Eye on Evaluation

WAKE COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOL SYSTEM

EVALUATION AND RESEARCH DEPARTMENT

EVALUATION OF CENTRAL SERVICES PROFESSIONAL LEARNING TEAMS AS OF SPRING 2010

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ABSTRACT

The Wake County Public School System (WCPSS) board policy states that central services staff are to support school implementation of Professional Learning Teams (PLTs) and to participate in PLTs at the central level. Central staff support school efforts in a variety of ways, and over 85% of principals at each level reported this support was adequate. Participation in PLTs among central staff respondents was high for those in administrative (86%) and professional and technical roles (76%), but lower for support staff (37%). High percentages of central administrators, professionals, and technical staff had positive views about PLT implementation and impact. Responses for those in administrative roles were almost always more positive in spring 2010 than in previous surveys. High percentages of administrators and professional/technical staff believe PLTs help them perform their job more effectively, along with most support staff (91%, 86%, and 67% respectively).

SUMMARY

PLT CONCEPT AND POLICY

WCPSS first implemented Professional Learning Teams (PLTs), originally called Professional Learning Communities (PLCs), in schools several years ago. PLC/PLTs are made up of members who regularly collaborate toward continued improvement in meeting student learning needs. These teams use data, professional experience, and best practice to work towards realizing a shared vision for a better learning environment.

Board policy 3610/4510/5040, adopted July 21, 2009, states that school and central services staff are expected to participate in PLTs.

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Central services staff members have two roles in the policy. One role is support to schools with PLT implementation, and the other is as participants. The board policy also indicates that the implementation and impact of the policy are to be studied and reported periodically. For central services, this report serves both as a policy study and an examination of changes in central implementation levels over time.

RESULTS

Central Services Support for Schools

Central staff supported PLTs in schools in a variety of ways. Key activities included:

- Providing a general overview and guidelines for all district staff about the definition and general characteristics of PLTs through a DVD called "PLC Fundamentals."
- Providing a variety of Web-based resources, employee newsletters, and online forums for staff to share PLT issues and solutions.
- Providing training for school-based staff on implementing effective PLTs. Discussions of PLT issues also took place within centrally organized meetings of school staff.
- Visiting PLTs meetings periodically to monitor implementation and discover issues that arose (primarily by the Chief Academic Officer and other Instructional Services Division (ISD) staff).
- Meeting periodically during the 2009-10 school year as a PLT Steering Committee to check the status of various efforts and to plan for the future.
- Expanding evaluation activities by the Evaluation & Research (E&R) department related to PLTs at the school and central levels.

Most principals at each level (over 85%) agreed or strongly agreed that support provided for PLTs by central services staff was adequate (based on an E&R survey deployed in April 2010).

PLT Participation

Participants in Central Services Administrator meetings, referred to as CSA participants in this report, include central administrators and a small group of professionals. CSA participants, as well as other central professional or technical roles, responded to a survey in spring 2010 about PLT implementation and impact. Response rates were 75% for administrators but were lower (44%) for professionals and others.

PLTs at the central level occur within departments and across departments. CSA participants are the most likely to participate in PLTs (86%). Other respondents in professional and technical roles are also likely to be involved (76%). These include staff who worked with multiple schools such as psychologists, teachers in support roles, specialists working with special education assessments, trainers, social workers, facility or transportation managers and technicians. Support staff respondents are less likely to be involved in PLTs (37%). Lower response rates for professionals and support staff than for administrators suggest actual participation rates may be

lower than reported percentages. Also, CSA participants are more likely to be involved in more than one PLT than any of the other groups.

PLT Implementation and Impact

Survey results for CSA participants were overwhelmingly positive in 2009-10, indicating that most employees have embraced the PLT concept and are implementing it. Based on respondents' primary learning team, positive responses (between 80% and 97%) were provided for each statement pertaining to PLT implementation and outcome status. Percentage agreement was below 90% for only about one third of the statements (9 of 28 statements). Nearly all CSA respondents (over 90%) agreed or strongly agreed that:

- Teams have a shared vision, clear goals, work with stakeholders, and have goals that align with those of the system (Shared Vision).
- Team meetings are productive and have free-flowing communication, conflicts within the team are resolved successfully, and individual members are willing to be held accountable for team results (Collaborative Culture).
- Learning teams help them do their jobs more effectively and to identify specific strategies to reach their goals. Teammates willingly share their knowledge and expertise with each other (Collective Inquiry).
- Division management supports the teams (Supportive Conditions).
- Leadership is a shared responsibility (Supportive and Shared Leadership).
- Teams use data to make decisions, have identified data to assess progress towards goals, and regularly communicate about progress. PLT members believe team-based learning efforts will benefit students in the district (Focus on Results/Use of Data).

While most CSA respondents had positive responses to all items, the two items with the lowest percentage of agreement related to supportive conditions, with 75% agreeing they regularly celebrate successes and 80% agreeing that resources available to the team are sufficient.

When results are grouped by characteristic, the percentage of positive responses ranged from 94% to 82%, with Shared Vision the highest and Supportive Conditions the lowest. Five of the six characteristics had at least 90% positive responses across items.

Table 1
Central Services PLT Responses by Characteristic, Spring 2010

Characteristic	% Agreement	Rank
Shared Vision	94%	1
Focus on Results	92%	2
Collective Inquiry	91%	3
Supportive & Shared Leadership	90%	4
Collaborative Culture	90%	4
Supportive Conditions	82%	6

CSA participant responses are particularly important in this study because results for two prior surveys are available for comparison. Compared to 2009, the 2010 survey had slightly higher

percentages of staff with positive views. For items with data for Spring 2009 and 2010, most improved by 10 percentage points or more. A general shift towards more positive responses was evident. The percentage of staff moving to strongly agree (the most positive point on the response scale) was also strong. The items with the largest one-year change (Spring 2009 to Spring 2010) changes related to Supportive Conditions, Collective Inquiry, and Collaborative Culture.

For items included since Fall 2008, the percentage of positive responses in Spring 2010 among central leadership increased for all but two items. Increases in positive responses exceeding 10 percentage points occurred in over half of the cases (in 10 of 18 cases). A shift towards stronger agreement was particularly noteworthy, with the percentage of staff strongly agreeing increasing by more than 10 percentage points for most items. The items with the largest positive change since Fall 2008 related to Shared Vision and Collaborative Culture.

Responses for other central services staff in professional and technical roles were very positive and similar to those who attend the CSA meetings.

Central services support staff were positive, but less so than CSA participants and professional/technical staff. When asked if work in PLTs helped them do their job more effectively--63% agreed or strongly agreed, compared to 91% of CSA participants and 86% of professional/technical staff.

RECOMMENDATIONS

As PLTs move forward, central staff should address several critical issues:

- Finding ways to continue to support schools adequately with more limited central staff resources;
- Clarifying expectations for PLT work at the central services level (both in terms of the models to follow and to what extent staff beyond the administrator category are expected to participate); and
- Considering training and resource needs for central services staff around PLT work and how to address them adequately.
- Finding effective ways to communicate plans and provide information on available resources.

More details on these recommendations are included at the end of this report.

**EVALUATION OF CENTRAL SERVICES
PROFESSIONAL LEARNING TEAMS AS OF SPRING 2010**

The Professional Learning Team (PLT) concept has become accepted by WCPSS education professionals as a "best practice" to increase student achievement, foster professional growth, and sustain school improvements. WCPSS first implemented PLTs, originally called Professional Learning Communities (PLCs), in schools several years ago. Some of these efforts have been in collaboration with neighboring districts and local businesses through the High 5 Consortium, and some have been independent WCPSS efforts. The work of DuFour and others (DuFour, DuFour, Eaker, & Many, 2007; DuFour and Eaker, 1998) were key resources in this development process. While the effort focused exclusively on schools in the early years, central services involvement has increased over time.

The Wake County Board of Education moved to the name *Professional Learning Teams* for all school-based and central services learning teams in 2009 to enhance consistent communications and "to ensure that school PLC work and central services departmental learning team [PLT] work were held to the same standards of thoroughness and excellence" (Sudderth, 2009)." By extension, the many Professional Learning Teams operating within the district's network would now comprise a larger, all-inclusive Professional Learning Community.

