principal may decrease and, as such, permit the principal to focus on other areas of instructional leadership.

<div align="center">Finding the Right Balance of Time</div>

In addition to the increased workload of the principals, teacher leaders in and of themselves are finding managing their time a challenge. Not only that, but there seems to

be a need to ensure that the time they have been afforded is being maximized. Early on, master teacher Lauren Cooper attempted to recreate a schedule that mirrored what she had been used to in the classroom. Part of this was born out of a desire to be able to justify how her daily work is organized, and part of it was simply because of comfort and familiarity. There might also have been an underlying concern that others may think that teacher leaders are not using their time in the most productive manner. Master teacher Cooper made this statement: "If you hired the right people for the job, they're not going to take advantage of the free time, because they're going to use it."

At this stage in the implementation, the teacher leaders are engaged mainly in putting the procedures and policies in place that will ensure that a robust system of teacher leadership is implemented with fidelity. A great deal of trust and respect is evident among all the stakeholders engaged in this enterprise—from the teachers in the classroom, teacher leaders, principals, and central office administration. As the implementation continues to grow and manifest itself, there is no doubt that the system will take on more complex leadership responsibilities (Smylie et al., 2007). In so doing, Rosewood will be better positioned to distribute these leadership responsibilities (Spillane et al., 2003).

Yet we need to be reminded that this early in the process, those relationships are still budding. Understandably the meeting times between the teacher leaders and the building principals are probably longer now than they will be in the future. It is likely that several months from now the building principal will no longer find it necessary to attend every meeting that the teacher leader has with the rest of the practitioners in the building.

Likewise, as the teacher leader settles and grows into the position, it may become less necessary to attempt to create a detailed schedule that outlines every minute of the day. As the system matures, the principal and teacher leader alike will be best served by giving each other some space to learn the system. This will allow the teacher leaders to develop their own leadership capacity, while at the same time taking some of those responsibilities off the plate of the building administrator.

<div align="center">Future of Financing is a Concern</div>

Among the teacher, teacher leader, and principal interviewed, there seemed to be a general concern over the fact that the teacher leadership system was funded through a grant. The Iowa Department of Education has been clear that the funding for teacher leadership and compensation systems is distributed through a granting mechanism for the first year. Following that first year of implementation, the funding is rolled into the regular financing formula for Iowa public schools. In spite of those assurances, there is still an uncertainty among practitioners that the funding will be in place beyond the first three years of implementation. There seems to be a general belief that after the initial three years, each district that has implemented a teacher leadership and compensation system will be on its own in terms of future funding. The perception of an unknown future for teacher leadership in Iowa could have contributed to the fact that some teachers elected not to apply for teacher leadership positions. I am reminded of what master teacher Lauren Cooper stated about applying for a teacher leadership position: "I think people think that in education things come and go. It's funded by a grant. It's a risky

thing to take. For me it is risky to do this, but if it's building . . . I feel like I'm going to get a lot of experience either way."

Although the messaging has been consistent in saying that the funding for teacher leadership is not going away, and will indeed be rolled into the school district's funding formula following the initial year of implementation, district leaders will be advised to communicate this point early and often. Any assistance and talking points the Iowa Department of Education could provide to facilitate such a conversation would likewise be welcomed.

<u>Filling All Teacher Leadership Positions is Difficult</u>

The teacher leadership and compensation systems adopted by Iowa schools include a requirement that at least 25% of teachers be identified in some sort of leadership role in their district. In schools where this is not feasible, the language is softened a bit to state that a "good faith effort" must be employed.

The Rosewood Community School District was able to fill all teacher leadership positions, with the exception of one model teacher. While this is a great accomplishment, we should not ignore the fact that the district needed to go out and recruit master teacher Lauren Cooper and encourage her to apply. According to Principal Miner, "When this all came up, we were short one master teacher. The master teacher requirement is that they had to have three or five years of teaching experience and one has to be within your district." Had it not been for the fact that Lauren Cooper had previously worked for the school district, it might not have been able to fill that master teacher position.