A board policy (3610, 4510, 5040) was adopted July 21, 2009 dictating that school and central services staff are expected to participate in PLTs. The policy states,

> "A professional learning team is made up of members who regularly collaborate toward continued improvement in meeting student needs. Using data, professional experience, and best practice, the team works towards realizing a shared vision for a better learning environment. The primary emphasis of this work is on the support of learning and meeting the needs of all students."

Central services staff members have two roles in the policy. One role is support to schools; Central services staff are to provide guidelines and resources, examples of research-based strategies, and implementation training. A second role is as participants, with central services staff expected to:

- Participate in regular professional learning teams.
- Identify goals for improvement in support of the learning environment and require evidence of improvement.
- Identify and share strategies.
- Assess the impact of the strategies and share the results.

The board policy also indicates that the implementation and impact of the policy are to be studied and reported periodically. For the central services level, this report serves both as a policy study and an examination of changes in central implementation levels over time. Data sources that informed this study included surveys, interviews, and document reviews. Separate reports address school PLT implementation issues – one has been completed (Jackl, 2010) and one will be available in Fall 2010.

EVALUATION METHODS

To study central services support for schools as well as PLT participation, implementation, and impact, data was collected and analyzed from several data sources.

Central Services PLT Survey 2009-10: In light of provisions in the new board policy, the scope of this survey was broadened from those attending Central Services Administrator meetings (administrators plus selected professionals). We requested and received a list of all staff with a central location code from Human Resources; this was utilized to send the same survey to administrators plus those classified as professionals or others. Professionals on the list include teachers, social workers, psychologists, or others who served multiple schools and therefore had a central staff location. Those listed as "other" generally served in technical or managerial roles related to facilities, maintenance, or transportation.

This was the third administration of the survey to those attending the Central Services Administrator meetings. Prior surveys took place in Fall 2008 and Spring 2009 (Jackl, 2009b). The survey instrument administered in March 2010 had only minor modifications from the survey done in May 2009 to reflect items related to aspects of the new board policy (with a few items added, deleted, or modified slightly). In 2010, the method of distribution varied in that the survey was distributed and returned online rather than on paper as had been done in previous years.

Support Staff Working Conditions Survey: An email from E&R's assistant superintendent to the superintendent's leadership team asked them to alert their staff to the availability of this survey of central support staff on the Intranet. Two items related to staff experiences with PLTs were added to this survey. The survey was available to about 600 centrally-based support staff during March and April 2010.

Principals' Survey: A brief survey was conducted at the three principals' level meetings in April 2010. A short electronic survey utilized student response devices and Turning Point software, to capture and display results immediately.

Steering Committee Meetings and Interviews: The E&R Senior Director for Program Accountability attended these periodic meetings and gathered information about ongoing activities to support PLT work in WCPSS. In addition, the facilitator for the group was interviewed for information on training and resources provided in 2009-10, and key members reviewed the draft summary of this report section.

Results from all of these sources are included in this report. The primary focus, however, is on the responses of those attending the Central Services Administrator (CSA) meetings (administrators and some professionals in leadership roles). Longitudinal comparisons are possible for this group, with many items asked across three administrations of the survey and some across two administrations.

CENTRAL SUPPORT FOR SCHOOL PLT WORK

Board policy indicates that central staff are to support the work of schools with PLTs. Interviews and a review of other resources provided information on what was provided during the 2009-10 school year. Central staff supported PLTs in schools in a variety of ways. Most principals (85%) agreed that the level of support was adequate. While not exhaustive, some key Central services activities included the following.

- Established an ISD goal for 2009-10 related to ensuring the PLTs were implemented with fidelity in 2009-10. The plan listed necessary resources, action steps, timelines, and measureable process checks.

- Developed a general overview of the characteristics of PLTs in the form of a DVD presentation. This DVD was shared with principals and central administrators; principals were directed to share the video with their staff as an informal training resource to clarify the nature of PLTs.

- Collaborated with parents and community members to develop a Web page with useful links for parents and teachers related to WAKE Wednesdays. Resources included child care options and links to instructional activities to extend regular instruction. Information about the Web page was disseminated at the beginning of the school year.

- Reorganized the PLT Fishbone (an electronic resource on the Web viewable at http://www.wcpss.net/curriculuminstruction/resources/admin/plc_framework/index.html) to match the characteristics and updated with additional resources to support PLT implementation.

- Wrote and featured articles on PLTs in employee newsletters, and initiated the Learning Team Ledger and Sandbox as an online forum and bulletin board for staff to share issues and solutions.

- Provided training for secondary PLT leaders and others on managing PLTs. Customized PLT training was also offered to individual schools when requested. At the elementary level, three PLT institutes were held for PLT leaders, and time was provided at Instructional Resource Teacher (IRT) meetings to discuss successes and issues during the PLT time.

- Presented items about PLTs and facilitated discussions of PLT-related issues at principal and central administrator meetings.

- Developed an application to help schools with limited technological savvy to post the work of their PLTs to their school Web site. Unfortunately, perceptions of what should be posted varied and the application was not ready as quickly as had been hoped. The application was put on hold for possible use next year. (However, the expectation that schools were still to post PLT information to their own Web sites was reiterated in March of 2010 at the principal level meetings.)

- Visited PLTs periodically to monitor implementation and gauge the type of discussions that were occurring and issues that arose (visits primarily by the Chief Academic Officer and ISD staff).

- Organized PLT meetings of school professionals who were "singletons" and therefore had no one else in a like role with which to meet. Teachers in areas such as the arts, foreign language, career and technical education, English as a second language, and physical education met monthly to discuss unique issues which applied to their areas. Professionals in student support roles also participated. These meetings took place centrally or regionally.

- Met periodically to discuss the status of various efforts and plan for the future (PLT Steering Committee). One accomplishment was establishing a logic model to reflect desired outcomes of implementation of PLTs (in collaboration with E&R staff). A second accomplishment was establishing a nomination process in which strong PLTs at the school and central level could receive recognition for their accomplishments. This is intended to be repeated quarterly.

- Expanded the evaluation activities of E&R related to PLTs at the school and central levels. One aspect of the expanded evaluation was case studies of strong PLTs. Another was an analysis of outcomes over time for schools that had implemented PLTs at high levels before 2009-10.

- Participated in professional development related to PLTs that was sponsored by the Triangle High 5 organization in order to further develop their skills to support school and central implementation. Some also attended training through the Wake Leadership Academy or other venues.

To determine whether central support for PLTs was considered adequate, an item addressing this issue was included in a brief survey at the April 2010 principal meeting. As shown in Table 2, most principals agreed or strongly agreed that support was adequate (85% or more at each level). "Agree" was the most common response. The percentage of high school principals who indicated they strongly agreed (23%) was somewhat lower than for middle (38%) or elementary (30%) principals. Thus, schools are generally satisfied with the support they receive from central staff, but there is still some room for improvement.

Table 2
Principal Perceptions of Adequacy of Support on PLTs
"I have received adequate support from central services about PLTs
(e.g., resources, training, and/or informal support."

	Responses	
Elementary	**#**	**%**
Strongly Agree	28	30.4%
Agree	50	54.4%
Disagree	12	13.0%
Strongly Disagree	2	2.2%
Totals	**92**	**100%**
Middle School	**#**	**%**
Strongly Agree	11	37.9%
Agree	15	51.7%
Disagree	3	10.3%
Strongly Disagree	0	0%
Totals	**29**	**100%**
High School	**#**	**%**
Strongly Agree	5	22.7%
Agree	15	68.2%
Disagree	2	9.1%
Strongly Disagree	0	0%
Totals	**22**	**100%**

CSA PLT IMPLEMENTATION

Survey Response Rates

The overall response rate for the Central Services Survey was 53%, with administrators more likely to respond than professionals or others (75% versus 44%). As shown in Table 3, for administrators (the group consistently surveyed over time), the response rate of 75% was similar to the May 2009 response rate of 77%. The lower response rate for professionals and others may relate to their job roles. About a dozen potential respondents contacted us and indicated they did not understand why they were receiving a survey because they were not in a PLT. (e.g., a homebound teacher and a maintenance worker). We purposely sent everyone a survey to see whether they were in PLTs, but the lower response rate suggested some of those not in PLTs might be in the non-respondent group. Another factor could be that this was the first administration to this group, and they did not have the advantage of a face-to-face introduction of the survey and its purpose (which was the case for administrators two years ago).