Further, both the principal and teacher practitioner shared how hard it was for the master teacher to leave the classroom. By her own admission, teacher Gwen Moran expressed misgivings about her own desire to participate in a teacher leadership program. When asked if she might ever consider the role of master teacher, she stated that she would not. When pressed as to why she would not be interested, she replied quite honestly, "Because you'd be out of the classroom." This seems to confirm the findings of Muth et al. (2013) that many teachers are unwilling to assume positions of leadership, but are interested in improving their own pedagogical skills.

Superintendent Siler further expanded on the challenge of not being able to fill all the positions by indicating that some teachers did not really want to feel as though they were in a position of superiority over their colleagues. She gave the following explanation:

> Lack of people wanting to step up. They didn't mind being a mentor. The principal explained it to me that nobody in his building really wants the others to feel that they're any better than them. There was that concern that they might think that if they applied to be a model or master that they would think they were a little bit better than the others.

This statement seems to corroborate the research of Barth (2001) that indicated the existence of a certain set of norms in schools, and that violating these norms is taboo.

Because of the high number of teachers needed to meet the requirement of 25% of teachers identified for leadership roles, there may be some merit in looking at alternatives for school districts to consider in order to meet this bar. Had master teacher Lauren Cooper been uninterested in returning to Rosewood and serving in a leadership role, this critical position may have been left unfilled. A waiver system that enables school districts

to employ a teacher leader without the requisite one year of district experience could help

to achieve the 25% threshold. It could be seen as a political issue: if the district in

collaboration and partnership with the local teacher association can agree that there is no

other current employee qualified to assume the vacant teacher leadership position, the

one year in-district requirement could be waived. As an added layer of oversight, the

Iowa Department of Education could have the final say. Since the legislation was clear on

this requirement, there would need to be a change in the code to make this

accommodation.

<div align="center">Resistance is Minimal but Just Below the Surface</div>

Because the district took a proactive role in the development of its teacher

leadership system, the resistance seems to be relatively minimal at this point in the

implementation. Completing surveys to gauge the interest in the system prior to the

planning gave stakeholders an opportunity to voice their opinions and hopes for teacher

leadership in Rosewood. All participants indicated that teachers were open to the

implementation of teacher leadership, and that so far there had been very little resistance

to teachers in these new roles. One teacher indicated nervousness surrounding an

upcoming observation from the teacher leader group, but this was quickly assuaged by

the building principal assuring the faculty member that the observation was not

evaluative in nature. Following these assurances, Principal Miner remarked, "She wasn't

really concerned, but still worked up." While interactions of this nature should not

necessarily be viewed as resistance, it is something that, left unchecked, could evolve into

a resistant staff.

Some minor resistance also surfaced related to the perceived loss of classroom prep time. Prior to the implementation of teacher leadership, the time that is now used for cluster grouping was previously allocated to PLC collaboration. While now relegated to the early dismissal that the district has every Tuesday afternoon, PLC is not used on a consistent basis. The early dismissal time is shared between PLC, technology integration, and vertical curriculum alignment. The casualty here, then, is that PLC is scheduled only once or twice per month, whereas in 2013 it was held every week. Now that the cluster time has been embedded into the instructional schedule once in the six-day cycle, teachers do not have as much time to collaborate as they had in the past. Because of this, teachers recently suggested that they be permitted to utilize one of their cluster meetings as a PLC time in lieu of the professional development. What was helpful in this regard was a clear and consistent message being conveyed by both the building principal and the teacher leader that illustrated the importance of protecting this professional learning opportunity for the teacher leader (Mangin, 2005).

Another area of resistance (at least a perceived one) could lie in the fact that some faculty who had previously served as teacher leaders under the old system chose not to participate or to even apply to be teacher leaders under the new system. Superintendent Siler indicated that part of the reason was that they were athletic coaches and thus unavailable for meetings before and after school, or possibly the fact that now there was a detailed job description for these teacher leaders, and as a result they chose not to apply. Nonetheless, the fact that those who were teacher leaders prior to the introduction of this

system was an exacerbating factor for the difficulties when some of the positions were left unfilled, forcing the district to look for these leaders elsewhere.