Table 3
Central Services Survey Response Rates by Job Group

Group	Number Sent	Responses Number	Responses Percentage
Administrators	289	217	75%
Professionals/Others	689	304	44%
Total	**978***	**521**	**53%**

*Note: Eight additional surveys sent but not deliverable.

When the response rate is disaggregated by division (see Table 4), the response rate for administrators varied from 57% (Superintendent's Office, which includes several small departments) to 92% (for Instructional Services). Response rates for professionals and others were considerably lower.

Table 4
Central Services Survey Response Rates by Division– Spring 2010

Administrators Only	Sent	Responses	Response Rate
Administrative Services	49	32	65%
Auxiliary Services	90	60	67%
Instructional Services	91	84	92%
Superintendent	37	21	57%
Technology Services	22	17	77%
Total	**289**	**214**	**74%**
Professionals and Others	**Sent**	**Responses**	**Response Rate**
Administrative Services	32	11	34%
Auxiliary Services	342	76	22%
Instructional Services	298	161	54%
Superintendent	17	16	94%
Technology Services	0		
Total	**689**	**264**	**38%**

Data Source: WCPSS analysis of Spring 2010 survey data.
Note: These data include all responses, not just those that participate in one or more PLTs.
    Surveys in which division was not listed are not included.

PLT Participation

The board policy indicates that central staff are to participate in PLTs. PLTs occurred at the central services level within departments and across departments. Examples include subject area PLTs (e.g., Biology, High School Algebra II, Elementary Mathematics) as well as topical or issue-driven PLTs (e.g., Magnet Program Implementation, Cost Benefit, PLT on PLTs (evaluation), Preschool, and Testing). One PLT on graduation rates included three subgroups to

focus on suspensions, attendance, and dropout prevention. When examined by job group, the vast majority of administrators (87%) and professionals/others (78%) indicated that they participated in one or more PLTs as of spring 2010. (Support staff participation is lower and is shared later in this document.)

Table 5
Participation in PLTs

Group	Number of Responses	In One or More PLTs	
		Number	**Percent**
Administrators	217	188	87%
Professionals/Others	304	236	78%
Total	**521**	**424**	**81%**

Data Source: WCPSS analysis of Spring 2010 survey data.

When broken down based on those who attend the Central Services Administrator (CSA) meetings and others, percentages change only slightly:

- Only 14% (40 of 281) CSA participants reported being in no PLT, with 86% being in one or more PLTs. Belonging to one PLT or two PLTs were the most common responses.

- Among other professional and technical staff, 24% reported not being in a PLT, with 76% in one or more. One PLT was the most common response.

Thus, CSA participants appear to be slightly more involved with PLTs than other professional and technical staff.

Table 6
Number of PLTs in Which Central Staff Participate Based on CSA Attendance

Group	Number of PLTs					
	None	**One**	**Two**	**Three**	**Four or more**	**Total**
Central leadership*	14%	34%	26%	15%	11%	281
Other Professionals/Technical	24%	38%	18%	10%	10%	240
Total	97	186	117	67	54	521

* Administrators and professionals who attend CSA meetings.

Survey Results by Characteristic

The first Central Services Administrators' Survey, deployed in October 2008, contained items related to three themes: a focus on a shared vision and values, the establishment of a collaborative culture and team processes, and the perceived level of support/resource allocation. The second survey included additional items to better assess the strategies and best practices

being used, as well as the overall impact of the PLT concept. Recent training has organized PLT implementation and impact into six characteristics (which closely align with the themes used in 2009 with minor differences).

Almost all of the individual items from the Fall 2008 survey were redeployed in the Spring 2009 survey administration, and again in Spring 2010. The results of all three years for these survey items are presented together within this report to facilitate side-by-side comparisons. Changes between Fall 2008 and Spring 2010 of 10 percentage points or more are **bolded** in each chart. One year changes between Spring 2009 and Spring 2010 of more than five percentage points are shown in *italics*.

Shared Vision and Values

The first theme, a focus on a shared vision and values, included items about team goals, member roles, team vision, and team work with key stakeholders. The percentage agreement was highest for this characteristic at 94%. Nearly all staff agreed on all items. Trends of note are that:

- Nearly all respondents reported that their team had goals (97%), with 95% reporting team goals were clear.

- Over 43% of respondents answered "strongly agree" for all items.

- The percentage of respondents who agreed that, "Leadership/team members facilitate the creation of a vision for our team," increased 18 percentage points (from 76% to 94%).   This is the largest increase in the level of agreement for any item in the survey.

- The shift in the degree of agreement (from agree to strongly agree primarily) was even stronger than the shift to agreement, and was evident for all items in this characteristic (see Table 7). Figure 1 provides an illustration of this pattern for the item with the largest shift between Fall 2008 and Spring 2010, "Team goals are clear." The percentage of positive responses overall increased gradually over time (to reach 95%), while the percentage strongly agreeing climbed more steeply (up 32 percentage points).

Table 7
Changes in Shared Vision Items Over Time

Statement	SA	A	D	SD	% Positive	% Negative
My team has established goals.						
Fall 2008 and Spring 2009						
Spring 2010	55%	41%	3%	1%	97%	3%
Team goals are clear.						
Fall 2008	21%	59%	17%	3%	81%	19%
Spring 2009	32%	55%	12%	1%	87%	13%
Spring 2010	*53%*	42%	5%	1%	*95%*	5%
Change Fall 2008 to Spring 2010	**32%**	-17%	-12%	-2%	**15%**	-15%
Leadership/team members facilitate the creation of a vision for our team.						
Fall 2008	29%	47%	19%	5%	76%	24%
Spring 2009	26%	55%	18%	2%	81%	19%
Spring 2010	*45%*	48%	5%	1%	*94%*	6%
Change Fall 2008 to Spring 2010	**16%**	1%	-14%	-4%	**18%**	-18%
Team members work with key stakeholders on a regular basis.						
Fall 2008	26%	62%	10%	2%	88%	12%
Spring 2009	25%	54%	19%	2%	79%	21%
Spring 2010	*44%*	48%	7%	1%	*92%*	8%
Change Fall 2008 to Spring 2010	**18%**	-14%	-3%	-1%	4%	-4%
My team's goals are closely aligned with the goals of the district.						
Fall 2008						
Spring 2009	36%	54%	9%	1%	90%	10%
Spring 2010	*56%*	39%	5%	0%	*95%*	5%

Fall 2008 *n*= 182; Spring 2009 *n*= 215; Spring 2010 *n*= 237-238

Data Source for all Central Services Survey Tables:
   WCPSS Fall 2008 and Spring 2009 Central Services Administrators' Learning Team Survey; 2010 Central Services Survey

Note for all Central Services Survey Tables:
    SA=Strongly Agree, A=Agree, D=Disagree, SD=Strongly Disagree. Positive includes SA and A; Negative includes D and SD
    Changes between Fall 2008 and Spring 2010 of ten percentage points or more are **bolded** in each chart.
    One year changes between Spring 2009 and Spring 2010 of more than five percentage points are shown in *italics*.