It is noteworthy that resistance to teacher leadership at this point in the implementation is minimal. In fact, teacher Gwen Moran is able to encapsulate the feelings of the staff related to teacher leadership with her comment, "I think it's all good, all intertwined. It doesn't necessarily seem like teacher leaders stand out." However, as the school year progresses and the newness of teacher leadership begins to fade, the district would be well served to continue to communicate a consistent and clear message between the building principal and teacher leaders. This will help with any resistance that may surface down the road.

<div align="center">Minor Changes are Not Only Probable but Necessary</div>

When Iowa schools embark on the process of planning for teacher leadership and compensation systems, they are talking about an ideal situation. They are operating under a series of assumptions and have no real frame of reference. This is because, in most cases, systems like this have not existed in the past, nor do those leaders tasked with developing them have experience in doing so. Because of this, it should be expected that some minor changes will be necessary as the implementation phase of teacher leadership unfolds in each representative school district.

Take, for example, the suggestion in the planning documents that each teacher leader would complete 15 to 20 observations per week. This statement was made without the benefit of hindsight, and once the implementation was begun, the realization occurred that it was too much for the teacher leader to accomplish. With the master teacher

responsible for the planning of the cluster group training on top of observations, the

district found this number of observations to be untenable. As Superintendent Siler put it,

> I think the planning committee was very helpful, but of course they did not know how extensive this was going to be and how it would affect the observation time. It will take two to three hours just to try to do the observation, preconference and postconference, and writing the report for the teacher and observer to discuss. It's very involved.

Rosewood also made a decision to increase the stipend for the model teachers by $1,000.

This technicality does represent a change from the original planning documents, and was

only agreed to after realizing revenue that would be gained from the neighboring district

that was also implementing teacher leadership and compensation this school year.

Finally, the fact that one model teacher was not hired represents a change in the

planning. That model teacher was not hired because no one applied for the position. In

spite of that decision, Rosewood was able to attain a minimum threshold of 25% of

teachers identified for leadership roles.

<div align="center">Training is Key to Teacher Leader Credibility</div>

The fact that Rosewood invested in training for teacher leaders up front was a

definite benefit to the evaluation of the implementation progress in this early stage.

Master teacher Lauren Cooper indicated that the training they experienced was fantastic

and prepared her well for this new role. In addition to this, a follow-up training primer

with the entire leadership team in early October served as a great reinforcement. The

training seems to have helped ease frustration that teachers might be feeling in these roles

and supports the research study conducted by Fullan and Knight (2011).

It was also helpful and appropriate that the building principals participated in the training alongside the teacher leaders. This helped them to understand the mechanics of the system and assured them that their support and leadership is crucial to the success of the system. Principal Miner stated that at several points during the training, the instructor would make a point of stopping and ensuring that the principals understood a crucial point that was about to be made. This supports the notion that principal support and training are key to the successful implementation of these systems (Smylie et al., 2007).

<u>Status of the Five "Must Haves"</u>

The first requirement of the teacher leadership system was that the starting salary for new teachers be no lower than $33,500. The starting salary for beginning teachers in the Rosewood Community School District had already exceeded that figure during the 2013-2014 school year, with a base salary of $34,254. During the 2014-2015 school year, the base salary is $35,304. This was achieved without allocating any teacher leadership and compensation funding. The district has clearly met this stipulation.

Prior to the implementation of teacher leadership, the district already had a robust system of induction in place for their new practitioners. Rosewood's plan, however, looked for opportunities to strengthen an already well-functioning mentorship system by providing even more supports and resources to their new teachers. This included the introduction of model teachers working in collaboration with mentor teachers on issues of importance and consequence for new teachers. Teacher Gwen Moran has a mentor teacher assigned. As a second-year practitioner on her initial license stated, "With us being in the same grade, it's good. I feel like I meet with her all the time because we're

on the same level." According to Gwen, this mentor teacher is assigned to the new teacher and provides feedback and an opportunity to ask questions. The model teacher, then, is equipped to conduct observations and move in and out of the classroom. "So definitely a different relationship and role." This additional layer has contributed to the improvements in the induction process for new teacher practitioners.