Figure 1
Changes in Shared Vision Items, Fall 2008 to Spring 2010
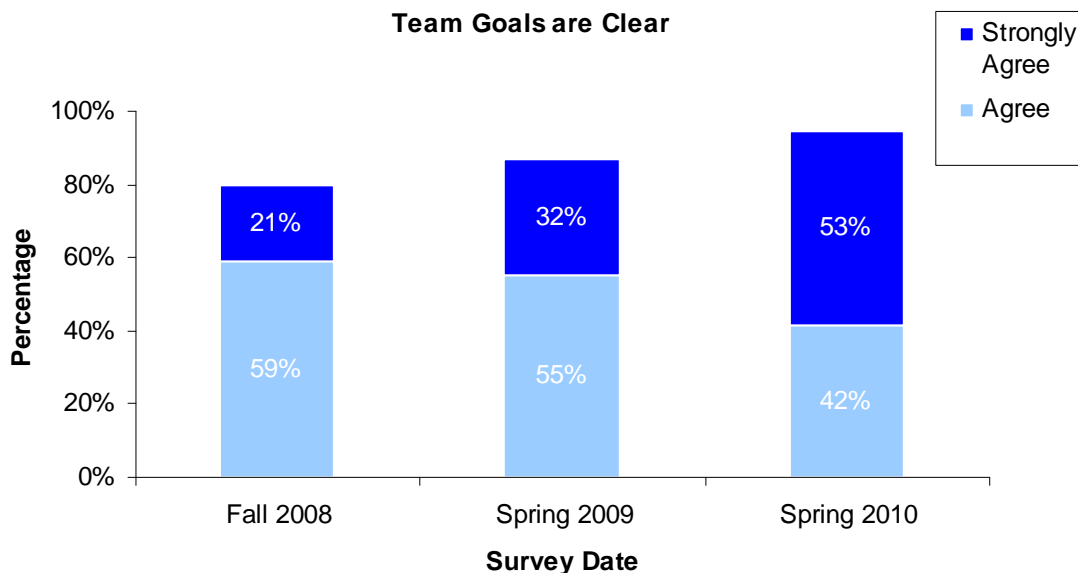
Collaborative Culture

Working collaboratively represents a major paradigm shift from individual efforts to a cooperative team concept of working together toward a common purpose and learning together (DuFour & Eaker, 1998). The nine items on the survey related to collaborative culture explored the communication and collaboration issues, as well as accountability issues. Because this characteristic had the most items, a few items used in the past were dropped that were redundant or less related to the key characteristics of PLTs. Results are split into two tables for communication and accountability items. The percentage of positive responses to the collaboration items was high, at 90%. However, this was slightly lower than for three of the other five PLT characteristics.

Positive responses were at 90% or above for five individual items related to the productivity of meetings, free-flowing communication, conflict resolution, problem solving, and a willingness to be held personally accountable for results. Four items were slightly less positive, with 83-89% of respondents agreeing or strongly agreeing — these items related to clarity of team members' roles, collaboration with other teams, team members holding each other accountable, and team members working hard to motivate each other.

Some interesting trends were that:

- Collaborative Culture included the other item on the survey with the largest change since Fall 2008. The percentage of respondents agreeing that, "Conflicts within the team are resolved successfully" increased 17 percentage points, from 77% to 94%.

- The percentage of respondents between spring 2009 and 2010 who felt clear about their role increased a moderate seven percentage points, but the percentage who strongly agreed increased by 24 percentage points.

- Nearly all respondents were willing to be held accountable for team results (96%), but slightly fewer felt team members actually held each other accountable for team success (86%).

Table 8a
Changes in Collaborative Culture Items Over Time—Communication Items

Statement	SA	A	D	SD	% Positive	% Negative
Members of the team are clear about their role.						
Fall 2008	24%	54%	19%	3%	78%	22%
Spring 2009	20%	62%	16%	2%	83%	17%
Spring 2010	*44%*	46%	9%	1%	*89%*	11%
Change Fall 2008 to Spring 2010	**20%**	-8%	-10%	-2%	**11%**	-11%
Team meetings are productive.						
Fall 2008	28%	54%	15%	3%	82%	18%
Spring 2009	23%	60%	14%	3%	84%	16%
Spring 2010	*42%*	50%	7%	1%	*92%*	8%
Change Fall 2008 to Spring 2010	**14%**	-4%	-8%	-2%	**10%**	-10%
Communication within the team flows freely.						
Fall 2008	21%	56%	19%	4%	77%	23%
Spring 2009	30%	51%	15%	4%	81%	19%
Spring 2010	*48%*	45%	7%	1%	*92%*	8%
Change Fall 2008 to Spring 2010	**27%**	-11%	-12%	-3%	**15%**	-15%
Problem solving is the responsibility of the team.						
Fall 2008	30%	56%	12%	2%	86%	14%
Spring 2009	38%	58%	3%	1%	96%	4%
Spring 2010	*46%*	47%	6%	0%	93%	7%
Change Fall 2008 to Spring 2010	**16%**	-9%	-6%	-2%	7%	-7%
My team seeks to collaborate with other teams.						
Fall 2008						
Spring 2009	25%	53%	19%	3%	78%	22%
Spring 2010	*38%*	46%	15%	2%	*83%*	17%
Team members work hard to motivate each other.						
Fall 2008	22%	52%	23%	3%	74%	26%
Spring 2009	27%	50%	21%	3%	77%	23%
Spring 2010	*35%*	52%	11%	2%	*87%*	13%
Change Fall 2008 to Spring 2010	**13%**	0%	-12%	-1%	**13%**	-13%

Fall 2008 *n*= 182; Spring 2009 *n*= 215; Spring 2010 *n*= 231-238

Table 8b
Changes in Collaborative Culture Items Over Time—Accountability Items

Statement	SA	A	D	SD	% Positive	% Negative
Conflicts within the team are resolved successfully.						
Fall 2008	15%	62%	19%	4%	77%	23%
Spring 2009	23%	60%	14%	3%	82%	18%
Spring 2010	*38%*	56%	5%	1%	*94%*	6%
Change Fall 2008 to Spring 2010	**23%**	-6%	-14%	-3%	**17%**	-17%
Team members hold each other accountable for team success.						
Fall 2008	19%	55%	21%	4%	74%	25%
Spring 2009	20%	58%	19%	3%	78%	22%
Spring 2010	*33%*	53%	13%	1%	*86%*	14%
Change Fall 2008 to Spring 2010	**14%**	-2%	-8%	-3%	**12%**	-11%
I am willing to be held accountable for team results.						
Fall 2008	55%	42%	2%	1%	97%	3%
Spring 2009	35%	60%	4%	1%	95%	5%
Spring 2010	*51%*	45%	3%	1%	96%	4%
Change Fall 2008 to Spring 2010	-4%	3%	1%	0%	-1%	1%

Fall 2008 *n*= 182; Spring 2009 *n*= 215; Spring 2010 *n*= 231-238

Collective Inquiry into Best Practice

Collective inquiry items related to the ability of the team to work together in finding best practices to support their work and become more effective. Items focused on working together to identify specific strategies to reach goals, sharing of their knowledge and expertise, providing feedback towards improvement to one another, and doing jobs more effectively.

Overall, 91% of the responses were positive, which ranks this characteristic third in positive responses among the six PLT characteristics. Three of the four items had positive responses above 90%. One item, "My teammates give me feedback and recommendations for improvement," had 86% positive responses. This item was the only one included since Fall 2008, and the percentage agreement has increased by a modest six percentage points in that time (with the percentage strongly agreeing increasing 11 percentage points, from 21% to 32%).

For the three items that have now been asked twice, the one which improved substantially was, "My team has identified specific strategies needed to reach our goals." Overall agreement increased 13 percentage points to 91%, with the percent strongly agreeing moving from 23% to 46% (up 23 percentage points).

Table 9
Collective Inquiry into Best Practice Items

Statement	SA	A	D	SD	% Positive	% Negative
My teammates give me feedback and recommendations for improvement.						
Fall 2008	21%	59%	17%	3%	80%	20%
Spring 2009	25%	55%	17%	3%	80%	20%
Spring 2010	*32%*	55%	12%	2%	*86%*	14%
Change Fall 2008 to Spring 2010	**11%**	-4%	-5%	-1%	6%	-6%
Being part of a learning team helps me do my job more effectively.						
Fall 2008						
Spring 2009	37%	52%	11%	1%	89%	12%
Spring 2010	*44%*	47%	8%	1%	91%	9%
My team has identified specific strategies needed to reach our goals.						
Fall 2008						
Spring 2009	23%	55%	21%	1%	78%	22%
Spring 2010	*46%*	46%	7%	1%	*91%*	9%
My teammates willingly share their knowledge and expertise in regular team meetings.						
Fall 2008						
Spring 2009	39%	50%	8%	2%	89%	10%
Spring 2010	*55%*	39%	4%	1%	*95%*	5%

Fall 2008 *n* = 182; Spring 2009 *n*= 215; Spring 2010 *n* = 233-235

Supportive Conditions

Supportive Conditions reflects the resources and support available to the teams and celebration of success. While 82% of respondents provided positive responses, this was the lowest percentage of agreement among the six characteristics. The percentage of positive responses ranged from 75% to 91% in Spring 2010 (see Table 10).

- Nearly all (91%) of respondents indicated the division management supports the team. Responses to this item have improved since 2008 by 12 percentage points, with strongly agree responses increasing by 20 percentage points (from 20% to 40%).

- The percentage agreement was lower regarding whether resources to the team were sufficient (80%). Responses have been stable over time, increasing only 2 percentage points since Fall 2008.

- The percentage agreement was lowest (at 75%) concerning whether the team regularly celebrates their successes. This is one of only two items declining in percent agreement over time, declining six percentage points since Fall 2008.

One positive trend is that the percentage of respondents with "strongly agree" as their response increased for all three items since Spring 2009 (by 6 to 15 percentage points).

Table 10
Responses to Supportive-Condition Items Over Time

Statement	SA	A	D	SD	% Positive	% Negative
Division management supports the team.						
Fall 2008	20%	59%	17%	4%	79%	21%
Spring 2009	25%	61%	12%	2%	86%	14%
Spring 2010	*40%*	51%	8%	1%	*91%*	9%
Change Fall 2008 to Spring 2010	**20%**	-8%	-9%	-3%	**12%**	-12%
Resources available to the team are sufficient.						
Fall 2008	18%	60%	19%	3%	78%	22%
Spring 2009	15%	62%	19%	4%	77%	23%
Spring 2010	*26%*	54%	18%	2%	80%	20%
Change Fall 2008 to Spring 2010	8%	-6%	-1%	-1%	2%	-2%
My team regularly celebrates our successes.						
Fall 2008	23%	58%	17%	2%	81%	19%
Spring 2009	22%	45%	27%	5%	67%	32%
Spring 2010	*28%*	47%	23%	2%	*75%*	25%
Change Fall 2008 to Spring 2010	5%	-11%	6%	0%	-6%	6%

Fall 2008 *n*= 182; Spring 2009 *n*= 215; Spring 2010 *n*=232-234

Supportive and Shared Leadership

This characteristic included two items related to whether leadership in the team is shared and whether team members are involved in key decisions. Overall, 90% of respondents had positive responses, which put this characteristic fourth among the six.

The percentage agreement was 93% regarding shared responsibility and 88% regarding involvement of team members in key decisions. Responses to both items have become more positive over time, particularly in terms of leadership being shared.

Table 11
Supportive and Shared Leadership

Statement	SA	A	D	SD	% Positive	% Negative
Leadership is a shared responsibility.						
Fall 2008	28%	53%	17%	2%	81%	19%
Spring 2009	31%	56%	11%	2%	87%	13%
Spring 2010	*48%*	45%	6%	1%	*93%*	7%
Change Fall 2008 to Spring 2010	**20%**	-8%	-11%	-1%	**12%**	-12%
Team members are involved in key decisions.						
Fall 2008	28%	51%	18%	3%	79%	21%
Spring 2009	23%	57%	19%	1%	80%	20%
Spring 2010	*42%*	46%	10%	2%	*88%*	12%
Change Fall 2008 to Spring 2010	**14%**	-5%	-8%	-1%	9%	-9%

Fall 2008 *n=*182; Spring 2009 *n=* 215; Spring 2010 *n=* 234

Overall Focus on Results/Use of Data

The final theme addressed the focus on results and use of data. Items related to the use of data to assess progress and make decisions, whether the team communicates and monitors progress towards goals, and whether efforts will ultimately benefit students. Overall, 92% of the responses were positive on this characteristic, which was the second most positive among the six characteristics. A high percentage of positive responses is evident for every item, ranging from 88% to 95% (see Table 12). It is interesting to note that:

- Nearly all (95%) expressed the belief that becoming a team-based learning district will benefit students; half of the respondents strongly agreed.

- The percentage of team members who indicated they had identified data to assess progress towards meeting their goals increased by 17 percentage points (up to 92%), with a 22 percentage point jump in the number who strongly agreed.

- The percentage of staff indicating they monitor progress towards established goals was slightly lower at 88%.

- The percentage of respondents who strongly agreed that they monitor their progress toward goals and communicate about progress on a regular basis is about one third, lower than the other items on this dimension. However, the percentage of respondents strongly agreeing about communication of progress has increased over time, from 23% to 37%.

Table 12
Focus on Results/Use of Data Items

Statement	SA	A	D	SD	% Positive	% Negative
My team uses data to make decisions.						
Fall 2008						
Spring 2009	31%	54%	14%	1%	85%	15%
Spring 2010	*46%*	47%	7%	0%	*92%*	8%
My team has identified data to assess progress towards our goals.						
Fall 2008						
Spring 2009	21%	54%	23%	2%	75%	25%
Spring 2010	*43%*	49%	7%	0%	*92%*	8%
Team members communicate about progress on a regular basis.						
Fall 2008	23%	58%	17%	2%	81%	19%
Spring 2009	29%	52%	17%	2%	82%	18%
Spring 2010	*37%*	53%	8%	1%	*90%*	10%
Change Fall 2008 to Spring 2010	**14%**	-5%	-9%	-1%	9%	-9%
My team monitors the progress it is making towards established goals.						
Fall 2008						
Spring 2009	24%	53%	22%	1%	77%	23%
Spring 2010	*34%*	54%	12%	0%	*88%*	12%
Our efforts to become a team-based learning district will benefit students.						
Fall 2008						
Spring 2009	45%	49%	4%	1%	95%	5%
Spring 2010	*50%*	44%	4%	1%	95%	5%

Fall 2008 *n*= 182; Spring 2009 *n* = 215; Spring 2010 *n* = 234-236

The model of central services PLT functioning in WCPSS has evolved from practices seen in schools as well as research on learning organizations. Honig (2009) suggests that central office administrators engage in two broad categories of activities. First, a subset of administrators should go beyond coaching to work in assistance relationships with schools to provide direct, collaborative, and hands-on assistance to support teaching and learning improvements. Second, administrators in more indirect support roles collect more evidence to ground their day-to-day decisions and actions.

As shown in Table 13, examples of the first model of Honig (2009) appear to exist, although whether the relationships go beyond coaching is less clear. Generally, central staff use data, research, and best practices information to determine the best ways to support student learning directly. Examples of the second model Honig (2009) suggests abound. Central staff use data to inform decisions about policies, practices, systems, and structures that may impact large segments of the WCPSS population.

Table 13
Examples of Central Services Team Responses on Use of Data

<div style="border:1px solid black; padding:8px;">

Direct Support to Student Learning
- School data for students who have not made high growth were used to target needs and specific interventions for the students.

- I work in a home visiting program and we meet bi-weekly to discuss difficult cases, best practices, goals and how best to meet the goals for [the] families we work with and with the requirements for the program.

- Through the PLT, our team has learned about new research-based strategies we can apply directly to our consultative work to support children in the classroom.

- Just today we spoke about how a specific strategy (neofeedback) will re-regulate brain states to better support three of our students. We put together an action plan to communicate with student families to better support each child's growth and development.

- EOC and EOG student data [are] used by Instructional Specialists to help teachers with low scores to improve their instruction, follow the curriculum and blue prints, etc.

- Other members of my PLT have helped me in planning progress monitoring efforts of a child's growth in reading to help my SST make the best decision regarding how to support her needs.

Less Direct Support of Student Learning
- Strategies shared at PLT meetings have improved my progress toward meeting 100% of 90 day IEP deadlines.

- [The] 12th Grade District School Counseling PLT has created, using data and action research, a Senior Counselor Activity Calendar with appropriate links.

- I think that the facilitating that our department has done in helping other divisions define and construct their mission, vision, and values and construct SMART goals and other parts of the central services plan will help departments to be better focused on the work that they do to impact student achievement. I think we have helped departments to think and process data differently.