Rosewood has identified and employed four distinctive leadership roles in the school district, with each role serving a unique and meaningful function. The anchor role of master teacher serves as the primary catalyst for the leadership system and works in tandem with the building principal in the planning and articulation of professional development. Model teachers work in collaboration with the master teachers in the collection of observational data, and collaborate to design and develop professional development. The role of mentor teacher is similar in nature to past practice—primarily to serve as a resource for those new to the profession. Finally, the role of emeritus teacher is unique to the school district and serves primarily to help with the vertical alignment of the curriculum and implementation of the Iowa Core Curriculum with fidelity. Although one of the model teacher positions remained unfilled, the district was still able to identify and appoint 26% of the faculty to leadership positions. This satisfies the requirement of multiple, meaningful teacher leadership roles.

The selection process for those aspiring to be teacher leaders in the Rosewood Community School District was quite rigorous. In addition to a letter of application, resume, and letters of recommendation, the candidates were also required to complete essay response questions that articulated their teacher effectiveness, professional

development, and commitment to district initiatives. The candidates were interviewed by the selection committee, which then forwarded recommendations to the superintendent.

Finally, the district was clear in its passion for ensuring that the teacher leadership system was aligned to current district initiatives. Much emphasis was placed on the importance of literacy and reading instruction. As a district that had piloted the Collaborating for Kids initiative the prior school year, Rosewood aimed to ensure proper linkages were in place between the two components.

Does the Panacea of the Teacher Leadership and Compensation System Planned for in the Fall of 2013 Match the Reality of Implementation in the Fall of 2014?

The evidence would suggest that the teacher leadership system employed by the Rosewood Community School District is working as designed. It is doing the right work! The work of teacher leaders is often described as tasks that are either designed to support the work of teachers or to develop the instructional aptitude of teachers (Gigante & Firestone, 2007). Both types of tasks are important, and evidence suggests that both are happening in the Rosewood Community School District.

The mere fact that such an emphasis is placed on the cycle of observations by the teacher leaders and then followed by crafting professional development based on the data gleaned from the observation suggests teacher leadership tasks that are developmental in nature. Albeit early in the implementation, this is no doubt occurring in the district. Because of the early stage of this system, many of the observations are being conducted by teams of two teachers at a time to ensure inter-rater reliability with the observation protocol. At this stage, most of the teacher observation and cluster group professional

development activities are designed to assist in ramping up the system. While it may be premature to state that the system is functioning fully as designed, it is clear that the right steps are being taken, the collective will is being established, and the systems are being put into place that will continue to help the district build momentum as its teacher leadership system fully ramps up.

In addition to this, teacher Gwen Moran gave a great example of going to the master teacher to ask for help with a student behavior issue. The fact that the master teacher was able to offer suggestions on how to deal with the youngster is indicative of a task that is supportive in nature.

<u>Limitations</u>

This study examined the early implementation of a teacher leadership and compensation system in a select Iowa public school district. In defining this case study, the implementation that was studied included only the first month. During this first month of implementation, it is difficult to accurately ensure that the implementation truly is successful.

Because the case study included the interview of four key informants, caution should be exercised when drawing generalizations for the entire school district. Although the participants selected represented the various factions in the school district, it is difficult to state that the results would have been the same had different participants been selected, even though the results from each participant were triangulated against one another for accuracy and consistency in findings.

Finally, it is important to note that the Rosewood Community School District was one of 39 school districts that are implementing teacher leadership and compensation in Iowa during the 2014-2015 school year. The teacher leadership system that has been designed and is being implemented in Rosewood is unique to that particular school district. Other school districts planning systems like this should take this into consideration when planning for their own system. One should not assume a teacher leadership system in Rosewood will work in another school district. Likewise, because this was conducted as a case study, it should not be assumed that the other 38 school districts implementing teacher leadership systems in the 2014-2015 school year are experiencing similar results.

<div align="center">Recommendations for Future Study</div>

While the implementation of Rosewood's teacher leadership and compensation is unfolding as expected and planned, questions remain. First, it would be interesting to conduct follow-up interviews at the conclusion of the school year to gauge how the first year went and to discover what lessons may have been learned and what additional modifications will be necessary in year 2. Second, Rosewood itself has set into motion its own accountability measures. Those measures are scheduled to be administered later on in the school year. Since this study was in advance of those measures, those data are not included. It would be interesting to calibrate that data set against the data collected from the key informants. This would no doubt provide for a unique triangulation of the data.