- Our PLT has successfully provided the support (documents, training, technical assistance) to get Web-conferencing available. [One] team is creating a Blackboard site to support equitable classrooms. The impact is creating a learning resource that can be accessed by anyone in WCPSS to support equitable learning environments.

- [The home visiting program] has organizational meetings monthly or bi-monthly to develop goals for agency, and all programs develop team goals based on the expectations of the agency and school system as a whole. I feel the program I work with is incredible at defining expectations and supporting one another in the achievement of those goals.

- The attendance PLT that I am involved in has identified that a systemwide standard procedure of operations is warranted in order to reflect students' attendance.

- Looking at the effectiveness of our services compared to other teams providing similar services has served as motivation to meet timelines for student services.

- After reviewing our testing data for Fall 09, our team was able to narrow down which teachers in our areas needed more assistance and guidance with their instruction and planning and thus we sent our instructional specialists out to work with them regularly to assist in improvement in these areas.

</div>

Note: Respondents' wording is shown, with only minor punctuation and wording changes to improve sense [see brackets].

Table 14 addresses the expected or actual impact or benefits of central services PLT efforts at the individual, group, and district levels. These examples help to illustrate the direct and indirect impact of central services staff efforts on students. Staff shared cases in which student participation, learning, and behavior directly improved as a result of their efforts. In terms of less direct support, staff shared examples in which buildings will be cleaner, goals will guide efforts, and assessments will identify at-risk students early in their school careers. All can support student learning. While some examples provide measurable results, others have not been underway long enough to measure benefits.

Table 14
Central PLTs: Benefits for WCPSS Students

Direct Support to Student Learning

- Through case consultation, ideas are shared, strategies are implemented, and the child in the case moves forward positively.

- By collaborating and sharing strategies, anxiety levels [have improved], success levels in social interaction and classroom participation of our students with autism has increased, [negative] behaviors have decreased, and grades have improved.

- The PLT has helped in managing a successful year for a student with multiple challenges.

- Using data to assess fidelity of implementation has led to better support of schools and improved behavior and climate at the school.

- Our PLT has resulted in evaluation teams doing a better job in the referral and IEP process and in documenting decisions made by the IEP team.

- Our developmental screening program for young children with suspected developmental weaknesses continues to improve and meet the needs of more children and their parents.

- Office referrals [have] decreased, suspensions reduced, and more time is spent in the classroom.

- Anticipate higher EOG scores as a direct result [of our work]

Less Direct Support to Student Learning

- Hopefully, when completed, the site administrator and maintenance groups will work more effectively to provide clean well maintained class rooms and better communication between school admin and maintenance departments.

- One example is ensuring that students complete assessments which guide the development of post secondary goals. These in turn help to keep a) IEPs compliant; b) students' educational experiences consistent with their vision for life after high school; and c) students motivated to complete and graduate from HS.

- Feedback on the implementation of Universal Screening in the elementary schools has been generally positive. Many schools have reported that the [universal] screening has helped them to identify students that are at risk that might have been otherwise missed.

Note: Respondents' wording is shown, with only minor punctuation and wording changes to improve sense [see brackets].

OTHER CENTRAL SERVICES STAFF PLT IMPLEMENTATION

Other Professionals and Technical Support Staff

As indicated earlier, response rates were lower for professionals and those in technical roles in central services who do not attend CSA meetings (44% compared to 75%). Of the respondents, 78% indicated they participated in one or more PLTs, compared with 87% among CSA participants. The actual rate may be lower given that those not participating in the survey may have been less likely to respond.

Attachment 2 includes a comparison of the responses of CSA and others in professional and technical roles who participate in PLTs. As with those who attend CSA meetings, responses were quite positive, with 76-98% of respondents agreeing for each item. For most items, the percentage of respondents with positive responses was similar (within five percentage points). Seven exceptions were noted.

Central staff in professional and technical roles who participate in PLTs were somewhat less positive on five items than CSA members. Results suggest that some non-administrators feel a little less in control of team vision and outcomes, less likely to see the connection between PLT work and their job effectiveness, and less supported by division management.

- Leadership/team members facilitate the creation of a vision for our team (89% positive responses compared to 94% for CSA participants),
- I am willing to be held accountable for team results (89% vs. 96%),
- Being part of a learning team helps me do my job more effectively (86% vs. 92%),
- Division management supports the team (86% vs. 91%).

On the other hand, central staff in professional and technical roles were more likely than CSA participants to agree that:

- Problem solving is the responsibility of the team (98% vs. 93%), and
- My team celebrates our successes (81% vs. 75%).

Central Support Staff

All central and school support staff were asked questions similar to those on the state Teacher Working Conditions Survey during April of 2010. Overall, 338 central support staff responded to the survey (roughly 56% of 600 support staff). Two questions were included related to PLTs:

- Professional Learning Teams (PLTs) meet regularly to find better ways to address student needs. They establish goals and work towards them. In how many PLTs do you participate?

- Participating in a PLT helps me do my job more effectively.

As illustrated in Figure 2, central support staff were less likely to indicate that they participated in PLTs, with just over one third saying they were in a PLT and nearly two thirds saying they were not. Those who were involved were most commonly in one PLT. When asked if work in PLTs helped them do their job more effectively, 63% of those in PLTs agreed or strongly agreed, lower than for other central staff.

Figure 2
Participation in PLTs by Central Services Job Group
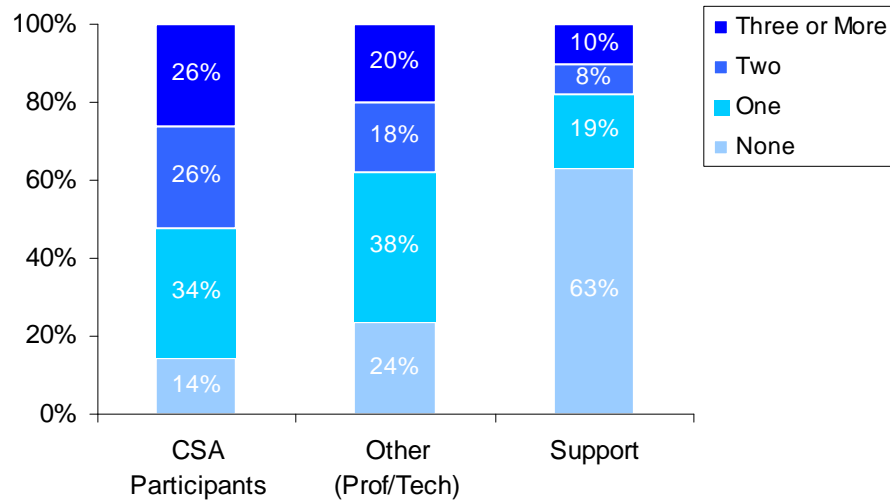
n= 281 CSA, 240 Prof/Tech, 338 Support

Table 15
Central Support Staff Responses about PLTs and Job Effectiveness

Participating in a PLT helps me do my job more effectively.	#	% of PLT Participants
Strongly Agree	24	17.3%
Agree	63	45.3%
Disagree	40	28.8%
Strongly Disagree	12	8.6%

Source: April 2010 Support Staff Working Conditions Survey
Note: *n*= 139 (325 respondents minus 186 not in a PLT).

SUMMARY

This report examines:

- Central implementation of PLTs in relation to board policy 3610/4510/5040, and
- The strength of PLT implementation in 2009-10 and changes over time.

The board policy indicates central services staff are to support implementation of PLTs in schools, and this has occurred in a variety of ways. High percentages of principals see the support as adequate (85-90% by level).

The board policy also requires that central services staff are to be involved in PLTs. This is occurring, although participation levels vary by job group.

- High percentages of administrators and others who attend Central Services Administrator meetings are participating in one or more PLTs (87%).

- Slightly lower levels of participation among others in professional or technical roles (77%).

- Only about one third (37%) of support staff respondents indicated they participated in one or more PLTs.

With regard to the second question, support for PLTs is strong. Administrators and others who participate in PLTs have very positive views of PLTs and their impact. Support staff in PLTs are less likely to see PLTs as helping them do their jobs more effectively (67%) than are CSA PLT participants (91%) and others in central services (86%). Participants in CSA meetings, who have now been surveyed three times, have shown increasingly positive views since 2008. Over 90% of CSA PLT participants had positive views for most items.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Find Ways to Continue to Support Schools Adequately with More Limited Resources

Central staff have supported school PLTs in a variety of ways, and the vast majority of principals saw the 2009-10 support as adequate. Declining budgets for training and central staffing reductions will make it difficult to expand efforts, so central staff will have to be strategic just to maintain current levels of support. It seems likely that support at principal or regional meetings can still be provided, but that other face-to-face support will have to be more limited. Prioritizing and targeting the support provided will be critical.

We advise seeking staff input on the types of support that are most important to provide to schools. This will be particularly important at the high school level, where strongly agree responses were more limited than at the other levels (with 23% strongly agreeing compared to 30% at elementary and 38% at middle). Meetings of principals, Instructional Resource Teachers, data teams, and/or other critical groups could provide a venue for these discussions. Discussions

could touch on the type of differentiated support that should be made available to new teachers versus PLT leads/facilitators.

The format of delivery of the support should also be discussed — in other words, what support is most important to offer in face-to-face settings versus on paper or electronically. Opportunities for electronic support have greatly expanded in recent years, with Web-based conferencing, electronic bulletin boards, and on-line training modules now feasible. Since PLTs actually represent a type of job-embedded training, electronic forms of support could help maintain adequate support if fewer face-to-face opportunities are feasible. Two specific topics seem timely to discuss: First, whether and how the PLT Sandbox can be useful as an electronic bulletin board and support system should be discussed (since use was limited in 2009-10), and second, use of the revised Fishbone.

The fact that Wednesdays will no longer be reserved for weekly PLT meetings at schools means schools must find ways to provide regular time for PLT work within their existing schedules. Central staff have already provided opportunities to discuss options at various meetings. With variations in meeting times, it will be more difficult for central staff to know when PLTs are meeting, or to drop in to monitor PLT functioning. However, with additional communication, it should be possible to overcome this obstacle.

Clarify Expectations for PLT Work at the Central Services Level

Exploring the models for central PLT functioning shared in Honig (2009) could be helpful in fine-tuning guidance to central services staff about how their PLTs might function most effectively. Based on learning theory and a review of current central office functioning nationwide, she recommends that central office administrators who work with schools most directly will be most effective if they move from present coaching models to more direct, collaborative, and hands-on assistance relationships with schools to support teaching and learning improvements. Further, she recommends those in more indirect support roles collect more evidence to ground their day-to-day decisions and actions. While WCPSS may or may not want to fully adopt her recommendations, discussions could be valuable to inform future directions.

Identifying and sharing exemplars of strong central PLTs with central staff could also be helpful. The nature of the discussions and issues addressed are more varied than at schools, because central services staff work to support student learning in a variety of ways (directly or indirectly). For example, transportation staff might work on improving the percentage of on-time arrivals of buses (so students can be on time for class), while special education staff might be working directly with students and families on learning goals. The recognition process for PLTs which was recently initiated is designed to include central services PLTs, and it should be used to highlight some of the ways PLTs work well in central services settings. This report also provides some examples which might be useful. The best venues for sharing these examples will have to be identified, but the PLT Fishbone provides one method.

The question of whether all central services staff are to be involved in at least one PLT should be clarified. Board policy now clearly states that central staff are to collaborate in PLTs. The

portion of the policy that relates to school staff clearly identifies *certified* staff as the group expected to participate. Yet the central portion does not specify any particular job classification or group. Existing Regulations & Procedures (R&P) address only school-level issues; adding clarified expectations in this section for central services staff could guide future efforts.

Survey results for 2009-10 suggest stronger investment in PLTs among CSA participants than other central services job groups (especially support staff). Lower participation for some job groups within central services may be appropriate given job roles and responsibilities and their more distant relationship to student learning. It seems likely that the expectation was not that all support staff would be involved, since that is not the expectation for schools. While participation in appropriate PLTs should be encouraged, it may be that participation in other types of groups or meetings may be more appropriate for some staff. National literature on the operation of PLTs at the central services level in school districts is limited. Honig (2009), for example, addresses how administrators can operate as learning organizations, but she does not address involvement of any other job groups. The extent to which school districts have addressed this issue is likely limited, and WCPSS could inform others with their exploration of the issue.

The number of PLTs that are optimal to be involved in at one time is a separate question for consideration. About one fourth of central administrators claimed membership in three or more PLTs. Given the time commitment needed for successful collaboration, there may be a point of diminishing returns to PLT involvement.

Consider Central Services Training and Resource Needs

Once the expectations are clarified, the adequacy of current training opportunities and resources should be reviewed, and a training plan for central staff should be developed. Participation can be enhanced with greater understanding of purpose and guidelines for collaborating in PLTs. Appropriate support beyond the administrative ranks is particularly critical.

When the PLT movement began, the focus was primarily on schools, with central staff from two departments trained so they could train schools. Opportunities for central staff training gradually increased, but involvement in face-to-face training has been limited primarily to administrators due to space limitations. Some administrators have also trained their own staffs, but this has varied. Beyond training in CSA meetings, training through High 5 and on Facilitative Leadership, the Influencer, and Langford Quality Tools has been available over the past few years. The Langford training was most likely to involve staff from across job classifications because it was delivered to department teams.

In 2008-09, the PLT steering committee reviewed the PLT manual and revised sections to make them more applicable to both school and central staff. Some resources are available to all WCPSS staff, including the PLT Overview DVD and the PLT fishbone. However, it is not clear that present resources are well known or adequate beyond the administrative ranks. The fact that participation has been more limited for technical and especially support staff likely reflects a combination of a lack of knowledge, training, and job roles.

The CSA meeting participants as well as professionals involved in PLT work had positive views of their implementation status and results, but a few items suggest areas in which training or resources might be expanded. For example, under Collaborative Culture, CSA team members were more likely to say they were *willing* to be held accountable for team success than to say the team members *hold* each other accountable for team success (96% versus 86%). (This difference was not evident for other professional/technical staff.) The Five Dysfunctions of a Team (Lencioni, 2002) recognizes "Avoidance of Accountability" as an area for improvement in many teams, and it is an important one to address where it exists. Holding each other accountable for results is a sign of a mature PLT. Teams encountering this issue might benefit from reading this book or from other training in how to accomplish this in socially acceptable ways (which could be electronic). This would be a good reference to add to the Fishbone. Other resources or training to address this concern would also be welcome, as well as perhaps an article for house newsletters or other venues for the dissemination of ideas.

The only characteristic for which positive responses dipped below 90% was supportive conditions at 82% agreement. About three fourths of the CSA respondents felt sufficient resources are available to their team or that their team regularly celebrates their successes. One team commented that their PLT work plans were not moving forward because funds did not exist to roll them out. At first glance these do not appear to be training issues. However, guidance to central leadership about ways to encourage realistic goal setting in these tight budget times could be helpful, perhaps with some examples of attainable and creative solutions. In addition, highlighting ways in which success can be celebrated could be helpful as well.

Find Ways to Communicate Plans and Available Resources

Once plans are developed, finding ways to effectively communicate plans and expectations should be thoughtfully considered. It is not clear, for example, whether all central staff are clear about whether they are expected to participate in PLTs or that resources such as the Fishbone are well known.

Return rates for surveys sent to administrators were considerably higher than for other groups. Part of this likely relates to the lower level of knowledge about PLTs among these groups, and the uncertainty whether the survey really applied to them. Therefore, clarifying expectations of involvement and expanding knowledge of PLTs (as described above) should help increase response rates. In addition, E&R staff members plan to enlist the help of supervisors in sending invitation emails and to use one additional reminder in 2011.

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2009-10 Central Services PLT Survey

Professional Learning Teams
Central Services Administrator and Professional Staff Survey
March 2010

WAKE COUNTY
PUBLIC SCHOOL SYSTEM

Page 1 - Heading

INTRODUCTION
As part of our policy study on the implementation of Professional Learning Teams (PLTs), we are interested in your experiences.   Results will be summarized by group.