Another recommendation is that the other 38 school districts in Iowa be examined to see how they are managing their own teacher leadership systems through this early

implementation. The lessons learned could prove to be valuable as other school districts plan for implementation in the second and third year in Iowa. Likewise, an analysis at the end of the school year could prove to be valuable for other school districts planning systems.

Moving forward, it would be interesting to see how those lessons are applied to other districts that begin implementation in later years. Additionally, an evaluation after years 2 and 3 could be beneficial to determine the overall effectiveness of the system, to see if the plan is working as designed, and to learn about the changes in the system that have been made in the intervening year.

Teacher leadership systems are needed in Iowa now more than ever. As schools become increasingly complex, it is important to ensure that the leadership systems implemented in schools work to "put the right people in place," as stated by Principal Clair Miner. The accountability measures included in No Child Left Behind, Iowa's renewed focus on early literacy, technology integration, and the Iowa Core make this no small task. By using teachers with special expertise and leadership skills, we can truly improve our statewide system of education by ensuring all of our resources are leveraged in a way to better the system.

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APPENDIX A

UNIVERSITY OF NORTHERN IOWA INFORMED CONSENT

Dear Educator,

I would like to invite you to join me in an inquiry on the implementation of

Teacher Leadership and Compensation Systems in Iowa. The purpose of this inquiry is to

discover perceptions of teacher leadership as it is implemented in an Iowa public school

district. This study will specifically examine early implementation of the school's teacher

leadership plan during the months of September and October. The study will uncover

data relevant to the planning of the TLC system in the school and the training

mechanisms employed for teachers and principals. It will also explore the differences

experienced from the planning of the system compared to the realities of implementation.

This study will prove useful for other Iowa school districts as they implement teacher

leadership and compensation systems in the next two waves. The primary question

guiding this research is:

> *Does the panacea of the teacher leadership and compensation system planned for*
>
> *in the fall of 2013 match the reality of implementation in the fall of 2014?*

Your participation is voluntary and at any time during the study you may choose to no

longer participate, nor face penalties if you decline to participate. Your superintendent or

other supervisor/colleagues will not know if you participated, as this will be kept

confidential. The data collection employed will consist of three semistructured interviews

that will be audio-recorded at a place of your choosing. Each interview is expected to

take no longer than an hour. Although the risk is minimal, no names will be used in the

final report and the school district selected for study will not be identified. All participant data will be aggregated in a secure digital location with no school or individual participant identifiers (e.g., race or age) to protect privacy and confidentiality to the greatest extent possible. Recordings of the interviews will be kept no longer than two years and then destroyed. As a participant, you will have the opportunity to review any quotes that are used and ensure the record accurately and fairly articulates your viewpoints.

The results of this inquiry will be for scholarly purposes in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Doctor of Education degree. The final report will be shared with the Iowa Department of Education and the General Assembly of Iowa in the hope that it will assist other school districts as they implement teacher leadership and compensation systems in waves two and three.

If you have any questions about this inquiry, please contact Anthony Voss, Superintendent of Schools for the Hudson Community School District, or Dr. Victoria Robinson, Professor of Educational Leadership and Department Head of Educational Leadership and Postsecondary Education at the University of Northern Iowa (victoria.robinson@uni.edu). If you have any questions about your rights as a research participant, you can contact Anita Gordon, UNI IRB Administrator, 319-273-6148, anita.gordon@uni.edu.

Sincerely,

Anthony D. Voss, Doctoral Candidate

Dr. Victoria Robinson, Dissertation Chair

Please sign below if you agree to participate in this inquiry. Please note that you may

decline participation at any time during the study.

Signed:

APPENDIX B

INTERVIEW GUIDE

Superintendent:

Part One: Background

1. Introduction of myself and the topic.

2. Tell me about yourself, background, education, career path and how you got to be in this position.

3. The window for applying to become an initial implementer of teacher leadership and compensation was relatively short. Why did you decide to apply this year?

    a. Who was involved in the planning of your system?

    b. How were they selected?

    c. Were there more teachers interested in planning the system than could physically participate? Why do you think that was the case?

    d. How often did your planning committee meet?

    e. Who did the bulk of the writing?

4. What is your vision for teacher leadership in this district?

5. What type of leadership roles exist in your district?

    a. Have those roles changed since implementation of the plan?

6. What type of activities are teacher leaders engaging in?

Part Two: Instructional Leadership

7. As a result of teacher leadership, how do you see your role evolving in the coming months and years?

8. Talk to me about your definition of instructional leadership.

    a. How did this look in the past?

        i. What barriers existed?

        ii. How did you find time for instructional leadership?

        iii. What did your day look like?

    b. How will this look now that you have a teacher leadership system?

        i. What barriers exist?

9. How is the role of the principal evolving?

10. What relationship exists between the principal and the teacher leader?

Evolution and Implementation of the Plan

11. Let's talk about your plan and any modifications that you may have needed to make based on the evolving nature of this initiative.

    a. The plan talks about connection to district initiatives. How is this lived out?

    b. Section 4 talks about improved entry into the profession. How is this different from what you may have done one year ago?

12. The selection process for teacher leaders is designed to be rigorous, and your plan outlines a very rigorous process.

    a. Were you able to follow this process?

    b. What was the competition like?

    c. Are all the teacher leader roles filled? (If not, why do you think that is?)

13. A key outcome of teacher leadership is to strengthen professional development. How are you doing that in your district?

14. How are you monitoring teacher leaders for impact on teaching and learning?

Principal:

Part One: Background

1. Introduction of myself and the topic.

2. Tell me about yourself, background, education, career path and how you got to be in this position.

3. What role did you play in the planning of the teacher leadership and compensation system?

4. What is your vision for teacher leadership in this district?

5. What type of activities are teacher leaders involved in?

    a. How has that changed your role?

Part Two: Instructional Leadership

6. As a result of teacher leadership, how do you see your role evolving in the coming months and years?

7. Talk to me about your definition of instructional leadership.

    a. How did this look in the past?

        i. What barriers existed?

        ii. How did you find time for instructional leadership?

        iii. What did your day look like?

    b. How will this look now that you have a teacher leadership system?

       i. What barriers exist?

8. Talk to me about your typical day. If I were to visit with you last year, what would

    that look like? Today?

9. What relationship exists between the principal and the teacher leader?

10. What relationship exists between the teacher leader and the teacher practitioner?

Evolution and Implementation of the Plan

11. What types of tasks are teacher leaders responsible for in their roles?

    a. How do you know this is happening?

12. Describe how teacher leaders are impacting district initiatives.

13. What kind of impact are teacher leaders having on those new to the profession?

    a. How is this different from past practice?

14. What kind of impact are teacher leaders having on professional development?

    a. Is this what you anticipated?

    b. Why or why not?

15. How often do you meet with teacher leaders?

    a. What do you talk about?

Teacher Leader:

Part One: Background

1. Introduction of myself and the topic.

2. Tell me about yourself, background, education, career path and how you got to be in

    this position.

3. What role did you play in the planning of the teacher leadership and compensation system?

4. Why did you choose to become a teacher leader?

5. What is your vision for teacher leadership in this district?

6. What type of activities are you involved with as a teacher leader?

   a. How has that changed your role?

7. What type of training did you have specific to your becoming a teacher leader?

   a. How has that impacted your practice?

Part Two: Teacher Leadership

8. As a result of teacher leadership, how do you see your role evolving in the coming months and years?

9. Talk to me about your definition of teacher leadership.

   c. Have leadership roles for teachers existed in the past?

      i. What did they look like?

      ii. Were you involved as a teacher leader?

      iii. What did your day look like?

10. Talk to me about your typical day as a teacher leader.

   a. Is this what you expected? Why or why not?

11. What relationship exists between the principal and the teacher leader?

   a. How often are you able to meet with your principal?

   b. What do you talk about?

   c. What type of supports is he able to provide?

12. What relationship exists between the teacher leader and the teacher practitioner?

    a.   How are you able to support teachers in their role?

    b.   How responsive are teachers to your new role?

    c.   What barriers exist?