INSTRUCTIONS

Please answer the following questions to the best of your ability. Give one response unless otherwise noted. You may skip any questions that do not apply to your PLT. It should take you approximately 10 minutes to complete the survey. Some questions may not appear when you are completing the survey based on your responses to previous questions. Questions that require a response are marked with an asterisk. Click on the "Submit" button at the bottom of each page to submit your responses and continue.

Page 1 - Heading

DEFINITION
A PLT is made up of members who regularly collaborate toward continued improvement in meeting student needs. Using data, professional experience, and best practice, the team works toward realizing a shared vision for a better learning environment. The primary emphasis is on the support of learning and meeting the needs of all students. At the central services level, this support may be direct or indirect.

Page 1 - Question 1 - Choice - One Answer (Bullets)   [Mandatory]

Based on the definition above, in how many PLTs do you participate?

- ◯ None [Skip to 3]
- ◯ One
- ◯ Two
- ◯ Three
- ◯ Four or more

Page 2 - Heading

Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements. If you belong to more than one PLT, please respond according to your experience with your primary learning team.

Shared Vision

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
My team has established goals.	❍	❍	❍	❍
Team goals are clear.	❍	❍	❍	❍
Leadership/team members facilitate the creation of a vision for our team.	❍	❍	❍	❍
Team members work with key stakeholders on a regular basis.	❍	❍	❍	❍
My team's goals are closely aligned with the goals of the district.	❍	❍	❍	❍

Collaborative Culture

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Members of the team are clear about their role.	❍	❍	❍	❍
Team meetings are productive.	❍	❍	❍	❍
Communication within the team flows freely.	❍	❍	❍	❍
Conflicts within the team are resolved successfully.	❍	❍	❍	❍
Problem solving is the responsibility of the team.	❍	❍	❍	❍
My team seeks to collaborate with other teams.	❍	❍	❍	❍
Team members work hard to motivate each other.	❍	❍	❍	❍
Team members hold each other accountable for team success.	❍	❍	❍	❍
I am willing to be held accountable for team results.	❍	❍	❍	❍

Collective Inquiry into Best Practice

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
My teammates give me feedback and recommendations for improvement.	❍	❍	❍	❍
Being part of a learning team helps me do my job more effectively.	❍	❍	❍	❍
My team has identified specific strategies needed to reach our goals.	❍	❍	❍	❍
My teammates willingly share their knowledge and expertise in regular team meetings.	❍	❍	❍	❍

A Focus on Results/Use of Data				
	Strongly Agree	**Agree**	**Disagree**	**Strongly Disagree**
My team has identified data to assess progress towards our goals.	○	○	○	○
My team uses data to make decisions.	○	○	○	○
Team members communicate about progress on a regular basis.	○	○	○	○
My team monitors the progress it is making towards established goals.	○	○	○	○
Our efforts to become a team-based learning district will benefit students.	○	○	○	○

Supportive Conditions				
	Strongly Agree	**Agree**	**Disagree**	**Strongly Disagree**
Division management supports the team.	○	○	○	○
Resources available to the team are sufficient.	○	○	○	○
My team regularly celebrates our successes.	○	○	○	○

Supportive Leadership				
	Strongly Agree	**Agree**	**Disagree**	**Strongly Disagree**
Leadership is a shared responsibility.	○	○	○	○
Team members are involved in key decisions.	○	○	○	○

Please provide one example of the positive impact your primary PLT has had on meeting student needs (directly or indirectly).

_____

_____

_____

_____

Please choose one response to each of the following background statements.

Page 3 - Question 9 - Choice - One Answer (Bullets)   [Mandatory]

I am a central services

- ○ Administrator
- ○ Other staff who has attended Central Services Administrator meetings
- ○ Other, please specify

Page 3 - Question 10 - Choice - One Answer (Bullets)

I have been in central services for

- ○ Less than one year
- ○ At least one year, but less than five years
- ○ At least five years, but less than ten years
- ○ At least ten years, but less than fifteen years
- ○ 15 or more years

Page 3 - Question 11 - Choice - One Answer (Bullets)

I am currently assigned to the following division/department:

- ○ Auxiliary Services
- ○ Instructional Services
- ○ Administrative Services
- ○ Technology Services
- ○ Organizational Development & Support
- ○ Communications Services
- ○ Area Superintendents
- ○ Superintendent's Office

Page 3 - Heading

This is the end of the survey. We will be summarizing the results in an E&R bulletin. Click the "Submit" button once to submit your survey response.

Thank You Page

Thank you for your participation!

Screen Out Page

(Standard - Zoomerang branding)

Over Quota Page

(Standard - Zoomerang branding)

Survey Closed Page

Thank you for your willingness to participate; however, this survey is now closed.

Please contact Andy Jackl (ajackl@wcpss.net or 850-1742) for further assistance.

Attachment 2

Responses of Professionals and Other Technical Staff Who Do Not Attend CSA Meetings

Characteristics		CSA			Other Professionals					
		% Positive	% Negative		SA	A	D	SD	% Positive	% Negative
Shared Vision										
My team has established goals.		97%	3%		57%	38%	4%	1%	96%	4%
Team goals are clear.		95%	5%		50%	43%	6%	1%	93%	7%
Leadership/team members facilitate the creation of a vision for our team.		94%	6%		45%	44%	8%	3%	89%	11%
Team members work with key stakeholders on a regular basis.		92%	8%		41%	47%	9%	2%	88%	12%
My team's goals are closely aligned with the goals of the district.		95%	5%		53%	40%	6%	1%	93%	7%
Collaborative Culture										
Members of the team are clear about their role.		89%	11%		42%	51%	5%	2%	93%	7%
Team meetings are productive.		92%	8%		45%	48%	6%	1%	93%	7%
Communication within the team flows freely.		92%	8%		50%	46%	3%	1%	96%	4%
Conflicts within the team are resolved successfully.		94%	6%		39%	55%	5%	1%	94%	6%
Problem solving is the responsibility of the team.		93%	7%		49%	49%	2%	1%	98%	2%
My team seeks to collaborate with other teams.		83%	17%		36%	48%	15%	2%	83%	17%
Team members work hard to motivate each other.		87%	13%		41%	49%	10%	1%	90%	10%
Team members hold each other accountable for team success.		86%	14%		31%	59%	10%	1%	90%	10%
I am willing to be held accountable for team results.		96%	4%		41%	49%	8%	2%	89%	11%
Collective Inquiry into Best Practice										
My teammates give me feedback and recommendations for improvement.		86%	14%		35%	55%	9%	1%	89%	11%
Being part of a learning team helps me do my job more effectively.		91%	9%		47%	39%	11%	3%	86%	14%
My team has identified specific strategies needed to reach our goals.		91%	9%		44%	48%	8%	0%	92%	8%
My teammates willingly share their knowledge and expertise in regular team meetings.		95%	5%		64%	34%	2%	0%	98%	2%

Attachment 2 continued

Characteristics		CSA			Other Professionals					
		% Positive	% Negative		SA	A	D	SD	% Positive	% Negative
A Focus on Results/Use of Data										
My team has identified data to assess progress towards our goals.		92%	8%		44%	42%	13%	2%	86%	14%
My team uses data to make decisions.		92%	8%		43%	45%	11%	2%	88%	12%
Team members communicate about progress on a regular basis.		90%	10%		40%	49%	10%	1%	89%	11%
My team monitors the progress it is making towards established goals.		88%	12%		39%	53%	8%	1%	92%	8%
Our efforts to become a team-based learning district will benefit students.		95%	5%		47%	46%	5%	2%	93%	7%
Supportive Conditions										
Division management supports the team.		91%	9%		34%	52%	12%	2%	86%	14%
Resources available to the team are sufficient.		80%	20%		24%	52%	22%	3%	76%	24%
My team regularly celebrates our successes.		75%	25%		36%	45%	17%	2%	81%	19%
Supportive Leadership										
Leadership is a shared responsibility.		93%	7%		46%	47%	6%	1%	93%	7%
Team members are involved in key decisions.		88%	12%		42%	47%	9%	2%	88%	12%

Note: Shaded cells are at least five percentage points higher (green/darker shading) or lower (yellow/lighter shading) than CSA percentage positive or negative**.**