<u>Evolution and Implementation of the Plan</u>

13. Talk to me about the initiatives that are currently being implemented in your district.

    a.   How does your role as teacher leader complement these initiatives?

14. Talk a bit about the mentoring program for those new to the profession.

    a.   How are you able to support those teachers?

15. What does the professional development plan look like in this district?

    a.   What is your role in the development and delivery of professional development?

16. How often are teachers allowed to collaborate with one another?

    a.   What role do you play in this collaboration?

17. If you were to look five years into the future, what would teacher leadership look like in this district?

    a.   Would you still be a teacher leader?

    b.   Why or why not?

<u>Teacher Practitioner</u>:

Part One: Background

1. Introduction of myself and the topic.

2. Tell me about yourself, background, education, career path and how you got to be in this position.

3. Are you familiar with this district's teacher leadership and compensation system?

   a. Did you participate in the planning of this system?

   b. Why or why not?

4. Did you consider becoming a teacher leader?

Part Two: Teacher Leadership

5. As a result of teacher leadership, how do you see your role evolving in the coming months and years?

6. What is your understanding of the role of the teacher leader?

   a. What do they do?

7. Talk to me about your typical day as a teacher.

   a. What kind of interactions do you have with the teacher leader?

8. What relationship exists between the teacher leader and the teacher practitioner?

   a. What kind of supports do they provide?

   b. How responsive are teacher leaders to your needs?

   c. What barriers exist?

Evolution and Implementation of the Plan

9. Talk to me about the initiatives that are currently being implemented in your district.

   a. How does the teacher leader complement these initiatives?

10. What does the professional development plan look like in this district?

    a. What does the teacher leader do to development and delivery of professional

       development?

11. How often are teachers allowed to collaborate with one another?

    a. Are teacher leaders involved in this collaboration?

    b. In what ways?

12. If you were to look five years into the future, what would teacher leadership look like

   in this district?

    a. Would you consider a teacher leadership role?

    b. Why or why not?

APPENDIX C

INTERVIEW GUIDE 2

Principal:

1. I am interested in hearing more about the training that you have participated in to prepare your work with teacher leaders.

2. The last time we visited you talked to me about how your role has changed as a principal since last year. Can you expand on that more for me?

   What relationship exists between the principal and the teacher leader?

3. What relationship exists between the teacher leader and the classroom teacher?

4. How are regular classroom teachers reacting to teacher leadership?

   How is professional development for teachers different this year than it has been in the past?

5. What kind of impact are teacher leaders having on those new to the profession?

6. How is this different from past practice?

   How often do you meet with teacher leaders?

   a. What do you talk about?

7. What is a strength of your teacher leadership plan?

8. What is one area that you think could be improved with your teacher leadership plan?

9. How do you know the plan is working?

Teacher Leader:

1. Can you share with me a little bit more about how you go about your work as a teacher leader? If someone asked you on the street, what is your job?, what would

you say?

Talk to me about your typical day as a teacher leader.

What relationship exists between the principal and the teacher leader?

    a. How often are you able to meet with your principal?

    b. What do you talk about?

    c. What type of supports is he able to provide?

2. In what way has the role of principal changed in this district since the implementation of teacher leadership?

3. What relationship exists between the teacher leader and the classroom teacher?

    a. How are you able to support teachers in their role?

    b. How responsive are teachers to your new role?

    c. What barriers exist?

4. How is professional development for teachers different this year than it has been in the past?

What is a strength of your teacher leadership plan?

5. What is one area that you think could be improved with your teacher leadership plan?

6. How do you know the plan is working?

<u>Teacher Practitioner</u>:

1. If someone came up to you on the street and asked what a teacher leader does, how would you answer?

2. What relationship exists between the teacher leader and the classroom teacher?

    c. What kind of supports do they provide?

    d. How responsive are teacher leaders to your needs?

    e. What barriers exist?

3. How is professional development for teachers different this year than it has been in the past?

4. How has the mentoring of new teachers changed from last year?

5. How often are teachers allowed to collaborate with one another?

    a. Are teacher leaders involved in this collaboration?

    b. In what ways?

6. What is a strength of your teacher leadership plan?

7. What is one area that you think could be improved with your teacher leadership plan?